

## 1768-99

With twin sons of Odette, Louis & Marcel, and 40 miles away, the three sons of Virginie, Claude, Jean, and Harold, all continuing ganty<sup>1</sup>, their now wholly bedrede<sup>2</sup> grandmother, – with the fortitude of one who has been proud to make of a life something not nothing, – suffered both her tumour and the horror of her imminent extinguishing; because Gwendoline was but the third Vouchsafe, and could only wordlessly sense, and to a very small degree see, a great deal more than ordinary mortals, and in full awareness of so much more to witness, so very much more to discover daily more new, both inside herself and out, she grieved, (as would Vouchsafes all, even the last), that such gifts, wherever they came from, came to her so slowly, so vaguely.

As Gwendoline modestly thought herself the very first Vouchsafe rather than the third, (for it was the fifth of this line who properly established and dated the lineage), it will be presumed necessary remindful, – particularly to one whose tenacity of memory, as well much else, is fully unknowable, – that the Vouchsafe ancestresses were as follow : first Leonora, (1605-1689), who came into her Vouchsafedom about 1631, 138 years before, but whose talents, so embryo, indeed so almost unperceived, – acknowledging of course that it was said in these times that a woman who heeds her mind over her heart falls readily into error, – caused her to think herself simply a woman nervously astucious<sup>3</sup>, and by interpreting her often disconcerting flashes of knowledge, even prescience, as merely a somewhat pronounced womanly intuition and instinct, and by never wondering beyond a frown, she seemed scarcely to warrant the title of Vouchsafe; second Vouchsafe Jane (1658-1718), also ignorant of her station, – for as the Vouchsafe gift was then still scarcely more than infantile, so in a sense was the mind attempting to undergrope<sup>4</sup>, therefore embrace so feckful<sup>5</sup> a visitation, – was so stricken with her far less few talents that she took to her bed for the last 18 years of her life.

But it was third Vouchsafe Gwendoline who was truly the first to be entitled to the addition<sup>6</sup>, the very first to knowledge that her skills, however confusing and frightening, were not innate but gifted; quietly suffering the dreadful pain she felt, first in her chest, later in her stomach, then eachwhere<sup>7</sup>, Gwendoline found distraction from the horror of her caducity<sup>8</sup> in fully allowing herself to become transfixed, sometimes almost stupefied, by her almost daily improving abilities, sometimes mumbling a few words which for the most part were simply superlatives; (it

---

<sup>1</sup> in good health

<sup>2</sup> bed-ridden

<sup>3</sup> of keen perception; of astute and penetrating discernment

<sup>4</sup> conceive or understand

<sup>5</sup> powerful

<sup>6</sup> title

<sup>7</sup> everywhere

<sup>8</sup> perishableness, transitoriness

will soon be seen that the Vouchsafe gift, for not dissimilar reasons, was as crippling in the beginning as it was at the end for the last two, or perhaps three, or even four, of her sisters).

When came the time of her gentle death, – with son Anthony 60 and his wife Hortense 54, their son Lemuel 34, again daughter-in-law Odette 32, — for she had been carefully cajoled into a second ceremony, — and her twin sons Louis & Marcel 11, plus a selection of heart-faithful servants, all sitting and standing around her bed, many weeping, – Odette uttering a sharp cry,

this was at 14:39 on Tuesday the twenty-second of March 1768, and Gwendoline Troke, born Longton, lived 75 years, two months, 22 days, reigning as the third Vouchsafe 49 years, ten months, two days,

husband Edmund 79, holding her dying hand, watched Odette turn deathful pale, falling into a chair, felt herself suddenly occupied by much that was neither of her owning nor of her making, for with everything indefinably enhanced to her startled eyes and her panicked mind, the concerned voices from all quarters seemed newly to confess but the half, nay!, the quarter of their freight; as she leapt up and rushed distraught pursued from the room, only Lemuel held all his ground, for he was the first to know that his own dear wife was now the new Vouchsafe, (who in turn, at her death, without either choice or the knowledge of whom the accipient<sup>9</sup> was to be, passed on her gifts to another legitimate Troke wife, for this is the way with this otherwise almost unselecting phenomenon; but alas by much of her life fighting her gifts, thus preventing their proper development, – and this is partly suppositive, – fourth Vouchsafe Odette would cause the travails of her successors to be even further overfraught).

The funeral, held on a day, not remarkably for late March, balmy and languid, – and so well-attended, the family was abayst<sup>10</sup> at the large number of friends Gwendoline had acquired, – following the exequies<sup>11</sup>, as two groups of boys, – five hardy sons of the latest generation, – looked sadly each at the others from across the descended shell<sup>12</sup>, widower Edmund, still slender, unbent, – (but because the woman he loved simply too severed him from his being, come a twelvemonth would be content to join his wife in the sky,

convenient metaphor for oblivion, for nothingness), –

spoke calmly, movingly, but not at too great length, of his dear wife, and whilst this was an occasion in which was natural there be dreeriment<sup>13</sup>, – for even Trokes a little contrived it on occasion, – the tears were strangely few, as if tearlessness was a greater tribute, a greater truer sorwe<sup>14</sup>, and when Lemuel delivered of his own very moving *éloge*<sup>15</sup>, his words neither were

---

<sup>9</sup> recipient

<sup>10</sup> amazed

<sup>11</sup> funeral rites

<sup>12</sup> coffin

<sup>13</sup> sadness

<sup>14</sup> sorrow

<sup>15</sup> funeral oration

sufficient to cause more eyes to drop down many tears; as the gravediggers shovelled, Lemuel spoke privately with Virginie, his still lovely but quondam<sup>16</sup> wife, first thanking her for accepting of his invite, then after voicing his admiration of her boys aged ten, nine, and eight, introduced her to his wife Odette.

The better to permit mourners, – a lamenting pack, Canetti calls them, – impart the sincerity of their condolences, Trokes spent muchwhat<sup>17</sup> two hours in the small, green and trim graveyard within sight of the *château*, until forswunk<sup>18</sup> by the ordeal,

for given the opportunity the dead can drain far more energy than the living,

all retired into the house; whilst sipping his tea, meditatively admiring of his grandmother, one or other of his twin sons Louis & Marcel, loath to infract<sup>19</sup> his reverie but nevertheless doing so, asking Lemuel, Papa, who were those boys at the funeral?, and Lemuel answering that they were children of one of the many friends of their excellent great-grandmother, hereupon the boys looked at him so askance,

meaning here and everywhere, as in *Mort D'Arthur* : a look sidewise, a side glance, obliquely, askew, asquint, with a side or indirect meaning, such as doubt,

he asked if they would like Claude, Jean, and Harold to come visit them, and with Louis & Marcel gleefully agreeing, so an invitation was sent, to which Virginie promptly dispatched an affirmative reply.

With Virginie and her sons making their call the very next week, with all five boys delighting as well to talk as to play *ball in the decket*<sup>20</sup>, she and Lemuel promenaded the hugy<sup>21</sup>, heavily scented, almost cloyingly colourful garden discussing the to-comyng<sup>22</sup> of their sons, for as he explained : lately becoming very aware of the dangerous revolutionary situation then in that country so threatening as to render them all unsure if they would have the pleasure of the society of their head on the morrow, he and his family would shortly be departing France for England, the land of his birth; this was all goodnear<sup>23</sup> true, for it was Odette, only the previous evening, turning suddenly pale, who said, in a cowthring<sup>24</sup> voice, that all of a sudden she sensed very strongly a great massacre of the wealthy, the titled,

those who have most power, as the poor most misery,

---

<sup>16</sup> former

<sup>17</sup> nearly

<sup>18</sup> exhausted

<sup>19</sup> infringe upon

<sup>20</sup> in which a row of caps are placed by a wall and a ball thrown by one and

landing in a cap the owner flees till caught and then he throws

<sup>21</sup> vast

<sup>22</sup> future

<sup>23</sup> very near

<sup>24</sup> shaking, trembling

was now come into the air, as if awaiting somewhere to gather up, then somewhen to settle; doubting not a syllable of this intelligence, Lemuel immediately of this revelation informed his stepfather Edmund, who,

unlike a divine : not intolerant of contradiction, not repudiating therefore all improvement in itself, not disdainng aught arising either from the heart or from the intellect,

not a mite less doubting, at once set in motion the liquidation of many of his holdings and assets; when after breakfast Lemuel to his wife broached the matter of their relocation, whilst expressing apprehension at such an upheaval, sons Louis & Marcel, thoroughly tutored in that language called English,

delighting to children, puzzling of foreigners, perplexing of poets, confounding of grammarians,

were inservient to<sup>25</sup> at least an extended visit; all this Lemuel explained to Odette there in the Preterite garden, glorious of multiplied scenes.

Now, as Virginie loved Lemuel,

she the energiser, love the energy, he the subject,

but without as they say actually being *in love* with him,

whatever that means, for interpreting what is love doth in many parts evacuate and dissolve it,

she next asking him what, if any, were his plans regarding herself and their sons : very grateful for her question, Lemuel replied with no small warmth that provided Claude, Jean, and Harold continued to receive the best of everything, and were occasionally accessible to him, he was not averse from Virginie pursuing any course she desired, including of course remarrying and having further children, but, with that said, he and his wife would be delighted, honoured, – for they had discussed this, – if she and their sons would accompany his family to England, at least for a visit, and to this rejoinder Virginie was silent; by the end of dinner, – a rather crowded affair, for many who had come for the funeral were still lodged at the *château*,

of which, beside friends as genuine as friends can be, many were trenchermen<sup>26</sup>, others adons<sup>27</sup>, others princelings, &c, –

Virginie and Odette, – not only coaevus<sup>28</sup> but congener<sup>29</sup>, becoming quickly friends, – retired to

---

<sup>25</sup> conducive to

<sup>26</sup> hangers-on

<sup>27</sup> fops or exquisites

<sup>28</sup> of like age or duration

<sup>29</sup> members of the same class

discuss their demigration<sup>30</sup>; during the cold November of 1769, – with most of his estate disposed of, delighted at the hourly intelligence concerning a pair of acquisitious counts madly outbidding each other over the purchase of his *château*, – at a dinner voicing his confidence that his good son<sup>31</sup> Lemuel would do much to further enlarge their fortune, then sitting pale down, so it was that Edmund Preterite, – surviving his health, his sight, and in the happiness of hoary hairs, in no calamity of half-senses, – taking to his bed, one day in November, quietly, one could almost say happily, departed this Earth.

In the glorious late May of 1770,

with Lord North and the Tories now in government employing an almost exclusively English mechanism, – scarce seen beyond these shores, and by those abroad more scarcely understood, – in which, with their own styles of bribery, corruption, cronyism, embezzlement, lobbying, nepotism, and patronage, reinfesting and newly-infesting a new swath of the poor of the country with doubts as to the very viability of being, of continuing the struggle to somehow be, to live at least like any living thing in its nest or burrow from which every exit was a careful seeking for sufficient food to medicine away death and so permit another day to follow,

the whole family, accompanied by three armed servants, in a calm sea on an affreighted<sup>32</sup> ship of good yarage<sup>33</sup>, but manned by a surly too dishonest crew, journeyed to England; the voyage was slow, yet steady, for the orlop<sup>34</sup> was ballasted not alone by 384 matching standards<sup>35</sup> containing household goods and furniture, the Preterite collections of priceless art, musical instruments, and firearms, and the remarkable 11,000 volume library begun long before the growth of printing, but also ballasted by 200 identical iron-bound chests containing 18 tons of meracious<sup>36</sup> massy gold, of which it alas could not be said that it was all *divitias nulla fraude quaesitas*<sup>37</sup>.

Whilst his two families remained in London, Lemuel, in company with a newly employed *valet*, – an English-born Italian of name Egon Nobodi, – over the course of two months visited a number of elegant, large, stateful<sup>38</sup> residences which the owners gave to believe they would part with if the price was sufficiently handsome; in seeking a new home of a very particular stamp, yet unable either to clearly visualise, therefore vocalise his vision, causing his efforts to prove unfruitful, it was only after a another long month of searching, – when Lemuel was beginning to wonder him if he should not rather purchase good land and thereon raise a dwelling of his own design, – that in the far county of Somerset,

---

<sup>30</sup> emigration

<sup>31</sup> son-in-law

<sup>32</sup> hired for the transportation of goods or freight

<sup>33</sup> manageability, said of a ship at sea

<sup>34</sup> lowest deck of a ship

<sup>35</sup> large chests, often for packing furniture

<sup>36</sup> pure; unmixed

<sup>37</sup> wealth acquired without fraud

<sup>38</sup> stately

where the people, – with those also of Wiltshire, and Hampshire, – were once called Belgians,

down in the warmer south-west of the country,

where the air, – healthy, temperate, sweet, and pure, yet often frisky, – by eschewing all that would shorten life, gave bounteously, even to its human inhabitants, for in purest air there is a fine foreign fatness,

Lemuel believed he had at last found what he was looking for.

Passing the unassuming but stoutly-stoned gatehouse,

meaning a house built over, or, in this case, adjacent to, a gate, and, another point, quickly : it is said by grammarians that the -ly suffix, – such as adverbs ending in -ly, e.g. happily-married, – should not be hyphenated : rubbish!,

trotting through the heavy ortive<sup>39</sup> gates,

fashioned not by Jean Tijou, as was long thought, but by a gifted apprentice,

and so onto what was once a bleak bare moorland,

in 1601 a small gift from the first Elizabeth queen to a Captain Herkus, for heroic services the world across where he left his leg;

owing to a slight rise in the milelong gravelled drive, beneath an overreaching colonnade of elms, each<sup>40</sup>, and maples, with overgrown lawns flanking, for minutes nothing other was to be seen, but, ah, at the eventual half-way, slowly rose up the manor,

meaning : the mansion of a lord with the land belonging to it,

at last into view, the which, smit all the senses, with such delightful suddenness, (and does so still, especially in an automobile), halting suddenly his horse, Lemuel realised that Trokes may have found their new home.

But for an alerted tutor<sup>41</sup>, – called also a bailiff or steward, – of name Anson Utterson,

a cranky man who believed, his wife too, that if his brigose<sup>42</sup> humour be not let regularly out, festering straight, it would soon prove to an apostume<sup>43</sup>,

---

<sup>39</sup> eastern

<sup>40</sup> oaks

<sup>41</sup> caretaker

<sup>42</sup> contentious

<sup>43</sup> abscess

unoccupied for seven years, lying almost acentre a land neglected and much forgrown<sup>44</sup>, was a very almost too large three-storey house of broad face,

designed in 1702, by a long-forgot architect, – actually of name Quaid Grealish, who died at age 25, – upon the commission of another disremembered man, – a Cerdic Witrix, newly-retired from an underhand life of political dealings, – who purchasing the land cheap, and ordering out its tenants, pulling down the handsome farmhouses, so for the gathering of his family of 31 members, in 1707 had this huge home builded, which after his death in 1711, the family disbanding, escaping, was sold;

built from local granite and hard sandstone, which, – for its three years seasoning to evaporate quarry-sap<sup>45</sup>, – for a very wonder proved overall in fairly excellent repair.

As he, or rather his blonket<sup>46</sup> horse, trotted again onward, the proportionably disposed windows, predominantly mullion<sup>47</sup> and lattice<sup>48</sup>,

which the window tax, – first imposed in 1691, and in 1851 abolished, – or the tax on light and air, – for the house was thought made of an overmuch of glass, – on its over 400 windows at yearly eight shillings per, rendered a costly indulgence,

seemed to Lemuel to denote order and smartness, aye, almost to pledge a future as much of security as of mild abandon, so also the terraced lawns, linked by gravelled paths and stone steps, so also the far woods which, – despite the wild undergrowth beneath the over-vert<sup>49</sup>, – seemed, all in concert, to promise a celebrative future; there were not, as was perhaps more usual, two sweeps of staircase meeting in a stone terrace before the principal doors, but rather a long, wide, yet narrowing gentle approach of steps leading straight up to two heavy oak front doors set deep within an anticum<sup>50</sup>, beneath a very handsome nodding arch<sup>51</sup>, and supported on the left by a caryatid<sup>52</sup>, on the right by a telamon<sup>53</sup>, the smartness of which seemed to imply that here mystery and ingenuity mought<sup>54</sup> might comfortably and safely abide; right above the front doors, most catching to the optical sensorium, was a remarkable wheel window<sup>55</sup> with intricate plate-tracery<sup>56</sup>, of fully ten feet diameter, which when lighted by the small room behind, (destined to become the phrontistery<sup>57</sup> for four of the six future Vouchsafes), created a most beautiful effect

---

<sup>44</sup> overgrown

<sup>45</sup> moisture contained in newly quarried stone

<sup>46</sup> grey

<sup>47</sup> vertically divided

<sup>48</sup> with small diamond-shaped panes set in leadwork

<sup>49</sup> trees in a forest

<sup>50</sup> porch attached to the front of a building

<sup>51</sup> arch which bends forward at the apex, away from the wall

<sup>52</sup> female figure supporting an entablature

<sup>53</sup> male figure supporting an entablature

<sup>54</sup> might

<sup>55</sup> rose window

<sup>56</sup> tracery consisting of apertures apparently punched in masonry

<sup>57</sup> place for thinking or studying

to any at evening promenade.

With already stairs enough just to enter the house, the old caretaker waited as Lemuel alone quickly explored nearly the whole house : the vast attic, above which in the tower he loudly excited over the *camera obscura*, – the joying over the details of which ample opportunity will be found as this narrative proceeds, – and the two floors containing 39 bedchambers, – some of which contained abandoned husslements<sup>58</sup>, – and the enormous library containing a few hundred worthless books, and the two ballrooms containing trunks of musical instruments, costume clothing, &c, and then on the ground floor the two kitchens, and the servant quarters, and the small sunken chapel, – once serviced by a trencher-chaplain<sup>59</sup>, &c, – but Lemuel could go not deeper, for, oddly, the manor possessed no cellar.

Accompanying Lemuel on his broad and unhurried tour of the land near about, the old caretaker explained that the rolling benty<sup>60</sup> fields on the three landward sides of the estate, – pricked at present by a few trespassing cattle-beasts, – as the deeds would confirm, were all part of the property, as to the north was the short foreland<sup>61</sup> and pelagic<sup>62</sup> sweep of high cliffs, over which there were no rights of way<sup>63</sup>; wading across a vast expanse of wild lawn they came to a wooden staircase, old and dangerous, leading down to a fine coved beach of sand, – save for a peppering of sea-coal and sea wrack, very clean, – which was very rare on that length of coastline; whilst to the west was a vista of neglected orchards and bosky<sup>64</sup> woods, with thereafter the sea, to the rear side of the house were well-kept stables, a dairy still equipped with all the implements necessary for the making of cheese,

in which thin lymphatic particles, forced to separate themselves, slide away from the more unctious,

and butter.

Not afar were other buildings : a pump-house containing a water-commanding engine,

made by Thomas Savery in 1712, intended for pumping water from a Cornwall tin mine, a stonebuilt bocherie<sup>65</sup> lined with white marble,

a term used by non-geologists to denote any stone which can be polished, but actually a

---

<sup>58</sup> householdments, minor household goods  
of little value

<sup>59</sup> domestic chaplain

<sup>60</sup> overgrown with long coarse grass

<sup>61</sup> point of land projecting into the sea

<sup>62</sup> open sea

<sup>63</sup> liberty of passing over land to go to  
church, to market, or the like

<sup>64</sup> covered with bushes, full of thickets

<sup>65</sup> shambles, or slaughter-house

metamorphic crystalline rock<sup>66</sup>, naturally composed predominantly of crystalline grains of calcite<sup>67</sup>, dolomite<sup>68</sup>, or serpentine<sup>69</sup>,

a distillery, beneath which, for the storing of wine, was a cold cellar of long vaultage<sup>70</sup>; most remarkably : to most of the north wall of the manor was affixed, like a giant half-bell-jar, an enormous ramshackle hothouse, or conservatory, all of two floors high, wherein a strange tropical, almost impenetrable luxury ran wild; the immediate garden contained some dozens of horrid statues, (soon to vanish), three wells of sweet water, two of which serviced fountains, and at the end of an overgrown ambulatory<sup>71</sup>, very interestingly : a jungled maze,

whereas in this work these terms shall be used interchangeably, this was actually a labyrinth, for note : whereupon strictly : a maze offers a choice of pathways, a labyrinth offers only one,

at this period measuring about 70 feet to a side, or of some 600 square yards, (soon to be revived, and in years to come enlarged on four occasions).

The highest point on the property was the tower, a pillared two-storey rotunda, which, by lying directly in line with the front doors and circuline window, awarding the house a very pleasing symmetry, comprised in its lower story an open terrace delightful of cool breezes and views during the summer taking of tea, and in the upper windowless storey of this tholus<sup>72</sup>, and accessible by trap-door and a retractable steps, resided a dusty *camera obscura*, comprising a scioptric ball<sup>73</sup> of most excellent grind,

made in 1761 by a man forgotten, (but known now to be one Edward Scarlett of London, then optician to King George the Second),

within a revolving turret, which permitted the lens to project an image, firstly onto a plane mirror set at 45 degrees, then, to correct the renverse<sup>74</sup> picture, via a biconvex lens, onto the viewing surface : a circular table of flawless white Italian marble of diameter ten feet, of thickness four inches, so that to any who would glad themselves to stand around a table and in darkness look down, ranging views of the whole grounds could be enjoyed; by attaching from its oaken case the small but sharp telescope, stars too could be displayed, and with paper laid down their slow

---

<sup>66</sup> altered in appearance, density, crystalline structure, and in some cases, mineral composition, by high temperature, or intense pressure, or both

<sup>67</sup> mineral consisting of crystallised calcium carbonate, a major constituent of limestone

<sup>68</sup> mineral consisting of calcium magnesium carbonate

<sup>69</sup> hydrous magnesium silicate material; generally dark green, with markings of white, light green, or black

<sup>70</sup> arched cellar

<sup>71</sup> place to walk in

<sup>72</sup> circular building

<sup>73</sup> a compound lens in a swivel mount

<sup>74</sup> inverted

travels plotted.

(One day a genius named Henry, – of whose person, wisdom, and virtue, it is intended to give a true and fullish account in a far more seasonable place than here and now, – would spend a good portion of his youth in this blackened tower observing sunspots and the surface of the Moon, the while undertaking certain improvements which would not only permit of much exacuated<sup>75</sup> imagery, and with the additament<sup>76</sup> of a somewhat involuted<sup>77</sup>, sometimes temperamental machine,

comprising a geartrain bearing a system of punched brass plates, along the lines of a Jacquard loom,

this would allow the collimator<sup>78</sup> of a powerful Alvan Clark<sup>79</sup> telescope to be quickly and accurately aligned upon certain features of the vast launce-skip<sup>80</sup>, such as, of the more immediate landmarks, the odeum<sup>81</sup>, wherein children would be clearly observed arguing over a game of say *hys-sy-py-sy*<sup>82</sup>, or the maze, or into the old summerhouse, before it was pulled down and rebuilt, wherein, when taken by their luddokkes<sup>83</sup>, couples could be observed indulging in swodgle<sup>84</sup>,

(or in those games Maxwell would one day crudely call *stink-finger* and *hide the salami*),

and with the long periscope attached, – also of Henry his inventing, – through the dense foliature of the trees westward, through the main gates, faintly the market square in the village of Watchet,

anciently called Weced-poort,

or, due east, the church spires of the far city of Wells; but this is all far futurely).

After sitting a spell down in the vast library, coming a peaceable and quiet resting, a deep thinking,

for there is poor comfort in sitting down in a place which, if it will, soon sayeth, nay!, arise!, this place is not appointed thee, this is not your real rest,

as well for the pure love of sitting down in a strange place, Lemuel decided immediately to

---

<sup>75</sup> sharpened

<sup>76</sup> addition

<sup>77</sup> entangled or involved

<sup>78</sup> small telescope attached to a larger for sighting

<sup>79</sup> then thought the best telescope-maker in the world

<sup>80</sup> landscape

<sup>81</sup> building for musical performances

<sup>82</sup> a Devon and Somerset game in which into a hole of some extent on uneven ground marbles are aimed at some object beyond the hole without letting them fall in; also called hynny-pynny

<sup>83</sup> loins

<sup>84</sup> sexual intercourse

purchase the excellent property from its latest owner,

a portreeve<sup>85</sup> of name Felix Woide, who, making suddenly his fortune from wool and gambling, married, bought the manor, settled down, and then growing again twily<sup>86</sup>, returned to the tables where he lost the better part of his capital, then his wife, and, else he entirely bangle<sup>87</sup> and become creditor-crazed<sup>88</sup>, was forced to sell,

who was very pleased to part with the house, – which including lands, messuages tenements<sup>89</sup>, and rents, totalled 3472 acres, over which it was expected the new overlord, — as well determine dues and rents, and command labour, — would also address all disputes, – for a very fair price, and even before his luggage arrived, Lemuel was overseeing local and far craftsmen undertake repairs,

here numerously to the wall which surrounded the estate, there to the Bethersden marble<sup>90</sup> floor in the squeery<sup>91</sup>, here to the eaves troughs<sup>92</sup>, there again to the walls of the ancient stables, here to re-glassing the giant conservatory, there to the wooden steps leading down to the beach, &c.

So it was : on the first day of September 1770, three women, – delighting at the enormous house, but amazed more that the tastes of a man could sometimes coincide so with their own, – two men, and five children,

these comprising the two families which would forever after, – or so long as life was pleased to continue them together, – be one family,

came to live at the Troke homestall<sup>93</sup>; as it is here, – Troke Manor, thereafter called, (which would continue to home the family for the next 230 years), – with its ten new habitants, –

comprising Lemuel 36, his parents Anthony 62 & Hortense 56, Vouchsafe wife Odette 33, former wife Virginie 32, their five sons aged between ten and 13, excluding servants of course,

that the Troke saga properly commences, it is with avowry<sup>94</sup> therefore that this history piece<sup>95</sup> henceforth travel with far less rape<sup>96</sup> to its momentous conclusion, (which is now so very few

---

<sup>85</sup> chief magistrate of a port

<sup>86</sup> restless

<sup>87</sup> waste an estate little by little

<sup>88</sup> bankrupt

<sup>89</sup> cottage and cottage-like houses

<sup>90</sup> dark bluish-grey

<sup>91</sup> scullery

<sup>92</sup> gutter immediately beneath the eaves

<sup>93</sup> homestead

<sup>94</sup> justification

<sup>95</sup> artistic pictorial representation of any historical event

<sup>96</sup> haste

days away), and though there will at first, here and there, pass years producing nothing worthy of sufficient notice, years from which it will be something of a task, if not quite outright impossible, to excerpt incidents of sufficient interest, – particularly as the etypical<sup>97</sup> enchantments and eccentricities of Trokedom were at first slow and artful in coming to appearance, – at least some of the more interesting tales will be told, and the more fascinating examples of this multanimous<sup>98</sup> family far less shallow-drawn than hitherunto.

With wagons arriving bearing their guarded luggage, much newly purchased furniture, until new staff arrived, the women and their three French servants bustled very productively adding what was essentially feminine<sup>99</sup>, but yet indispensable to a home if it is to safely harbrow<sup>100</sup> happiness and health; with the cliffs, the beach, the woods, and particularly the maze, the five children were almost taken with a parerethesis<sup>101</sup>, for never before had the game of *all-bid*<sup>102</sup>, – a game played in all centuries by nearly all Trokes : a tradition, – taken on such inconceptible possibilities; with the problem of servants,

according to the principal newspapers of the time, – the *General Evening Post*, the *London Evening Post*, the *Morning Chronicle*, and the *Public Ledger*, – the well-finding of was greatest problem then facing the upper strata,

eventually settled to the satisfaction of all, even the servants, it was decided at a family meeting that a party, arranged for early September, would not only as if bless the house but formally introduce Trokes to the local gentry : surrounding farmers, companions in landscape<sup>103</sup>, and as many of the local inhabitants as might wish to cement the ties of good neighbourhood.

As a consequence of this rather open invitation, – due to the many sparks struck out succeeding in subtracting something from the prejudices expected of such a mixture of classes, – a large, lively, very variable crowd appeared, representing nearly all the local small businesses and industries, such as,

smallwares<sup>104</sup>, wet coopers<sup>105</sup>, white coopers<sup>106</sup>, whisquet weavers<sup>107</sup>, cheese and bacon factors, dyers, ropemakers, saddlers and harness makers, coursers<sup>108</sup>, a stay maker, a barrow-bunter<sup>109</sup>, a straw bonnet maker, employees from the small iron foundry and two flour mills, withy cutters, a local organ-builder, a skeppist<sup>110</sup>, a watch-motion-maker, a

---

<sup>97</sup> unconformable to type

<sup>98</sup> many-sided

<sup>99</sup> female qualities

<sup>100</sup> harbour

<sup>101</sup> abnormal excitement

<sup>102</sup> hide and seek

<sup>103</sup> landship

<sup>104</sup> haberdashery

<sup>105</sup> makers of casks that could hold liquids

<sup>106</sup> makers of casks for transporting dry goods such as apples or corn

<sup>107</sup> basketmakers

<sup>108</sup> horse-dealers

<sup>109</sup> female costermonger

<sup>110</sup> maker of skeps, or beehives of straw

retired forensal<sup>111</sup> perruquier<sup>112</sup>...

and of course clerics in plenty,

come also of course to take a feast of fat things, of wines very potable<sup>113</sup>, of fat things full of marrow!,

from almost every Christian mispersuasion, all hoping, (soon forlornly), that the new tenants, surely more easily than the plain country people,

of whom, as Herbert saith in *A Priest to the Temple*, of 1632,

*...are thick, and heavy, and hard to raise to a poynt of Zeal, and fervency, and need a mountaine of fire to kindle them,*

would take up their own particular denomination, (in later years these clerics would wonder and in marvel remark on the general, almost contagious, falling in faith,

taken to mean : that which was unassailable by criticism,

about the lands contiguous to Troke Manor), and thus save their souls by buying a family box-pew, perhaps occasionally even filling it : all of which was of course oh an overhope.

(A brief interposure : over the ensuing 161 years, a small number of clerics were invited, or else self-invited, – for gods of their generals readily permit of such imposture, – to the annual Troke garden-party to mix freely with their far brighter betters, and, as servantry borrows always a little light from the served, and from so great a master as was a cleric,

of whom it has been said : there is none in this world more elevate, none in existence more exalt,

coming suppose a great light, even a light blinding, provided this light were kept sufficiently muted, they were permitted, these mad servants of devout observance, near all their enjoyment; aye, but if amidst gaiety, sometimes wildness, these men in their glummy vestments, – all holily mortified to the world, esteeming nothing that favoureth not of theology, – spoke too loudly after their frenetic calling, or, worse, soberly or otherwise, dared in their great flights to preach with unequivocacy,

saying, for instance, that only true believers in their own creed deserved to enjoy such pleasures, or, for another instance, that only to sincere observers of their own devout form of faith could such conspicuously wasteful spectacles prove not only a means to grace, but

---

<sup>111</sup> forensic

<sup>112</sup> wigmaker

<sup>113</sup> fit or suitable for drinking

compoundly enhance the spotless reputation of their first and only master,

then such men,

such exactly as frowned as much upon a people in joyous displays as upon those of equal extreme who eat say of fish, or live upon herbs, or go barefoot, or wear sandals instead of shoes, or wear only linen garments, or only wool, some in black, some in white, or who shave their heads either broad or narrow as cause is, or go girded, or go loose, many of whom, times apast, the law ordered to be stoned with stones, till they die,

would certainly suffer badly to meet with such as say current Lemuel, or upcoming Samuel, or more futurely Keith, or Michael, and most certainly, – whom at length see far below, – still living Jeffrey,

long considered and by bloods admired not only as the meanest ever reasoner against fatuous aerologies<sup>114</sup>, but the person very best to send to ruffle that raven plumage used too long to a far greater latitude than was ever allowed by that far more severe inquisition of reason, which it was believed unnecessary for such people to study,

a man who, because he found the pleasure of sin far far greater than the remorse of conscience, believed it no harm in doing that which he did, for he liked only one thing better than finding a fop to roast, and that was to put a parson in a passion, but because a cleric could not be reasoned out of his misbeliefs, or his vanities, perhaps he could be ridiculed out of them, – a far better sport, the family believed, – for then, for all to gathering see, and hear, right there on the sunny lawn of their home comfortable : the small brain of a religious man without intelligence and a very red face received a thorough drubbing from an intelligent man without religion and a countenance sunny, friendly, or, more latterly, – when it was at last acknowledged that, without cheating, the case was oh *quite* hopeless, – a light Vouchsafe *touch* administering, – a fool in black suffered a sudden bronchos<sup>115</sup>, or a very odd amnesic episode, and henceforth, upsettingly proselytising<sup>116</sup>, would saunter the Troke garden never again).

In sum then, nearly everyone who was anyone at all within a ten mile semidiameter attended the first annual Troke garden-party, (of which, – peopled by the most genial and intelligent, down to those who, with their feeble heads and great ignorance, consorting with impure hearts, narrow sensibilities, little knew that they, the vulgar, were let into a great many pleasures that men of a polite imagination, — including those the most malignant and scurrilously hostile, who believe pleasure creaturising<sup>117</sup>, — are incapable of receiving, – there would be 145 in all before the event was discontinued in 1932); despite the local gentry suffering something of an affront at

---

<sup>114</sup> doctrines of the air

<sup>115</sup> temporary loss of voice

<sup>116</sup> attempting to convert to another faith or

religion

<sup>117</sup> lowering; making like an animal

mixing it not only with those destined in a low degenerate fashion of mind to travel the more obscure walks of moilsome<sup>118</sup> life, all speaking in rugged earnest, laying about them as briskly as their remotest progenitors, growing hot in using words rough, free, and irregular, which happenchance allowed a faster hold to things, yet at the same time using words as sinewy, as powerful, as elsewhere graceful, neat, luxuriant, and yet as pertinent as elsewhere gracious, delicate, and copious,

in a word : men and women who, possessing no other birthright than their own hands, had never in their lives opened a book, such as, farmers, oporopolists<sup>119</sup>, a hacker<sup>120</sup>, a kedger<sup>121</sup> and jagger<sup>122</sup> once of Wales named Evan kedge Evans, a brother thatcher and hillyer<sup>123</sup>, common hedgers and ditchers, a whitewings<sup>124</sup>, a baker white, a baker brown, both monists<sup>125</sup>, ...

but those of outright zanyship, such as Old Woman Melyar,

a little fume of a woman who would never so grow old as to fall upon the parish was a bluttering<sup>126</sup> sowlibber<sup>127</sup>, hog-ringer<sup>128</sup>, pig-sticker<sup>129</sup>, and saulie<sup>130</sup>, an utterly unlettered filthy old slut who had seen much of the rough side of the world, but that day with unusual cleanliness she had departed her tilted cottage in which she had been a lifetime domiciliary, all neat and elegant in her starched white cornette<sup>131</sup>, yet still of nature and inclination continuing of that upsetting kind who never miss an opportunity to vie and ostentate with gentry of the finest sort possible, the better – with a vocabulary of 300 words enough, – to speak of them contemptuously, yet overall as good a woman as ever pissed, – and interestingly : when the invitation was hand-delivered, was slow to respond to the door-knock, for she was at prayer, petitionary prayer, entreating her god for herself : for the belief that there was afterwards more life, however elevate, was simply a horrid prospect!, for she had already lived too long, and surely enough was enough!,

or such as two brothers from London visiting their local aunt : Unitt and Artist Criel, one a dancing master, – renowned unsurpassed in the teaching of old English country dances of lively

---

<sup>118</sup> laborious

<sup>119</sup> fruit-sellers

<sup>120</sup> hoe-maker

<sup>121</sup> fisherman

<sup>122</sup> peddler or hawker of fish

<sup>123</sup> one who roofs with slate or tile

<sup>124</sup> street-sweeper

<sup>125</sup> believers of reality consisting of only one kind of thing

<sup>126</sup> gabbling

<sup>127</sup> sow gelder

<sup>128</sup> one who puts rings in the noses of swines

<sup>129</sup> one who slaughters pigs or hogs

<sup>130</sup> hired mourner at a funeral

<sup>131</sup> type of wimple consisting of a large starched piece of white cloth folded upward in such a way as to create the resemblance of horns

or boisterous nature, such as the trenchmore, – tother a hairdresser,

in the eighteenth century stock figures one and two in the hierarchy of contemptibility, this is true, but by calling themselves merely low abettors of the vanities of the privileged, they were everywhere very in demand, and also rather well-to-do, for the reason, – besides of course a very serviceably oiliness and obsequiousness which permitted their harshness be critical only of hair and gait, – that both possessed skills each were very willing to disdain credit or deserve for possessing;

both clever men poor and the blockheadly rich, – of which the plurality of both was extreme, – found Squire Troke and his family overall a decent upright people enough, who, despite their batrachivorous<sup>132</sup> connections, – for it should be here enoted that the *Seven Years War* had only been concluded seven years, – whilst seeming devoid of all that Frenchery not otherwise passport to confidence and popularity, appeared to follow many the English arts and rules the more prudent of the world walk by.

Michael Overslaugh, whom this history now formally introduces, was a man destined to supparte<sup>133</sup> very highly in the after-course<sup>134</sup> of the Troke family, for one day he simply ventured up the long drive, knocked at the front door, and asked if the children, which he could clearly hear playing and laughing, required a tutor; Michael, as he insisted everyone call him, even the five children he was contracted immediately to teach, was at 27 a great merry bear of a man who bore an easy laugh, often a serene countenance, and a sense of the bizarre which, until one came to know and love him, much dissettled and mystified, (characteristics which remained immutable<sup>135</sup>, even unto his retirement and departure<sup>136</sup> from Troke Manor 56 years later); the marked influence Overslaugh was to effect upon the family bore principally upon one central matter : the wonders of words, for here was a man whose eloquence,

of which it has been said depends far more upon the instruments of mind and voice, than upon the ears that listen,

was superior, whose enunciation was just and harmonious, whose periods were well turned, whose every word was the most expressive, the very best that could be used in that place, for as saith Ben Jonson in *Timber : or Discoveries* of 1640 :

*The congruent, and harmonious fitting of parts in a sentence hath almost the fastening, and force of knitting and connection; as in stones well squared, which will rise strong a great way without mortar.*

Much, even crowing mention will be made in this history of eloquence,

---

<sup>132</sup> frog-eating

<sup>133</sup> reckon

<sup>134</sup> future course

<sup>135</sup> unchanged

<sup>136</sup> departure

for as ordinarily it is as difficult a matter to repair with words what is threadbare, or grace what is unfashionable, or light what is obscure, or probabilise what is doubtful, as it is to simply novelise what is old, or authorise what is new, there is no subject so rude, so barbarous, that eloquence cannot ornament and polish, and nothing so incredible that cannot be made probable by the rightly manner of its putting,

– called the art of persuasion, and by which even the most cruel natures can be charmed, so it is said, sometimes believed, – for such is the effect thereof, such sometimes the power, (which perhaps, perhaps not, will herein, here and there, be exempld), that almost there is nothing so humble which eloquence cannot haunce<sup>137</sup>,

nor anything so obscure which it cannot clarify, nor anything so scattered which it cannot gather, nor anything so condensed which it cannot amplify, nor anything so daily which it cannot pageant;

even at this stage of their growth, the family was not entirely unaware of the bounties of language, nor certainly of the satisfaction of ordering thoughts or committing them to paper, ay!, for neither to intellect nor science does the heart unlock its treasures, nor either to ears or eyes, but rather, simply, and almost only, to paper.

Dead languages aside, at least bilingual, and bringing out of France a vast library containing volumes and manuscripts even then very rare indeed, (today even sole), and many unique,

taken to mean, one and no other, single, solitary,

Trokes in the main modestly considered themselves very fond of literature, of language, of words, and for a very simple but perhaps obscure reason which will require to be made out more clear : blooded Trokes were atheists all,

a word coined for callers out of belief in a coined god,

which their recent coming into a fortune, as well back into England, allowed them to affirm at leisure, without fear; neither heathens,

or worshippers of idols who do not acknowledge a Christian god,

nor infidels,

or those who professes to believe what they do not believe,

nor even indifferently atheist,

or those who hold it better that death should consume them unto nothing than a god

---

<sup>137</sup> raise, exalt

receive them unto eternal punishment,

and all but Virginie firmly and faithfully antitheist,

defined as one who claims god is unproved, not disproved, for there is a great difference, a very great, between believing there is no god and not believing there is a god,

because it is said that an atheist cannot deny the existence of a god because atheist means simply : one without god, it is important to understand that Trokes were predominantly positive or dogmatic atheists,

who assert that there are *no* such beings as gods,

with negative atheists,

who assert that they are simply not believers in gods,

feathering away to the odd nescient, or agnostic

which, though meaning simply : one without knowledge of gods, is taken in its common acceptation : doubtful about, questioning the existence of, all gods, be they of either sort : impotent : wanting to abolish evil, but unable, or wicked : able to abolish evil, but refusing.

Save to a few upcoming *outsiders*, – for an explanation of this term : see below, – the literature up to that day,

with the exceptions of course of Boccaccio, Cervantes, Walton, Shakespeare, Molière, Margaret Cavendish, Dean Swift, Fielding, Sterne, and others, all of whom only *omitted* the subject,

similarly the philosophy,

believed by some mere homesickness, by others the study of happiness, by others again the path to naught else but loneliness, by others yet again a means of overcoming the fear of death, of living in uncertainty,

was quite incapable of excluding the nonsense of theism from their texts, which in the reading, to an atheist sensibility, proved oh very trying; aye, authors such as Langland, Chaucer, More, Bacon, Donne, Hobbes, Browne, &c,

or rather : *and others*, for as a neuter plural, *et* should not be applied to a list of persons,

included in too harmful part so much god in their works, this rendered their works veritably religious tracts, mere manuals for the promotion of nonsense; as forbearing as were the noble Trokes,

for the nobler the man, the profounder, more insatiate his consciousness,

a diet so beslobbered<sup>138</sup> with the wholly impossible and indigestible turned them oh very anenterous<sup>139</sup>, hence Trokes their fledgling taste for literature, for by avoiding, by ignoring, or by reading around all that is godstuffed, by reading only of what is possible, what is everywhere visibly about, – people, their doings, – it was clear to a Troke that words, opportunity given and taken, can say truth very handsomely.

Regarding outsiders : males who married, sons, (up until fairly recently), remained always at the manor where their upgrew, females who married, daughters, (with one exception), moved away into the world, and those with Troke blood inside them were called *bloods*, as stated, and those without were called *outsiders*,

sometimes *them*, – the plural pronoun, third person<sup>140</sup>, objective case, – sometimes *they*, and sometimes *those*, the plural of *that*,

but rarely to their faces, and usually without any intended offensiveness, and only until their adjustment to Trokedom came, until a healthy modification of character and psyche were effected; but because as much as a man, a woman can no more, (without Vouchsafe assistance), alter her own peculiar individuality, her moral character, her intellectual capacity, or her temperament, than her stature, aye, until outsiders came embracingly into the family fold, they remained outsiders, some losing this label quickly, some slowly, and some never.

It shall be the burden of the following few paragraph to state, as clearly, as distinctly as language can do so, that whereas Trokes were not antitheist out of tradition, out of habit, nor out of a different brainwashing, – for bibles were fearlessly anywhere read,

not in search of those four things said to be abundantly there, but never and nowhere found : precepts for life, doctrines for knowledge, examples for illustration, and promises for comfort,

as essential to an historic understanding of literature, – nor did they base their disbelief alone upon cold logic, – that severe examiner, capable of greatest audacity, – nor upon the writings of those very close examiners of faith,

Augustine, Chrysostom, Ambrose, Gelasius, Jerome, Theodoret, and Origen,

nor upon that fare far too fine even for the best men to feed on every day after another, all of whom, in wanting the audacity to apply simple logic, display that certain sign of an ill disputer,

such as Alicensis, Basilides, Cerinibus, Corpocrates, Ebion, Epiphanius, Heracleo,

---

<sup>138</sup> bespattered, as with ordure

<sup>139</sup> lacking intestine or stomach

<sup>140</sup> they

Lombard, Lucian, Luther, Marcosius Colorbasius, Menander, Nominalls, Occham, Pigbius, Ruffinus, Saturninus, Scotus, Severus, Simon Magus, Theophilus, Thomas, Valentinus Secundus, and Zuingliuslook,

nor upon a careful appraisalment of the supposed evidence, of the unsworn witnesses, no!, but by the light of cool common sense, which, – whilst the only repository of knowledge which common sense itself assures is irrefutable, – is applicable to everything but matters of faith and revelation, and upon plain instinct, which often enjoys advantages which relegate human thought and doing to the second rank.

As it does not require an individual or a family to be lifted very far above the ordinaries of day and generation for atheistic doubts to be acquired, provided fear is laid aside, and the doors of understanding,

ignoring, for now, – as useful, even as indispensable, as it may be, – that understanding can be the meanest faculty in the human mind, the most to be distrusted,

set wide to the wall, and the most sensible methods patiently applied, cool of reason,

called by theologues a fancied being, an erroneous vapour, a dark lantern to lead men to their own destruction,

pithy of logic,

said to be reason in military dress,

plausible of rhetoric,

said to be reason in court dress,

and pure of grammar,

admittedly often arbitrary and irrelevant, for it has never provided a good explanation for its many inconsistencies,

then it is soon clear that the whole sphere of theism proves to want even the decency and comprehensibility of a sane idea!

Certainly, to progress from savagery to monotheism, as Comte saith, then via abstract forms and entities to the far more important matters of believing in honest biology, and then, cautiously, employing science, so on, it may perhaps be necessary for the evolving human mind, – superb at inventing meaning where knowledge is lacking, – to spend a small spell, – say during early childhood, – believing in gods, if for no other reason than to comprehend the sheer want of survival value inherent in such dogma as the bible and like works supply : that man is immortal, that the giving of identity to enemies warrants their removal, that evidencelessness, ignorance,

and fear are virtues, oh and heaps else; but alas, for the vast most of mankind, by persisting in such silly beliefs, so is his mental evolution much thwarted, so is man trapped in teachings which in sum, – the most admirably adapted to the perpetuation of a slave society, – are the embodiment of self-deception, submission, inertia, and the denial of very life.

Michael Overslaugh will have to bide, for without waiting for the place predetermined for the elucidation of this matter of gods,

so violent, so ever-comprehendless, so too familiar, so questionlessly long-popular,

and with blood now sufficiently up, let this saga fall now to examples : herewith the first of three, or rather four, simple cases of the polyatheist Trokes defending their honesty, their honest disbelief, particularly when it was attacked by those who, – in the self-insufficiency of their halfness believe living by a code of pretty nonsense a far less futile occupation than by a code of ugly truths, – effrontuously<sup>141</sup> claimed that atheism,

which Noah Webster, a jumped-up Yankee, and a fool, described as :

*...a ferocious system, that leaves nothing above us to excite awe, nor around us, to awaken tenderness. –*

maketh a man futilitarian<sup>142</sup>, which in their terreity<sup>143</sup>, Trokes considered true only if hereout<sup>144</sup> the good and zealous sensile<sup>145</sup> was unable to ingreat<sup>146</sup> his manpower<sup>147</sup>.

However, concerning those garden-party guests who, in regards to believing in their god,

believed the ultimate universal, believed the form of forms, the fountain of all symmetry, of all good, all truth, believed a real thing, believed a something hidden, believed far outside of human experience, beyond the reach of all language and understanding, believed the sole reality out of which all other universal truths or realities sprang, believed so great, so real, it did not even need to exist!, &c,

made them disbelievers in, and discreditors of, human reason, e.g. those with the very greatest will to believe,

a will of such brass, boiler-iron, and granite, upon which disquieting facts, contrary lines of reasoning, and argument, could make no impression,

---

<sup>141</sup> with effrontery

<sup>142</sup> one who believes that everything in life is futile

<sup>143</sup> earthiness

<sup>144</sup> out of this

<sup>145</sup> one capable of sensation; sentient

<sup>146</sup> make great

<sup>147</sup> normal rate at which a man is able to work, equal to one-tenth of a horsepower, this which is estimated by the work of a brewery horse lifting 330 pounds, carrying it 100 feet in one minute, and repeating same for 8 hours

or those with an imagination so diseased as to prove immune to any offering of contrary proof, – particularly when truth itself was offered by a people with the temerity to believe that if philosophic knowledge was attainable, it was such as could only be yielded by a study of this, the real world, and its so various sciences, so, concerning these fools, then, little, then no attempt was made to undeceive them.

Even of Trokes their least members,

those outsiders, – poor *émigrés*, once used to carrying upon the Sunday a euchology<sup>148</sup>, – to whom nothing could be more horrible, more evil, than the attempted murder of a beautiful theory by a brutal gang of facts,

who were themselves undergoing daily debriefing, deconditioning, – some gently led, some screaming dragged, – towards healthful enlightenment, aye, even the devoutest outsiders,

(in these preceding three centuries, it is true, there were in all a handful of Trokes who, too succumbed to years of childhood indoctrination and interrogation, – refined and polished over two millennia, – to years of adult brainwashing, in church then out, were stubbornly beyond rescue),

were near enough sure to one day find themselves beginning to be persuaded that on another day soon it might possibly be preferable, because made so newly sanely reasonable, to doubt rather than rashly defend what their numerous new kin had always known for a certain ✓, and so permit arrival of that first fair gram of realisation that all gods are simply nonsense and nonexistent.

There are no two people, including a man and a woman, more incapable of understanding each other, – as full of intelligence and goodwill as both may be, – than of a god a believer and a disbeliever, for the believer,

despite all assurance insisting that because a truth *should* be so, it *is* so, and not not so, consulting ancient texts,

containing words which for very simplicity of structure, unfailing concreteness of diction, could easily without loss against<sup>149</sup> literal translation back into the original Hebrew,

and with painstaking care searching for the exact statement of a supposed fact, which beyond reach of any abstraction, draws always wholly from second hand, whereas the disbeliever, first and last consulting at first hand the self, the world, supplying text of his own, employs words of subtler shades and shadows of feeling, or at the least such as stand best chance of honestly ordering those complicated webs of thoughts which grow from the great tangled efforts to

---

<sup>148</sup> prayer-book

<sup>149</sup> withstand

personally reason out the cold universe and its treacherous soothings; as much as in these following four examples as nearly all possibly others : because they wished far more to clear their own way than to make a way clear for others, sadly, Troke enlightenment, effective enough in house, was not by the world much contagious.

Certainly, when rarely yearly here and there a mind briefly actually took up what, until then, it had never before contained, smiling Trokes gathered to witness that much-prized expression of surprise, speechless amaze, shock, even horror, – lasting but a mere few moments together, perhaps, but a high delight to come upon, – when a guest was made actually afraid that what was advancing might turn out, daring upon a closer and private examination, to actually carry at least a portion of that weight of truth which near Troke all believed.

So, to the first example : in 1862, Samuel, lifelong bachelor, to his lately friend Violet Cutbirth, – by widowhood raised so greatly above mere want, having nothing other to do with her time than to render herself agreeable, – after her return from a lovely Sunday church service in the attractive Norman church, in the nearby village of Stogursey :

— Acknowledging it illogical to view the irrational interests of another as one's own, for clearly that person is not myself : let me open by saying this : holding the belief that we return to life, – as well possibly all other beliefs for which man renounces his liberty and humanity, – is simply the gaming of a mind which, – by the prejudices of infancy, the errors of education, and the habits of life, and the simple horrors of lifelong dying, is made too porous, too penetrable by pious sentiments, – mortally fears that without continuity via reimbodiment, life would be an absurdity, a grotesque farce, and without meaning, which, as everyone deepest wisest knows, it is.... Whereas I make often leisure enough to admire this world, – its endless forms all most beautiful and most wonderful, – I do so only on the understanding that in passing fleet through it but once, I will pass never this way again, the which opinion, until your supposedly godded world adduces a better, I will retain forever, or until mine forever extinguishing, whichever comes first.... In this our crazed, blind, and ever-accelerative yet never attained growing-up, because the mind delights to rejoice in the power of inventing, even immortality, – particularly with the use of apagogical demonstration<sup>150</sup>, which maketh even some sensible men to first smart then agonise at every pore, – the mind gives out to believe the mind appropriates even death. Though there are alas in the world many as would scorn as a chimera without frame or bone the perhaps worthiest belief of all a man can have : that possession of life obligates one toward the finding out of its real truth, – said by these same foolish not to be the blessing of reason, nor the crown of wisdom, nor even the grace of wit, the beauty of valour, the brightness of honour, nor the magnificence of wealth, &c, but rather the glory of prayer, the joy of faith, the light of piety, – we Trokes believe this oh a very great folly, to give it no worse name. Creating great truths, – but false, – from confusion, hope, fear,

---

<sup>150</sup> showing the absurdity or impossibility of the contrary

and loneliness, all from one alone ancient book, – which requires no ordinary measure of infatuation to carry one so deeply into, – rather than seeking out from no book but the book of life small truths, this is a pursuit no one with any self-respect could ever engage in, particularly if, like we Trokes, they be a people in whom there is an hereditary compulsion to crawl on when others have met their limits.

— But to return again, as you move, – and with all that clearness of style which for many beyond these walls serves as a very satisfactory substitute for the clearness of ideas, – to the subject of reincarnation, and leaving transmigration for another time : during this short season of life believing we return to it, – that one part lives and dies in this world, and one part lives on, or again, forever, in another, – yet without memory, and death therefore but a fleeing from one life to another : as pretty as it sounds, – even to those not yet anciented, – and whilst for man a very desirous fancy, – for in regard to oblivion, — called forever rest, repose, tranquillity, nothingness, and so on, — wherewith it is immediately accompanied : this is often a most welcome prize, for death, by many and often, is far more to be desired than life, – is purely a theoretic moonshine of such absurdity as to make my wits almost to fail, my tongue almost to fold, for such, as I say, is coinage purely of the parasite mind, which, – and it would concern the suscept<sup>151</sup> man to take of this good account, – can never stand up even to the gentlest winds and weathers of coldest facts, of far colder experience. For man, as for all living else, existence begins and ends here in this transitory, seductive, illusory, paltry, broad prison of the world, and for the merest of a moment, ennobled solely by the comfort of living and dying only once, he need never suffer the fret and expectation of return. But only raretimes with all this is man content, and; yet, – and this also man should well know of, for it is worthy his whole, his most serious attention, – because truth her cold colour worketh always such a dislike in man, – as a consequence of becoming daily more adulterated, more sophisticated with arguments, with such diverse far-fetched discourses, truth hath almost lost her proper, constant, universal visage, her beauty, – truth, – at least in this small parenthesis in eternity, – has become variable and peculiar to every man, think what he think will, for at verist bottom what really matters to Trokes the truth, provided faith in the momentaneousness of self be kept!, for he who doth not believe in himself always lieth.

— Now whereas it will be admitted that certain people, – men and women of great calling as else, – seem unwittingly lived over again, – as if life was doing again the deed done, – what proof is there anywhere of continuity of identity, or of a forebeing<sup>2</sup>, and whereas, also, – as was said and believed by a fool called Leighton, – that there is, of necessity, a complete, permanent, and satisfying good intended for man, but as no such good is to be found in the earth or earthly things, man must, looking for it elsewhere, conclude very

---

<sup>151</sup> host of a parasite

reachingly that he is not extinguished at death but removed to another place where awaits this supposed good, and whereas, further, if life is an isolation, death to nothingness a return, one would think we Trokes believe it a wretched thing to be alive in this world, for if neither sickness blast us in the bud, nor the rude assault of a violence or a sickness crop us off, then the slow decay of age will soon enough drive us witless earthward. But no, all this I say is not to say that everything is not wonderfully exciting, particularly the unknown, – which if it can merit interest, even intrigue, cannot thankfully deserve reverence, which, — particularly in these days, — even the known merits not, – and chance, – believed the blind fortuitous concourse of causes void of all reason, – is even more wonderful even than your providence, of which, by the by, there is proofless none, and no transcendent justice.

— By ridding himself of all the clogs of gods, – particularly those which, forcing man to abide by such strictly conditions ensures a great number of him would be sure to go wrong, – it seems undeniably the case that man inherits, as his principal birthright, a curse in which he is lifetime prisoned, and the Earth simply his place of exile... and because life *is* after all a very molestive<sup>152</sup> journey, a painful dream in which the body, – which some believe nothing more than a blood-spring, merely a garment, some a lodging-house, but which in truth is the will objectified, for the final objective of the will is power over the self, for the will wants what it wants simply because it wants it, – liveth but once and then forever dies, I would advise, rather than believing in your reincarnation, – taken to mean the rebirth of the spiritual part of man, — called also the soul, the very supposed existence of which to sane reason is a matter of enormous and crippling cumber, — as opposed to the physical part, which, — despite fashioned out of a filthy sperm, conceived in the itching rash of the flesh, in the hothouse of desire, and in the fetidness of lust, as Innocent III speaketh, — does indeed reincarnate, but only via reproduction, or regurgitation, – that you do far better by benefitting from the knowledge that existence, rather than purposeful, even meaningful, is merely a chanced sum, almost a purely mathematical thing.

— Though it is but for a moment that man alights, lonely and confused, on one of the many greasy misted stair-treads of endless time, and there, before losing his footing, falling, and, – without glimpse certainly of the stairhead but neither even of a raiser<sup>153</sup>, – vanishing forever, he immediately commences his profligate cowardness by proclaiming, – as if belief alone were a truth epidemial<sup>154</sup>, when surely prudence is but one of the requisites of belief, – that the steps are well within number, that they there began, there will end, that the carpenter is of this very precise yet impossible metal, and the delivery of man to salvation his sole purpose.... The debate, the battle, between the world's nonsense, and, – it may be, – our own, is one which we Trokes, who start at no shadows, do not,

---

<sup>152</sup> troublesome

<sup>153</sup> vertical surface of a step

<sup>154</sup> able to spread or multiply quickly

with isosthenia<sup>155</sup> impossible, do not at all joy to take up, for by historically and individually suffering for our own very personal reasons, we need not retain the least knowledge of any the smallest god in our knowledge, neither needing that biting mite of identity gained by believing what comes out of an old book, – a palimpsest<sup>156</sup>, a montage, copyedited<sup>157</sup>, — for what of Nicodemus?, what of Polycarp?, — yet believed unerrored, – nor by fretting that death is life pared back to the irreducible.

— Nay!, if man instead of god-maddened, and made mean, and narrow, he were nice, simple, and scrupulous in his own behalf, governing and governed as he ought, and not anywhere men always attacking men, we Trokes would not be challenged and forced to yearly mount as if a podium to try swamp the opponency of ignorance near to drowning in a tide of, – as well as these ingenious vocables, profound utterances, and this brilliant tongue-fence, with which, I have no doubt, you will make soon reply, – such clear and simple logic, as to prevent, in this instance you, my dear Mrs Cutbirth, from taking the floor, and contributing your own portion to a world already overfull of the clap-trapped etcetera of gods, – particularly such gods, bent on rule and ruin, whose lust is law, – souls, and damnation, and thereby encouraging our familywide theomicrism<sup>158</sup>. Wait, wait, though sincerely I grieve in avowing such sentiments, particularly as you are as excellent a talker as Coleridge, – provided, as also of Coleridge, one allows that, in matters of faith, the start will be from unproven premises, and the end contain no even reasonable conclusions, – I insist on continuing.

— Now, whereas it is not required, – particularly with so many other and perhaps even joyous options open to us, particularly on this lovely rare day of glorious sunshine in which we do not stand but in gloomy tree-shade, – that we here continue to concern ourselves with matters fatuous and for tens of unresolved centuries in dispute among pedagogues, the question still asks, and I now ask it : what sort of continuing foolishness, nay, what sort of insanity!, prevents a man from asking, – not alone himself, — even in words as simple and poor as these, — but others, even this whole godded world!, – what manner of evil senselessness, truly, is the doctrine, – contrived millennia ago by but a few leisured members of this mad animal called man, not only the most formidable of all the beasts of prey, but a sole species as much inclined to destroy and kill everything, as to believe in every the wildest nonsense, – of eternal punishment?, in which, after freely permitting, even encouraging, his archenemy the devil to slowly sow evil and then reap, your god, even be man sorriest, after first punishing him alive in this beneath world and rendering him wretched and heartbroke, punishes him dead in an everlasting afterlife with eternal

<sup>155</sup> equality of strength of the two opposing arguments

<sup>156</sup> manuscript, often written on papyrus or parchment, on which more than one text has been written with the earlier writing

erased yet still visible; strictly : twice prepared for writing

<sup>157</sup> edited and corrected

<sup>158</sup> mockery of gods and divinity

damnation, – and, ordaining after unfathomable counsels, *citra condignum*<sup>159</sup>, so it is also said, – with pains and penalties, infinite of violence, infinite in duration.

— Let us mutually admit then, – because, after all is said, both here and everywhere, existence cannot even rudely, even in one's own words to oneself, even in thoughts without words, — a difficult process, but which eventually rewards, — be expressed, — spake we hesternally<sup>160</sup> of this : because words are insufficient if their power is bounded solely by their meaning, speech often stifles and suspends higher thought, – that it were best, – after conceding that, yes, belief in the supernatural and other subjugated knowledges<sup>161</sup>, — even substituting acceptance for belief, — reflects a failure not only of inscape, imagination, — that supposed quality which, despite all its disguises and shadowings, all its fetches and arts of sophistry, truly need not strain so hard to convince, especially when supplying no evidence, save of feeling, none even of reasoning, nor even a why, and yet enables man to take as true what is not only untrue, but of no possible probability, — but of wits, which is only to be expected of an animal so new to this old world, – after stepping a small step back, and placing imagination, – everywhere very different and individual, and possessed even by a nupson<sup>162</sup>, – in the far better employment of applying itself to the simplicity of gratefully accepting this very odd privilege of existence, aye, let us both, without necessarily doing so aloud, admit that it were best to abandon the words and thoughts, both written and spoke, of all others, by which following and believing man lives, particularly of those who ask assent unto things in sane reason impossible, – which are never made clear, made sound, but always clouded by prejudice, ruffled by passions, impaired by disease or intemperance, – such as state that the duty of life is simply the sacrifice of self, or such as believe that finality is the greatest evil which can befall a world of movement, – and by renouncing the upstart little ego that the old and mighty ego may be freed, simply feel, wordlessly feel! Oh my dear Mrs Cutbirth, be but open and patient, wait, listen, watch, and above all be silent, – for from the mere fact alone of its uniformity, — particularly to those who seeking quietly to impossibly fly, loudly crash, — silence cannot be overly disdained, – for when running the grave risk of taking the ridiculous for the true and sublime, this manner of action, seeming humble but not, is of a stronger, less vulgar, less foolish, and of a far less dangerous sort.

Of interest, perhaps, was the reply : here raising her cane, shaking it at the sky, or rather at the branches above her, Violet cried out,

— *Semper ego auditor tantum!*<sup>163</sup>, split me, sir, but you are very impertinent! Pray remember what o'clock it is with you and me! Coleridge?, he who unless he could have all the talk,

<sup>159</sup> less than is deserved

<sup>160</sup> relating to yesterday

<sup>161</sup> those disqualified as inadequate to their task, insufficiently elaborated, naïve, or

beneath cognition or scientificity

<sup>162</sup> fool, simpleton

<sup>163</sup> must I always be a listener only!

would have none? But soft you now!... Ah, how you enthusiastical atheists attack we whispering Christians!, – many of whom, it is true, believe that one can never do more injury to truth than by discovering too much of it, – for do you really believe that as your business is simply to learn how to live briefly in this world, ours is only to learn how to be eternally unburning out of it? If there be nothing in this matter of resurrection, there will be no harm in being thus deceived, – though one will alas not know of it, – but if there be the slightest something, – for the idea of a god innate and coexistent with the mind itself, I believe a truth so very obvious it is discovered by the very first exertion of reason, even in persons of the most ordinary capacities, even by a child, — for, surely even a vague idea can be formed by simply adding infinite to every perfection of which man has knowledge, — and whoso is stirred for to not believe, let him not believe, – it will be fatal not to have believed to the full, and this, sir, millions believe. And whereas I know not whether I do expound and declare myself well or no, – which permits you to freely determine what degree of weight you please to this mine short answer : weigh all this I have said, you, in the golden balance of your misbeliefs the most dangerous, absurd, and abstruse!, Come, Samuel, tea is calling.

The second example : Keith 19, commander of the Troke militia, at the 1886 garden-party, to a strikingly buxom lady of 36, who, by displaying a paste brilliancy come of a fortune still too new, far too upward in the parts of show, and though proudly principled in body and mind, was yet a great latitudinarian in point of morals and honesty, – named Mary Exmewe; standing very erect, – the line straight from the crown of his well-lifted head, down his throat lengthened to full extent, bisecting his shoulder and hips, with the muscles of his thighs strong in front, and all weight on the balls of his feet, his heels near together, his toes slightly apart, – a posture overall ready, light, active, buoyant, and, with the addition of hands in pockets, very reposeful, – Keith delivered as follow :

— As a means of discovering say a basis of morality, – whereto every regard paid is a denial of the world, of the self, and a subtraction<sup>164</sup>, – or what ethics, – called the science of freedom, – can be, or even as a means of more fully accepting our wretched humanity with far less of what could, and easily, be called a dissonance in the cerebral apparatus, then, certainly, – provided of course they do not too further imbeciliate<sup>165</sup> human character, – beliefs of what wild and unnatural order soever, – particularly those which possess at least a little truth in their behind, such as superstition, legend, and folklore, which is to say : sympathies for the invisible, a love of storytelling, – sometimes serve, unless I am mistaken, a useful purposes, particularly to those who, – attracted by god because repelled by man, say, or to those of little reading, less meditating, and least experience, – hold with ever the hardest obstination to matters which, laying midway between the only two phenomena which can never fit together, truth and untruth, require

<sup>164</sup> withdrawing or withholding of some right

<sup>165</sup> to render weak or feeble

to be bestridden by a third thing, called credulity, for it must not be forgot that in proportion to the strength or weakness, soundness or rottenness, of the one and the other, diseases operate as differently but as effectively upon the body as upon the supposed eleven<sup>166</sup> passions of the mind. Aye, all this, but to aforthen<sup>167</sup> a mere guide to leader, – as is the case with your Christ man, — in whose existence you demand the world foreprise<sup>168</sup>, when in truth it is you and your people who are obliged to prove him not a bubble, — of which records, sacred or profane, from all histories of that age, now believed in hundreds three, make not even the slightest allusion, nor to any the least of the miraculous incidents ingrafted into his life, – and to turn mythology, – which is religion minus faith, – into history, – called somewhere a nightmare from which man cannot awake, – and to exchange reality for ideality, *and* to live a whole life under unevidenced beliefs, – for we do not know it for true that everything has a cause, – in short : to render mere fancy into flesh, and in then making this fancy your sayman severely restricting that freedom which mortality packages anyway small, this, – or I again mistake, – is a very dangerous folly indeed!

Keith wanted also to say, but did not, – for he was perceptive enough to realise that what began as a dialogue was become a monologue to which only he was listening, – for it was clear to him that Mrs Exmewe, by too much cloaking the defects of her unstudied years with but a crumbling patience, and not one to take counsel when hurt by a moral rupture, was clearly very impatient with an analysis of herself which under all other circumstance she considered as civil and polite as could well be found to begin a quarrel with, and yet remained silent, for she herself was perceptive enough to realise that Trokes were in all probability utterly incapable of recognising any authority greater than their own, as much of the church, say, as of the law, – which,

called written reason, or perfected reason as some would have it, and believed of reason the body, the life, the artificial perfection, in all its three parts : declaratory, directory, and remedial,

the world defined as the minimum comportment required before man collectively applies that which can alter the speed or direction of matter in motion, or overcome inertia, called force, – or government say, – in which fools, — of which this our age has been most fertile, — were called the great men, the grave men, the sage men of the land, but elected by trustless fools to do not otherwise than in madly manner mediate the systematicity of everything everywhere, – no!, for according to their Troke make all this was simply inapplicable to a Vouchsafed family who, steering their own motions, would never by nonsense be borne back, nor even by all the currents of the world.

The third example : Michael 31, at the 1900 garden-party, to one Ormonda Oughtred, a once

---

<sup>166</sup> love, hatred, desire, horror, joy, grief,  
hope, despair, boldness, fear, and anger

<sup>167</sup> promote  
<sup>168</sup> take for granted

ravishing belle, then an abundantly daughtered widow, but now, at 67, as so often occurs, a *belle laide*<sup>169</sup>, a markedly stuggy<sup>170</sup>, short-sighted women, who, the year before, – because overnight made sudden a widow and no longer able to place all her felicity in the abundant gratification of every sensual appetite, particularly to horizontal pleasures of the lower belly, – by her grown children forced upon far more closely observing the rituals of their church, was now deriving the joys, quite unexpected, of tearfully asking, and always receiving, confitent<sup>171</sup> to her confessor, forgiveness, – not alone for her many actions, but for her mere thoughts, – for she was of the Roman Catholic persuasion,

member of that people who, by turning so much their zeal to the outwards of their religion, and loving to have glorious objects strike and effect, excite and elevate, their sentiments, their senses and imagination, – such as ritual, pomp, vestments, thurification<sup>172</sup>, &c, – believe they are not only moved more closed<sup>✓</sup> to their god, – who residing anywhere and everywhere can even reside in a thin wafer, — called also sacramental bread, communion bread, eucharist wafer, the lamb, &c, and made always of unleavened wheatmeal, — not only wholly in the whole wafer, but entirely in every tiny crumb of it, which Burnet believeth the highest of inconceivables, – but in receipt of a purer grace, therefore an assurance of eternal rewards; despite their foolery of inventing an abundance of saints for all trades, – sicknesses, graces, virtues, &c, – their sinless worship of graven images, – whether of wood, of stone, cast metals, fired clay, or plastic, such as a wooden cross to which through hands and feet is nailed a man emaciated, wounded, agonied, and dying, – caused Catholics to be once called by Protestants animals of intolerable pride, of lawless fury, of untractable barbarity, animals so subtle and treacherous they are not to be chained, by either custom or discipline, by any law, either of a god or of man :

— Yes, yes, but despite it believed, – not only by your god-intoxicated self, but by nearly everyone everywhere, – that god, be he only short-winded and vengeful, is always around one, inside and out, and to his supplicants, all rejoicing in his heavenly bright, speaking at least some pidgin not too intolerably obscure, — for we Trokes have not only heard the fame thereof with our ears, but with our eyes have read of it, – such utterly is invisible not only to myself, to all my senses, – internally, — for a verificationist must be able to at least know about the possibility of something if it is to exist, – and exteriorly, — for an instrumentalist must also be able to observe a thing if it is to exist, — but to nearly all of our name, – and whereas we never prove our views so well as we fancy we do, for we far prefer to gladly suffer all our spiritual or religious aphasias, we sabbathless Trokes call it only as we see and feel it!

Briefly stopping to listen to her impatient response, and soon enough, after perceiving her gist,

---

<sup>169</sup> an attractively ugly woman

<sup>170</sup> short and thick-set

<sup>171</sup> one who confesses; a penitent

<sup>172</sup> act of burning incense

hearing very imperfectly but sufficiently what the details said, – for after all, if she could first think and then say something new, honest, and provable, — which even conclaves of world minds, prating highest and for centuries, could not, — therefore belief- and existence-changing, Michael would have listened, for, make no mistake, all Troke laid always their eyes and ears ever near the ground, – resuming his commandeering, he said,

— Pray madam, pardon my cutting into your commencing to set the better foot of your lame cause foremost with such a poorly overload of words, – all of them going to it so by heaps, as if multitudinousness could ever overpower reason, – and despite my saying, — now twice!, — how unnecessary it is to try ensure my continued listening to what is not only not listenable!, but not sane!, constantly touch me, with one finger, or with four straight fingers on the forearm, – well may you now writhe your head to one side, and up with your chin, to say what, mmm?, – glancing now to the left to recall information, and finding this unsupplying glancing now to the right to better supply this deficiency with imagination, or hope, in a word : with a lie, such as *nisi credideritis, non intelligentis*<sup>173</sup>, – and saying then, holding thy beak in the air, what?, *Sir, it booteth little to try overcast so clear a light as my god casts upon we purer of the world with the vaporous mists of your ambiguity?*, or perhaps, thrusting out a pair of deriding lips, saying, *Sir, why must you try ravish a belief from me so dear?, no? or : Sir, why must you attempt to annihilate a belief so consoling, no?*

— Why scowlest thou so, why strokest thou thine own forehead?, now rub thy face and sigh with a breath that could, if you wished it, be made far sweeter, as fragrant even as my own, – which has been sweetened by sipped passage of a honeyed wine of our own making, – for as bad as not saying what you feel, this not saying what you look, – and why dost thy face seem to sayest now : *Sir, certainly, if you can make no better arguments than these, and have so small judgement as to think mine not of any worth, I have now great reason to decline all further conference and depart?* Wait, wait and listen : to come up an inch closer to you, and just before you turn to flee, and to answer to<sup>✓</sup> your first question, – nay, nay!, droop not, pleasant bel!, – let me, please!, open my answer by asking if you think me unaware that all means are as lawful, as warrantable, when error is set so against truth, as when truth is set against error?...

Attempting to say more, but nothing quotable, then, without really listening, impatiently awaiting his lips cease their movement, Michael realising it pointless to say many things more, but perceiving, – for, as young as he was, had a little yearly experience in this matter, – that she was no longer tempted, till she be quite out of breath, to take that fury worst of all : the theological fury, – for to vain and contentious natures, of which weakest minds have generally the greatest share : gods call loudest, – which never proves aught but the utter imbecility of its cause, Ormonda Oughtred, – a gentlewoman as much obliged never to speak one least untruth against her supposed knowledge, as to always speak out against any who display the crassness of a lack

---

<sup>173</sup> unless ye believe, ye shall not understand

of it, – fighting the temptation to attempt reply, – not for reason that it was after all Sunday, — for she had no intention of exposing for ransom her soul to the hazard of perdition, — but rather for the swift-growing reason of a sudden digestive *crise*<sup>174</sup>, which required, by means partly of face, teeth, and fists, but mostly of those very certain muscles which assist, she concentrated upon suppressing of same its disgracing expression, – realising she could put herself in a way much more secure by suffering, head and bowels, in new silence, this allowed Michael to continue in this wise, and *notandi sunt tibi mores*<sup>175</sup> :

— Madam, though I be not so right nor so discreet as I should be, for my years are so far still few, nor yet so bad neither, as thou perhaps takest me to be, nor so mad, – for gentle am I, and humble in heart, as any of my family will avouch, – I beg thee, be not in such heat, be not so hot in so cold a cause! You who have already contended that only ill-humour can be the cause of atheism, cannot but agree that cullibility<sup>176</sup>, as well all the authority error derives from custom, – which to yourself and the bulk of mankind so strong, passes for reason and sacred truth, – cannot ever be much useful to the human species. Believing, as you do, that your god, – to whom it seemeth to me as much blasphemy as absurdity, the form, the sentiments, and the passions of man, to impute, particularly the goodness, for nothing permits you to regard goodness as a major attribute of your god, for there is enough suffering in one narrow London lane to prove this conclusively, – hath no right hand nor left hand, that he is neither moved nor quiet, nor circumscribed by place and time, but absolutely infinite, and that in him are comprehended all perfections : surely, if your incomprehensible god were to exist, – and by opening now widest my mind, which otherwise for so small a purpose opens not, I may be here committing an assumptious piece of anthropophuism<sup>177</sup>, — yes, I own it!, — for there is no warrant in attempting to clothe Nature with even one human quality, – there would be good objective proof, would there not?, as for gravity and oxygen, and full perceivable to nothing less than the open senses, – not only the outer of hearing and sight, but the inner of touch and taste, – particularly if, without directly implanting faith in minds, this god of yours, – by whom you claim all things are made, and not anything made that was unmade, aye, and the very maker too of man, originally a soft and peaceable creature of mercy and meekness, and born only to love, but, somehow mistakenly, given free will, choosing rather to rave, to rage like a beast, and to run upon to his own destruction, – required people to disbelieve in him, or her or it, – as well that heaven was but a wonderclout of doctrine, and hell but a scarecrow, – and thus be saved from, – what doth breathe and spire out its malice only manward, – a spiteful damnation, how then!

As the stricken guest, else she be unable more to keep her composity, – as well perhaps her gas, even her stool, – turned over a mind struggling perhaps, – for though much upon this fruitless

---

<sup>174</sup> Fr. crisis

<sup>175</sup> note well the manners

<sup>176</sup> gullibility

<sup>177</sup> ascribing human nature to god

matter may as well be inserted in this saga as thrown away, what this woman was turning over in her mind was indeed so valueless as shall be quite passed over, – to design ever more strange mysterious reasons why man, never observing his gods or their actions in any clear honest way, believes yet in so sovereignly intelligent a being, – with neither organs nor space, neither point nor contact, – quite unsupportable by any, by every of those prooves<sup>✓</sup> which are required to establish all propositions laid down amongst men, Michael clearly realising, – as exactly so far, as exactly always, – that not alone their continued converse,

an exchange which, ordinarily a transaction by which both parties benefit, or one loses and the other gains, was here so clearly mutually gainless,

but his continued lecturing, would reward him neither gain nor advantage, nor even interest, and, ah!, most conveniently! coming rescue, for in his mind there was a vacancy sufficiently spare to allow him to receive information by another method; with his blue eyes, – despite usually far less satisfied with seeing than his ears with hearing, – hawking, as if of themselves, for a yearly venery, even as he his latest words spoke, he espied not far across the lawn a maid with very rum ogles<sup>178</sup> set in an amorous face, and overall with a very smart becoming air, – as well a lovely name : Elkenna, – and, as well, most particularly amidst so many reeds, a bosom wherewith she was nothing meanly enriched!, taking this quick notion of her and finding at the very first she so pleased his fancy he fell a little in love,

and a little in love is a great deal with which to make much, even the most,

indeed he believed it suddenly very true that there was no one then in the world in whose acquaintance, even friendship,

(in modern, honest parlance : between whose open and inviting legs, breasts, and arms),

he would have been so happy to see himself firmly established sweetly solacing himself to his great contentation, he prepared to commence to wind up his long closing.

Believing himself one of those fortunates who possessed wits enough to sufficiently fathom all the allectives<sup>179</sup> of beauty, than which, so he had read, nothing so violently makes its way more directly to the soul,

which some of the body call the garment thereof, some the house, some the instrument, some simply the harmony,

Michael now cast about in his mind by what method he might first, with decency, escape his present shackles and then by what further method he might come at such charms as he would

---

<sup>178</sup> fine eyes

<sup>179</sup> allurements

delight in rifling, – for his luxive<sup>180</sup> health, strong spirits, and bold confident disposition would surely do naught but forward his predominant inclination, – provided of course this did not make *too* terrible depredations upon her noble faculties,

which alas shortly occurred, for without uttering an indecent word, or showing an indecent gesture, – despite urging him to the very limits of decorum, – and without in the least understanding his otherwise perfectly unmistakable suggestions, she replied with so divine a continence, this immediately excinded<sup>181</sup> all his lascivious hope;

cupping together his hands in parting manner, and without hard words, involved constructions, awkward metaphors, overloaded epithets, or overly-unmeasured sentences, Michael advised in excellent good words the following :

— Because we Trokes take the greatest care to ensure a far smaller part of creation falls under our notice and influence than is normal for our class, – for we suffer not that insecurity which in the active and moneyed insists he produce himself to the world, – yet nevertheless remaining wise enough to know it undeniable that, – because of the great conformity and participation of minds in like errors, widespread agreement no more makes right than widespread belief truth, – in regard to faith and gods and such like, the only sensible policy is to assume, because after all it is impossible to prove any nonexistence claim, – and an assertion unfounded on observation must, naturally, — for assertions made without evidence can be refuted without the need to supply any refuting evidence, — be rejected, – the *onus probandi*<sup>182</sup> lies clearly upon yourself, a believer, to acknowledge that all unprovables are false, at least until such time as they can be proved otherwise. For really, madam!, – and take ye this by the way, and you will surely excuse me if I enjoy myself so obviously, for it is so unlike me to use unnecessary proofs in an indisputable point, – admit it as so obviously unreasonable, for this would provide you with a small hole to creep out at, that in suffering the mind, – which like the body has its very own diseases, – to believe a proposition from which, after two millennia of blood, screams, and death, – here stressing of course that we Trokes are not otherwise a people to deem nothing demonstration if it not be ocular, for we do not suffer the hypocrisy of those who dismiss as chimerical whatever is not palpable, or cannot be seen, tasted, heard, or told, – not a single gram of evidence has been borne away, neither that vice is punished, nor that they who seek to climb by privy sin shall fall with open shame, neither that virtue, – defined by some moralists as nothing else but the knowledge of things ensued and followed, or of things eschewed and fled, and divided by other moralists into benevolence, prudence, fortitude, and temperance, – meets reward, nor even that the observation of one single, one scornful, one measly, – which means contemptibly small, – one mingy<sup>183</sup> supernatural fact or miracle has ever been put upon if not sworn then at least upon

---

<sup>180</sup> voluptuous

<sup>181</sup> cut off

<sup>182</sup> burden of proof

<sup>183</sup> mean, stingy, niggardly

reasonable record, – for I suddenly recall what Thomas Huxley saith :

*Whoso clearly appreciates all that is implied in the falling of a stone can have no difficulty about any doctrine simply on account of its marvellousness. –*

then in rosied health you can admit this also, for despite it hurt, it shall breed no real inconvenience at all : it is as much an absurdity to believe in what cannot be seen, as to believe the same is hidden, although I readily admit it as true that the invisible and the inexistent look very much alike.

— Now, in a final furtherance of all that I have said, – and I as much trow<sup>184</sup> as hope that forthwith thou shalt know better how to learn truth of another than they the nonsense of thee, – and for any possible offensiveness thereof sincerely begging pardon, for the need to be both just and honest can often be very disobliging, – and yet with an understand<sup>v</sup>, or rather a patience, as fine as your own, clearly you possess sufficient for us both, – I offer here of proven wisdom a piece : life consists, as always before it hath, – particularly for we Trokes, – mainly of looking, hearing, and keeping distant silent, – particularly concerning things pertaining to dangerous nonsense, for orthodoxy, – which will never allow itself worsted, even with its back flat to the wall, as it is now, – having always an answer too round and ready, can reply only in this most basic, desperate, and lying wise, – and whereas reason insists, – particularly to such men as make a profession of devising shifts and evasions to save themselves and their beliefs from the pressures of the outright brazenry of truths, – that the starting point of belief cannot come of vain feeling, or of a reasoning inconstant, – for what can be more contrary to reason, than using reason to master that which transcends all reason?, – but rather common senses simplest and pure, and if accepting an assertion by faith alone is to concede that it cannot be taken on its own merits, this I leave to your own conscience.

— Though we Trokes have mind enough to grandly entertain all manner thoughts, but without a necessary obligation to accept them, we find it only too true that in the presence of the faithly and their gods, real thought halts, for the two are quite opposite. Madam!, as you have failed wholly to realise that it were better, if one must prate of this matter of gods, to be far better furnished with answers to those objections with which we, a profane crew of atheists, always plentifully present to those who of gods, – arguing ridiculously from but one old book, often from but one small passage thereof, the which we do not permit, – make the greatest din, let me advise you also the following : learn and study the things that extant are, how they are ordered and governed, by what means, for what cause, to what end, and study also thyself, find what *Nature* bids thee to be, tells thee thou *must* be, and what end your life is like to have, and then, – admittedly this is far less painful to conjecture than to experience, and the process is very simple!, madam, a children's playing!,

---

<sup>184</sup> believe

– acknowledge first that we are a species eternally condemned to kill one other to live, nurture next a newfound ludibry<sup>185</sup> for man, – for this is the very beginning of wisdom, – believe next that any ripeness in faith is a rawness in wit and judgement, and finally, finally!, – and few mathematical demonstrations conclude stronger than this, – for once and all attain to that benerous<sup>186</sup> state of corruption wherein not nonsense but truth is all the eye can see, and thus will you cease to suffer your blindness. Now as these are so far my best thoughts, it is as much a duty for myself as for yourself to go on, and think further; now, madam, I am said.

The fourth, the final example : Jeffrey, storyteller *extraordinaire*, – this would be in 1995, in August summer, – just as he and Maxwell, his bosom friend and fifth cousin twice removed, older mentor and younger mentee, were strolling to Messrs Peal their bootmaker, talking, laughing, and both very newly invigorated, even cleansed, by a long hour in an establishment catering expensively, unhurriedly, to chamber-mirth<sup>187</sup>, – or to call it by its name : purchased sexual congress, – from expensive young women of excellent nature and look, for without beauty to them, and breeding, without refinement, and culture, their merchandise, to these two happily married men, would never have been either saleable nor even giftable; suddenly, – a simple, daily casualty<sup>188</sup>, – stepped into their path a quite,

used here in the sense, – rather than wholly or entirely, rather than as a maximiser or diminisher, but as a compromiser – very or rather,

pretty, wastefully pretty, young lady named Joyzelle Inchfawn,

whilst at night studying economics, – principally, the economic impoverishment of the underclass, – and by profession a social worker specialising in victimology<sup>189</sup>, but because of a very fragile sense of identity, an unhealthily developed ego, and a loveless childhood, alas finding religion at a very early age,

who, with her assorted colleagues, was canvassing the streets for their god,

called by Jefferson : cruel, vindictive, capricious, and unjust,

aye, hustling everybody they see with first looks of mild imploration, then, coming faintest some sign, stopping them dead to preach their Jesus unto them, saying that salvation is available now!, and at the cost only of wits and all critical faculties!, ah but little could she realise, poor Inchfawn, that it were better she preach to an hundred extremist Muslims, a thousand!, than to our Jeffrey.

---

<sup>185</sup> contempt

<sup>186</sup> blessed

<sup>187</sup> bedroom pleasure

<sup>188</sup> chance or casual occurrence

<sup>189</sup> the study of victims of crime

Rather than learn what, after three words, the girl would attempt further to assert, noddingly granting what was currently pleading, – for it was his horrid suspicion that what was overall saying, than upon bounden intellect and reason, was exclusively suited to work upon minds overcarked<sup>190</sup> and made small by the dictatorships of unbounded imagination, passions, and fears, – with limply raised index making gentlemanly sign that he had heard exactly enough to take clearly her point, for his suspicion was grown now to a certainty that what would next be heard would be another of those interminable pieces of common gosselarity that can never in its life, in a real man, a *sane* man, occasion the least obligation to again hear,

aye, most stupendous and impenetrable are the arts that in this kind such lunatics employ to waylay the sane,

and also : he was not unaware that such a passion as his own to revile that which exists not, made him often seem to himself a preaching fool, as well perhaps to others, those who, – even as staunchly disbelieving as he, – calmly thought nothing of such matters, or who thought indifferently, or who simply laughed at such as was beyond the very meanest contemplating, so adding now to raised finger a stronger and more determined expression, – one that cannot here, nor anywhere, be described, but in its effect occasioning a gasping backstep not alone by the girl, but by her two nearby escorts, – Jeffrey prepared to commence upon his matter,

for after all what else can one do to such people as are always inferior of rationality, intelligence, and reality, – ungentlely turn aside and continue walking?, – but teach,

by first adding some real meat to it :

— Speaking, as I tend always, in a frank and open way, I will begin my response with this statement : it is not only quite possible but highly probable that at the end of our little confabulation you will possess an even smaller capacity for founded truths and an even greater for your unfounded nonsense, which it all is, preaching of things without substance! Very well. I have read your bible book in many of its versions, from Tyndale to the lately published *Clear Word*, and I continue to find it an extremely silly thing, nasty and pandemic. As to the truth or beauty of its contents, – sole foundation of those creeds from which your devout observances proceed, – I must here assertationate<sup>191</sup> : if beauty is truth, – Miss?, Miss?, – then you believe, Miss Inchfawn, in nonsense, a nonsense not only without the least voucher<sup>192</sup>, but a proofless nothing monstrous ugly and pernicious, and which overall is just plain daft<sup>193</sup>. Alas, because he or she who believes in gods also believes, necessarily, in other nonsenses, other lies and fictions and falsities, of all other sorts, in all arenas of life, truth itself is wideware tainted, infected, made weak, slowly sickened, and

---

<sup>190</sup> oppressed

<sup>191</sup> avouch

<sup>192</sup> supporting evidence

<sup>193</sup> an Englisher word for silly, foolish, stupid

will ultimately be killed. Perhaps, – and this is but a musing aside, – perhaps it is indeed possible, as saith Weil, that this world could only be created by withdrawing from it, and god's absence his distance, called space, his awaiting called time. Nay!, I knowest it dislikes thee, but I cannot unsay a single word : truth can neither die nor be unsaid, particularly on such a lovely day and most particularly to a bright one such as yourself who, – though this might be saying amiss, for, *ficum voco ficum et ligonem ligonem*<sup>194</sup>, I often overshoot the mark of prudence, – has about beauty enough, despite the silly poke-bonnet<sup>195</sup> and other inelegant sartorial arrangements, to raise above dependence even to a duchess.

Here, he paused very briefly to admire a mammatus cloud,

— Now, whilst acknowledging it an error, even a rudeness, to claim, as we both do, to be in the right oversoon : to such silly misbeliefs as you now with your tragic pamphlets peddle, containing, – for you clearly consider it no sacrilege to graphically example your heavenly things with earthly forms, – material surely so desirable, and so reasonable, would we heathens but look aright at what we of the *same* world see as anciently built from the few scraps of imagination which cluttered a few minds filled with frightened thought, or, as D'Holbach saith, and Meslier out of him : constructed from mere supposition, by ignorance imagined, propagated by mad enthusiasm and knavery, by timid credulity adopted, preserved by custom, – called somewhere that never reasoning witch whose spells cast moral illusion, – and revered because not understood, but in whose amorvolous<sup>196</sup> society you exceedingly joy, and yet, because so unhealthily covetousness of such supposed riches, clearly imperfectly well. To minds, like your own, so clearly as incapable of dealing honestly with this our mortal world as with your own warped faculties, counsel and medication is well-warranted, even surgery, for then, with new-built mind, – one that hath altogether, renouncing the use of unreason, learned to recognise what is sheer silliness, – one may at last peer cleansed upon a world, – admittedly, at the first appearing a little waste, vague, and unowned, and filled as it also may newly appear to be with all the pointless loneliness, pain, danger, and difficulty that accompanies this our godless existence, – returned to full real. The alienage passing, this new you will soon be thrilling at the wonderful realisation that whilst your every yesterday was foolishly misunderstood, your new today and every tomorrow will not be so, for newly true will it be a moral crime any the least untruth to cherish. This new you, refilling a newly purged and detoxified life, will soon discover that things are not really much changed, indeed as much the same with god as without : justice, mercy, truth, peace, and freedom, will continue to be simply impossibles, and meekness, temperance, unity, goodness, and righteousness, – once defined simply as action from right motive, – will continue further impossibles. Whereas this is far by the way : rather than here in the open streets of London

<sup>194</sup> I call a fig a fig and a spade a spade

<sup>195</sup> such as are worn by female Salvationists,

once by American Quakers and  
Methodists

<sup>196</sup> marvellously lovely

to the stout and the more stout in fine enough clothes your fool words peddling for their inexistent souls to save, surely the afar swarthy backwaters of adversity, sickness, war, and starving death, are far more deserving of those actions, as wordlessly supply to those that have them not or rarely, such simply as medicine, a meal, and a trouser, no?

— Before we from each unanswered away, — we and ours, all this soon forgot, to pastures continuing real, cheerful, sunny, and green, and you and yours, again downcasted by defeat, to pastures continuing unreal, therefore bleak, and of a most cheerless grey, — and there, with your overlarged hearts roiling with intoxicate god-limited sensibilities and language, continuing unable to express just how much we atheists, — d—d, as is all man, but not forever but only to this one only life, — are to be pitied, — remember, if not these words, — which of highest truth, therefore of greatest value, — yet seemingly to yourselves of highest untruth and least value, — are still building one of the most ingenious pieces of reasoning that has ever fallen, or, I fear, will *ever* fall, under your narrow notice, not a part of which, I suspect, will penetrate and medicate your absurd delusions, — then these living tones, swift looks, and gestures of manifold dramatic accompaniment.

— Ah, so witchingly lovely is your sweet face made, — which, by your grace, I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of closely observing, particularly when, as newly now, it is beautied further by the almost terror in its huge eyes, — by these gut-deep words, glances, and gestures, — come all, — it need not be said, but will be, — from a heart which expresses always carefully, always sincerely, but not everything I feel, for heathens too suffer the constraints of language, — as by truth you are driven pale and so slowly backward, but not ill-wishingly, for I bear never maltalent<sup>197</sup> towards those rare whom with knowledge I persecute.

In closing, I will add only this : whilst we Trokes, — comprising a large, ancient, and noble family, dwelling very quietly and far away, almost dimensionally far, but of whose name you can never have heard, for it is far more likely you have never heard of the sky, — come rarely out into this far world, and then when out even more rarely from out our silent obscurity, it sometimes happeneth, — as exactly now upon this fine day, here in this better street, — that a rare one of us, — this year it is me, it seems, of name Jeffrey Abelard Mitchell Darcy Troke, — suddenly prompted, not certainly by any need, nor any mood, nor any fancy, but by an opportunity, — such as precisely this, — is compelled to speak, — as well to feel that wordless little glow, as if of the loins, which comes of honouring a just duty, — to simply and frankly, — whether via a single human instrument, or, as is presently the case, three, — tell the world one or two basic wisdoms that have been proven to me fullest true.

— Firstly, man is simply a part of Nature, simply another unsouled and unspecial lifesort, and, despite a bigger brain, not even from a nettle distincted, and yet, — if one likes, for it is

---

<sup>197</sup> ill-willingly

a fairly harmless fancying, – allowed supposed some element essential in the great mystery of life. Secondly, one need do no more for reality to truthful find than to look travelling about, and to wide read and much listen. Thirdly, one needs deepliest of all to look into oneself for to soon joyful find that to existence there is neither reason or solution. And, finally enough, fourthly, not ours alone, but all of existence can be accepted only by acknowledging it quite perfect, but utterly meaningless. Whereupon, wisdom taken on, and commencing at last, even more virgined, to most properly live and breathe, – for henceforth every adventure would then wear to the mind its new shape, – so will a real life come, and far kindlier symptoms. Aye, well may you let down silent tears, well may your trembling rattle your little box, – which, if I knew where exactly its contents terminated, I have the means to fill bursting full, – but as I do not hold to your foolish beliefs, so neither, save these words, can I give to them, neither out of true charity nor false, the first predicated upon love, which for your cause I do not feel, – for one cannot of lies love their lovelessness, – the last upon guilt, condescension, and pity, which I feel not either. Miss Inchfawn, your servant, ladies, yours. Come, Maxwell!

With his large leathern travelling bag high upon broad shoulders, it was to open-mouthed Lemuel, right there at the front door, that Michael Overslaugh began his institution<sup>198</sup> by stating what he firmly believed,

as indeed everyone should, for it is full true,

that the limit of reality,

which after all only signifies strong belief,

is dictated only by the limit of its describing in a language, chiefly in words, and thus by this great man was the family firmly, most properly, forever, launched upon the practice of pursuing and displaying an inordinate efascination for words; of his life before this signal day?, briefly : a childhood oppressed, and a loveless family, are elements : his father, collated<sup>199</sup> at the very young age of 24, and falsely renowned of such pronounced unctuousity, he was believed one of the piouesest men in the county, promised come his ordination to resign a comfortable living<sup>200</sup> to him, and a visiting prelate,

taking time away from the troubles of his living, – ruffling in rents, dancing in dominions, pampering paunches, moiling in gay manors, loitering in lordships, as saith Latimer, – to visit an old schoolmate,

---

<sup>198</sup> instruction

<sup>199</sup> appointed to a benefice

<sup>200</sup> ecclesiastical benefice

hinted that he might offer the reversion<sup>201</sup> of a benefice of which he had the advowson<sup>202</sup>, should Michael, – after close examination, of course, by men of gaitude in the circumstance of his sufficiency, – prove capable; came then rescue : awaking sudden in his cot, in his cold, damp, and ill-ventilated cell, – the eleven others, some only snoring, but all stinking, – came enlightenment, – without which Michael would have certainly become a good cleric, but an unhappy one, – and flight.

Of Michael less briefly : at age 23 in the wet year of 1766, four days short of his confirmation, one drizzly foggy cold dawn he awoke to a clear realisation,

which immediately and at length writing down for the leaving behind, herewith a short extract :

*... insulting science and its virtues to make a living, is, oh, too expensive bread!, particularly to one who is suddenly simply unable to any more stomach the cant<sup>203</sup> delivered by the hour by my theologaster<sup>204</sup> teachers, many of whom are not only acediast<sup>205</sup> but pettily consumed by odium theologicum<sup>206</sup> ...;*

so, wiping the pen, capping the inkwell, reborn Overslaugh arose, and shedding his glummery dressed properly in the donnins<sup>207</sup> of a real man, packed his large, single leathern bag, and without a word, – but with a nodding to the lame mute gatekeeper named Rufus Dogg to whom he flicked a six-and-ninepenny piece, – walked out of the theological college into the teeming rain to commence his four years of pilgrimage under the goodly light of religious indifference.

By acknowledging at last properly, honestly, what he had always deep inside believed, that god was naught more than an idea, a hope, a thought, then after years of hard study, – seeking deepest to prove himself wrong, – confirming that god was but a thought that that made hoked<sup>208</sup> all that was straight, and had never been aught but a vain name, no essential thing, and then to paper stating same, Overslaugh, – but quite unknowingly, – became renowned a betrayer of his brothers, and by those of the higher ecclesia,

those who spent their entire lives weaving and unweaving subtlest cobwebs,

he was called a base criminal, an enemy,

<sup>201</sup> the return of an estate to a donor or grantor or his heirs after the expiry of the grant

<sup>202</sup> the right to present a clergyman for appointment to the bishop of the diocese by one who had the patronage or was guardian of a benefice or an ecclesiastical house

<sup>203</sup> insincere and parrot-like appeal to

religious principles the speaker does not himself believe in or act upon or understand

<sup>204</sup> pretender to knowledge in divinity

<sup>205</sup> slothful or wickedly lax when it comes to matters spiritual or religious

<sup>206</sup> bitter hatred between rival theologians

<sup>207</sup> dress; clothes

<sup>208</sup> crooked

but would it not be to the glory of any religion to have for an enemy a man so scholarly, so reasonable?

but to the undarkened Trokes, Michael was clearly a most sane and sensible fellow, which is why he was immediately employed; very capable in his duty as a junior librarian, as well a patient skilled assistant to the infirmarian<sup>209</sup>, he had proved, until his tergiversation<sup>210</sup>, despite a little too leodicean<sup>211</sup>, an excellent student, – doing always the work better than they could teach him, – bretful<sup>212</sup> of such goodness and light as would soon beat him a path to a high benefice, if not to a mitre.

As he strode unseen down the road from the seminary, his worldly all in his commodious satchel, and despite the mugged<sup>213</sup> air, with a very lightness in the step for so large a man intent upon futures utterly unknown, he halted his gay whistling to think briefly of some Isiah :

*66:15 : For behold, the Lord wil come with fire, and with his charets like a whirlwinde, to render his anger with furie, and his rebuke with flames of fire.*

*63:3 : I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my furie, and their blood shall be sprinkled vpon my garments, and I will staine all my raiment.*

*33:12-13 : And the people shalbe as the burnings of lyme: as thornes cut vp shall they be burnt in the fire. Heare yee that are farre off, what I haue done; and yee that are neere, acknowledge my might.*

and he shivered in horror at the desperate measures long ago lonely men needed to employ to share their madness, their terror; for many months following his exclaustation<sup>214</sup>, newly secularist<sup>215</sup> Overslaugh found himself much enjoying his errabund<sup>216</sup> life, eating his meals at inns and farmhouses, sometimes by a campfire sleeping under the stars, or, – without making it openly known that he was once a man of a god, nor that, if he was anything, he was now a hylotheist<sup>217</sup>, – as a guest of this family and that, he found it no too great matter to join his hands, lower his head, say amen; during his four years as pilgrim very disinclined to speak of god, – for he found at the unresolved often bitter end no profit in this almost wholly fictional matter, – but when pressed by one of those troublers of the world who need to know immediately and precisely the colour of the faith of another man, Overslaugh said that he was an adiaphorist<sup>218</sup>, and whereas in company as mixed as possible it was often the case that this answer, because not

<sup>209</sup> one who has charge of an infirmary and its patients in a religious establishment

<sup>210</sup> abandoning of religion

<sup>211</sup> lacking in religious fervour

<sup>212</sup> brimful

<sup>213</sup> drizzled

<sup>214</sup> act of leaving a religious retreat

<sup>215</sup> one who rejects all forms of religious faith and worship

<sup>216</sup> wandering

<sup>217</sup> one who holds that the material universe is god

<sup>218</sup> one who is theologically indifferent

understood, was the least likely to cause the most offense, when an occasional fool demanded he abjure<sup>219</sup> his heathen and take up true beliefs,

full of presumption and falsehood, sustained with no truth, enlightened with no wisdom,  
seasoned with no salt, beliefs vain, rash, heady, and pernicious,

Overslaugh merely laughed.

Though similar indulgencies must not be expected of other outsiders by whom Trokes benefitted, it will certainly not be out of place to award space in this saga to this remarkable man Michael Overslaugh, (but it would be well to realise that much of what shall forecome must be umbecast<sup>220</sup> over the more than half-century of his stay at Troke Manor); on his very first day of betutoring, – undertaken upon not only the day but almost the very hour of his arrivement, – in the soon to be furnished classroom, with the five shy, suspicious, but fresh-faced boys before him, by way of introducing himself, Overslaugh told a moving yet very strange, (and still not wholly understood), tale, which, paraphrastically, and a little moderned, went as follow :

— In the beginning, oh long before new man walked this Earth, when were things only, hugely varied and countless, and because no man no words anywhere extant to lament this soon believed outrageous nepotation<sup>221</sup>, things were content to know they were things, for even when uncouth<sup>222</sup> to all other things, things were they still. This most felicitous time was of duration oh almost measureless, stretching from the farthest distant beginning, or nearly, to very recently : almost the end, when, first slowly, then suddenly, into this world where new things came rarely, and always slowly, amongst came man, a sudden quite new thing, darkly strange, but forbearant. For a while, things with this newness lived in indifferent enough harmony, but then, coming a mind to man, – and make here no mistake, when it came, it came right suddenly, – things became of man wary, then suspicious, as are you, now, of me. Soonafter arriving to man, to try speak his new mind, a swelling language, – a crude thing, as it is even now, but in its beginnings vastly more so, – things grew fearful, which you of me will never. At first rudimentary, language soon showed itself to be oh very pompous, then sly, then delinquent, for it was not very long before words began to claim, – with barely man enough born to give them utterance, – that before their coming things existed not, that things were essentially nothing! Well, aidless to do otherwise, – for things were unfortunately unaware that feelings of guilt, inferiority, and worthlessness can only come following agreement, – many things, for simple want of their words, – from man at least, – fading vanished!

— But dry your eyes children, for matters soon changed, for in time, things becoming sufficiently outraged by developments, and by secret meeting, by plotting, by turning even

---

<sup>219</sup> renounce

<sup>220</sup> cast about

<sup>221</sup> extravagance

<sup>222</sup> unknown

vengeable<sup>223</sup>, so in many corners of the world named things, to oblivion sacrificing themselves, vanished, aye, and the words only remained, – magic is of course an instance, but not gods, for they are always only a word, – and as everyone knows, words thingless are words only, and not things, but rather nothings. With words very rightly alarmed by this revolt, this coup their very brief existence threatening, – for what if the thing man, came their fearful murmurs, chose himself to vanish, why all we words would also, yet every thing else remain, for man, at present, is our sole domicile, and without him we are not, and can nowhere be!, – words envoys quickly dispatching, after much bantery coming an uneasy truce, and with two promissors, – one as old as wise existence, tother, like man, upstartly of very lately making, – at last understanding reaching, and agreeing to become two signators to a contract, – which if breached often, is still in place to this day, – so continues this world.

— This agreement, as you will all come to learn and then joyfully realise, simply states what continues true : that old things and new words, must, without enmity, coexist, if not in equal number, then in always a balancing manner, particularly when a single thing requires as many words as often as a single word requires to enclave many things, that not only every word must have its thing, and no word ever be thingless, but every thing must have its word, and no thing ever be wordless, that things came and come always first, and only then follow words, that things will always outnumber words, that things will always suffer attritioning, but words far more so, that whilst no thing shall permit long continuance without bonding to a word, no word will long exist if it find not its thing.

— Now it would be wise to remember, to never forget, my new young friends, that despite their strength, sometimes their beauty, – for I love them every one, – words are yet still young, therefore not fully to be trusted not to one day break their treaty, which in scattered places has already occurred, the bible a perfect example. When you are but a little older, my children, when with my help and time you know words far better, you will observe, not in their deeper, but in their deepest, nature, – and few dare believe and know this secret, – it is their malevolent intention to entirely oust things, all things, to build a world wholly of their own, a world where, language alone reigning, all would be possible, which is chaos, madness! It is therefore the lonely duty of a man like myself, and in the future perhaps of men like yourselves, to preserve this delicate truce, to keep the perfect balance fair of words and things, to encourage from far oblivions the return of wordless things, that they may be lauded properly with new words. Since I was as young as yourselves I have suspicioned that I am come to this world to somehow protect its harassed reality, and today, come to this excellent house, and to you, fair boys, I believe it now almost true that the duty of my life is to recruit a family of guardians to forever delay the coming of a thingless dissolution, to forevermore maintain the equilibrium of always words enough, always things enough, so that the machine of this world of things shall continue to

---

<sup>223</sup> revengeful

peacefully coexist within a world of words, so that the crude machine of words may not too unhappily, not too uncomfortably, – in other words : safely, – coexist about this great world of things;

whereupon, his little tale told, – a good piece too incomprehense for the unmoving, open-mouthed, slightly paled, younglets five, who, inside, were strangely vibrating, – he performed some applaudworthy sleights of hand with a penny.

Whereas speech is believed the very image whereby the mind and the soul of the speaker conveys itself into the bosom of him which hears, or her,

according to Mercurius Trismegistus, a god-given gift of the same virtue, power, and immortality, as that which, – justly or unjustly, profitably or unprofitably, delightfully or offensively, praisefully or disgracefully, honestly or dishonestly, – of the inward it expresses,

and whereas, further, speech, or declarative reason, gives far richer increase to a ground that is turned and watered for knowledge, than bare simple reading, – which it is true to some is no small edifying<sup>✓</sup>, – Michael in his didactics<sup>224</sup>, – save not to confirm or show or prove, but to learn new, and, of course, to joy again over a favourite passage, – rarely resorted to books already digested, – and yet digesting still, – for his memory was without fissure;

long an archaist<sup>225</sup>, he would every day give his students new words, – meaning : old or forgotten, but still useful, – hidden amidst his discourse, his lessons, his talks, which the first to note, to question, would receive his loos<sup>226</sup>, – quickly to prove prize enough, – and very soon, for these new unknown words his students, were eagerly with their ears searching, and when found and understood, were carried away to bluster their intrigued parents therewith, forming such sentences as futurely the following :

— Did you know, Mama, Papa, that our amusive Master, Michael Overslaugh, of headpiece daedal<sup>227</sup>, but of body somewhat amorphous<sup>228</sup>, is gainest<sup>229</sup>, – despite of character *bienséant*<sup>230</sup> and of comity<sup>231</sup>, – to embrangle<sup>232</sup> with, even exenterate<sup>233</sup>, any cynocephale<sup>234</sup> who would dare even to acidulate<sup>235</sup> or asperse<sup>236</sup> the minds, or dispart<sup>237</sup> the

<sup>224</sup> art or science of teaching

<sup>225</sup> one given to, partial to archaism

<sup>226</sup> praise

<sup>227</sup> ingenious, skilfully made, highly elaborated, intricate

<sup>228</sup> shapeless, formless, badly constructed, ill-designed

<sup>229</sup> readiest, most delighted

<sup>230</sup> fitting and suitable in conduct of morals,

decorum, and decency

<sup>231</sup> courtesy, friendliness

<sup>232</sup> bogus word, from embroil and entangle

<sup>233</sup> disembowel

<sup>234</sup> of a fabled race of men with dogs' heads

<sup>235</sup> make sour

<sup>236</sup> besmirch

<sup>237</sup> part asunder, split in two

hearts, of those callants<sup>238</sup> under his aegis<sup>239</sup>;

as it followed from this, naturally enough, that the children instructed their equally pysical<sup>240</sup> father and mothers by supplying a translation, thus it was, as well as his far discoasting from too plain and simple speech-ways, by more properly launching the Troke fascination for words, that futurally far more Trokes than one would as much write with his tongue as orate with his pen.

Not in any way homiletic<sup>241</sup>, nor ever once in his life reverting to vapulation<sup>242</sup>,

for memory, any more obedience, cannot be very favourily acted upon through the muscular integuments of the hindward by an appliance of birch-rods,

Overslaugh was by any standards, (even of today), a most excellent teacher, – (indeed after his retiracy in 1826, despite extensive searches, the family never found a teacher, — even from their own numbers among, — half his equal), — principally by employing what is called the Socratic method<sup>243</sup>, for by constantly pouring oil into the lamp of thought to keep intelligence at its very brightest, he was most particular in revealing the breaches in knowledge, the weaknesses, and the outright fallacies,

sometimes taking great pains these to explain, sometimes little, and sometimes no pain at all,

then to heal and close them up, (as his biography *Wordsmith : Michael Overslaugh 1743-1833*, published by *The Troke Press* in 1941, clearly avouches); inasmuch as he knew, as few before and far fewer since, that knowledge must be heuristically<sup>244</sup> imparted, as much with firm gentleness, as with great ardour, – as if a teacher were he only whom it had been granted to open the trumpet-stop on that great organ of passion, – he believed also that knowledge must maintain its probity,

an old word, meaning : moral excellence, integrity, rectitude, uprightness, conscientiousness, honesty, sincerity,

until it becomes somehow something more than, – not less than, and never equal to, – itself.

Furthermore, as restlessness, even boredom, and hence fatiguery in clergy<sup>245</sup>, is to youth a slowly deading poison,

for a fool and blundering method of study, (still enduring), swallows whole childhood, kills

<sup>238</sup> young fellows

<sup>239</sup> protection

<sup>240</sup> always asking questions or inquiring

<sup>241</sup> preaching

<sup>242</sup> beating, flogging

<sup>243</sup> method of teaching by which questions lead to answers

<sup>244</sup> learning by training gradually to find things out for oneself

<sup>245</sup> learning

enthusiasm, &c,

if a loresman<sup>246</sup> be as true to his craft as to his knowledge, he must also be a tutorist<sup>247</sup>, but whose eyes and finger were alone both his fescue, or festue,

a pointing instruments to direct children in reading, locally called a vester, in Cornwall a custis,

and his ferule or ferula, – a cane for punishing children, – which Michael, – in a further aside, thereby exempling an idiosyncrasy very typical of him, – warned must not be confused with the ferrule, with its double r, known also as a verrel and virole, which is a metal cap or collar affixed to the end of stick, to keep it whole, nor with the ferula, which is the plant the giant fennel; whereas the rod is not in every instance the most unfit tool to be used in education, – for if it is a nonsense said that *no* boy will ever be brought to good learning who is not allured thereto without stripes<sup>248</sup>, – a good caning is also sometimes a tool as excellent in teaching responsibility, as the ways of surly silence, so, nay, a rataplan<sup>249</sup> upon hand or hind, was never a sound heard in *his* classroom, for when excitement proved simply too infectious, when his students seemed suddenly unbitted<sup>250</sup>, throwing an affronted forehead upon his face, his tonous<sup>251</sup> voice would sound his loudest, in boldest type, — *Clom!*<sup>252</sup>, he would say, — *Bombax!*<sup>253</sup>, the which, so effective of stilled silence, amounted to the very uttermost of his severeness.

With his sweet singsong tenor voice ringing through the large classroom, – for he sang songs wonderful sweet, – amusedly expounding now upon Shakespeare, or Rabelais, now upon Catullus, or Marco Polo, or Pythagoras, or the *Novo Orbe*<sup>254</sup>, or Descartes,

he who in investigating the conflict between *pensum*<sup>255</sup> and *punctum*<sup>256</sup>, dared to suggest that insanity was not diabolical in origin, but a legitimate object of philosophical and medical enquiry,

all five boys so quickly became eager scolaie<sup>257</sup>, not a one was indocile<sup>258</sup>, nor unapt<sup>259</sup>, nor negligent, nor of dull conceit, for Michael Overslaugh turned even the most beamless child soon clerical<sup>260</sup>; when his always short lessons, which were loved barely less than their teacher, came

---

<sup>246</sup> teacher

<sup>247</sup> advocate of rigorism in a mild form

<sup>248</sup> blows made with a whip, rod, scourge, or the like, such as usually leaves a mark

<sup>249</sup> the iterative sound of beating

<sup>250</sup> uncontrollable

<sup>251</sup> full-sounding

<sup>252</sup> be silent!

<sup>253</sup> well, I never!

<sup>254</sup> New World

<sup>255</sup> mind

<sup>256</sup> body

<sup>257</sup> to attend school

<sup>258</sup> unteachable

<sup>259</sup> not ready to learn

<sup>260</sup> learned

to an end and refection<sup>261</sup> was served, –often to a parent, even to a servant, in interested, even fascinated attendance, – often in the conservatory, or, weather permitting, in the garden,

which a score of ortolans<sup>262</sup> were at last putting to those rights which are right because they are satisfactory,

with all five boys hanging from him, – one from the worn lapels of his clerical coat, one from each arm, one a-pigga-back<sup>263</sup>, and one a-pisty-poll<sup>264</sup>, – laughing and panting hugely, spinning around, and quoting Cicero, *Omnia mea mecum porto*<sup>265</sup>, then gently shaking them all from him, and until his breath was regained, half-pretending exhaustion, lying on the warm grass, he might discourse in an underbreath<sup>266</sup> upon the mysteries sufficient in a godless universe : its great order, which rather than a marvel, is simply the indispensable condition of its existence.

Upon almost any pretext, upon almost any subject, Michael could expound grandly, and always fascinatingly, whatever came to his mind, for the man needed but to look about, or even close his eyes, and look inside about to find a subject with which to charge his students with astonishment, for instances : he would say that the raspberries and blackberries the children were eating, so cool and fresh-picked, were acinus fruits, because, as they could see, they comprised clusters of drupels, themselves comprising many drupes, or drupelets, making each fruit therefore?, drupaceous, that to be bat-eyed was to be mentally blind, obtuse, imbecilic, missing of the finer shades of thought, feeling, and meaning, that to be babyshed was to be deceived by childish or foolish tales, or baggerment, which was simply flathers or rubbish, that a *giant's-stride* was a gymnastical apparatus consisting of a tall pole with ropes or chains apically<sup>267</sup> attached, the nether end of which gripping and running, carried one around and aloft, and with the lofting halp<sup>✓</sup> of the smallest child Harold, – with a grace surprising in a man of such bulk, – demonstrating his words, and the children saying excitedly oh they must have one!, so were drawings immediately made, presented to the parents, and the contraption standing high to 40 feet, (still to be seen from the north windows), was constructed from the trunk of a dead cedar, *Juniperus Bermudiana*<sup>268</sup>.

Veridical<sup>269</sup>, orotund<sup>270</sup> of voice, but not of writing, – for this then meant pompous, turgid, bombastic, – polylogous<sup>271</sup>, yet never a sciolist<sup>272</sup>, and in no way given to hyperbole, Michael was a delightfully unpredictable, even impulsive, and best of all and very rare : an ever *interesting* man,

---

<sup>261</sup> refreshment

<sup>262</sup> gardeners

<sup>263</sup> piggy back

<sup>264</sup> carrying a child on the shoulders

<sup>265</sup> all my possessions I carry with me

<sup>266</sup> subdued voice

<sup>267</sup> of or at the apex

<sup>268</sup> pencil cedar, Bermuda cedar, used for ship building, houses, furniture, and fuel

<sup>269</sup> truthful, corresponding to facts

<sup>270</sup> full, round, resonant of voice

<sup>271</sup> much speaking

<sup>272</sup> pretentious, of superficial knowledge

for he would suddenly upsolve<sup>273</sup>, apropos<sup>274</sup> of nought save something dredged from the midst of a reverie, of which he was particularly fond, for a few instances?

aye, that for instance bubbles in boiling water were once called boilouns, and that one such bubble was once called a walme; he would sometimes go to extraordinary lengths to explain that although there was much magic to be found in words, there was also much legerdemain, – which was illusion, deception, – so it was very important to be able dissever<sup>275</sup> between words of a sound constitution and words which were so to speak incocted<sup>276</sup>, rizzered<sup>277</sup>, or green<sup>278</sup>, whereupon trotting to the blackboard he would illustrate his point with examples; upon other occasions, concerning for example words nearly identical in sound, he would explain : to feel complacent is to feel self-satisfaction, and to be complaisant is to be obliging or polite, to be adversed is to be opposed or standing in diameter with, and to be aversed is to be disinclined, to appraise is to value, to apprise is to inform, notify, or place a value upon, to assay is to test, to analyse, or to estimate, and to essay is to try, or to attempt, towards is direction and toward relation, biannual means twice a year, biennial every two years, casual means happening chancemeal, causal refers to a cause, insolate means to expose to the rays of the Sun, and insolite means unusual, wontless<sup>279</sup> or strange,

— Like me, perhaps, your beloved teacher, and he would often scowl almost half-viciously and say, — I hope you are glopping, or sucking in, these wonderful words, my haspats<sup>280</sup>, else you grow up gomerals, which like nine parts of the great big stupid public world, is bird-eyed<sup>281</sup>, mannerless, loutish, and fool,

and the haspenalds<sup>282</sup> would nod, but without overcraft<sup>283</sup>, for they all prided they were evolving into educands<sup>284</sup>.

Michael would also jactate<sup>285</sup> at length upon single words, such as for example, oh, nuncupative, which meant declared by word of mouth, rather than by escript<sup>286</sup>, as was said of a will made at the point of death, or that piscatorial meant of fishers or fishing, that to make the pot with two ears was to stand as their master when a quisquulous<sup>287</sup> answer came, with arms akimbo, or with hands on hips, elbows outward bent; often too he railed

---

<sup>273</sup> explain

<sup>274</sup> by the way

<sup>275</sup> distinguish

<sup>276</sup> uncooked

<sup>277</sup> half-dried or salted

<sup>278</sup> unsalted

<sup>279</sup> unaccustomed

<sup>280</sup> youths between boys and men

<sup>281</sup> staring

<sup>282</sup> youths between men and boys

<sup>283</sup> deceit

<sup>284</sup> persons educated

<sup>285</sup> discuss, bandy about

<sup>286</sup> a writing

<sup>287</sup> of the nature of rubbish or refuse

against shyness, – which maketh a man more afraid of the criticisms of mere acquaintances than of his deepest being and its conscience, – and humility, – which, like mystical, invisible gods that man cannot skill of, so restricts growth, – and to press this point : had he not at the very outset<sup>288</sup> insisted they not only call him Michael?, for that was natural, it was his name, but use him body and mind as if he was a canvas, to at first slaister<sup>289</sup> with great fun, then later when less craftless to limn<sup>290</sup> say a paysage<sup>291</sup>, with perhaps an effect *sfumato*<sup>292</sup>, then later still, when the hand and eye faltered less, to transpiciously<sup>293</sup> portrait whatever part of the world required it, for to be sure the greater part of man could only scumble<sup>294</sup>.

It is worthy of no more than a passing note that in these early years Overslaugh was partial to the conjecturalities of the philosopher Helvétius, a man who, ignoring heredity, claimed that the mind of a *vagitum infantis*<sup>295</sup>, in a state of omniparity<sup>296</sup>, was capable of any kind of discipline and instruction that may be afforded, (but this was a belief one day to suffer a slight diminishment when despite his best efforts one or perhaps two of his students turned out to be, – comparatively speaking of course,

whereas compare *with*, implies similarities and differences, compare *to*, implies resemblances,

– dunces); in the intervals between his exciting, but, to ensure paideia<sup>297</sup>, very brief lessons, – often of only 30 dense minutes, – when the children were free to amuse themselves, Overslaugh would silently wonder at his charges, for though three of them were unrelated to the two Trokes boys, they all shared the same unmistakable bodily lineaments and facial features, which if hitherto scarcely touched upon will be herewith detailed and entreated.

So as to once for all discharges the pen from dealing with this matter further : for his personal qualities, both natural and moral, – for a Troke was no man's copy, – take as uniquely follows : whereas there are of course exceptions not overly numerous, the natural backward thrust of the Troke head in strange company prevented it from ever adopting the inclinations typical of characters devoid of vitality, yet the head in solitude was lowered in proportion to the quantity, – suppose it a little, or suppose it much, – of intelligence and reflection; beneath a broad high forehead, – which in the males, with the advent of incipient calvities<sup>298</sup>, ascended far farther, –

---

<sup>288</sup> outset

<sup>289</sup> paint or colour in a vulgar manner

<sup>290</sup> paint

<sup>291</sup> country scene, landscape

<sup>292</sup> having indistinct, blurred, outlines

<sup>293</sup> clearly

<sup>294</sup> soften outlines of a painting by adding thin coat of almost dry colour

<sup>295</sup> newborn babe

<sup>296</sup> general equality

<sup>297</sup> education aimed at forming an enlightened, mature mind

<sup>298</sup> baldness

the Troke face, because so animate, so aspectabund<sup>299</sup>, was prone to early rutidosis<sup>300</sup>; the hair was fair, often very fair in the young, very fine, very late to grey, and in males often naturally parted on the right, on what has been called the woman's side,

for it is said that hair parted on the right maketh a person look warm and feminine, and on the left maketh one to seem a organized, logical, driven, confident, competent, and masculine,

and often bearing that double crown which upon a close-shorn head often suggested wildness.

Troke eyes were small, – a sign of strength, as large a sign of languor, – and bright blue, cerulean, – which is sky-blue, as is azurine, – but having to them also a strange, wordless, often an unsettling cast, were considered by many, especially upon first acquaintance, as small as they seemed, far too full open, – meaning perhaps too seeing, – and despite, – like of simians, their eyes, – possessing so little white to them this made it sometimes difficult to determine where they were aiming, and because seemingly secretive in their looking, not at once to be trusted; the Troke face was remarkably expressive of the supposedly eighty-one expressions believed possible of a human,

(though it would one day be said that only nine major emotions<sup>301</sup>, – supposed of Izard in *The Face of Emotion*, 1971, – or only six, – supposed of Ekman in *Expression and the Nature of Emotion*, 1984, – were dispatched to the face<sup>302</sup>),

as was the body, overall.

The eyebrows,

considered the thermometer of the mind, as the shoulder of passion, the elbow of pride and humility, the thumb of life,

long and thick, adapted themselves with every facility to the various conceptions of a vigorous mind; the nose and lips, appearing often as an atavism<sup>303</sup>, were often a trifle fleshy and full, – but rarely mollitious<sup>304</sup>, – and to a refined yet disfavoured eye, even coarse; the mouth was wide, large, with good strong teeth in it, and the voice when relax<sup>✓</sup>, clear, rich, even in blood women timbrous<sup>305</sup>, in song both strong and sweet, but in expressing intensity of passion, even in small, in trivial things, often acute, high, and penetrant; the chin was strengthful, particularly the gnathion<sup>306</sup>, the ears were often large, lobed, spheroid, once denoting talkativeness; thus the face,

---

<sup>299</sup> of face expressive

<sup>300</sup> wrinkling

<sup>301</sup> interest, enjoyment, surprise, distress, disgust, anger, shame, fear, and contempt

<sup>302</sup> surprise, happiness, fear, anger, disgust,

and sadness

<sup>303</sup> an ancestral but not parental character

<sup>304</sup> luxurious; sensuous

<sup>305</sup> resonant

<sup>306</sup> tip of the chin

which of a man gives out but a superficial knowledge, for it is by his works that his principles and capacities come to be known.

In regard to a fuller morphology<sup>307</sup>,

for it is of great import into what body, – central site of being, – the mind, – central site of meaning, – is bestowed, for as many things arise of the body to sharpen the mind, as arise to dull and rebate it,

a Troke male was generally below middle highness, – sometimes as below even the lowest degree of middle stature, as sometimes above – yet symmetrical, strong, agile, vigorous, fast, powerfully steeve<sup>308</sup>, often of considerable biacromial width<sup>309</sup>, and therefore of somatotype<sup>310</sup> mesomorph<sup>311</sup>; the neck was often short, thick, and cervicose<sup>312</sup>, the head cuboid and weighing roughly 12 pounds, the arms strong and of weight ten pounds, the legs thick and slightly bowed, and of weight often each 30 pounds, with the ankles slender, the feet were fine looking, not large but strong, the toes often long, and high was the instep,

meaning, here, the arched inner underside of the foot, called the medial longitudinal, not the lateral longitudinal along the outer underside, nor the transverse along the ball of the foot, and certainly not that which some fools believe the arched upperside.

Finally, importantly, Troke hands, – cutting edge of the mind, particularly strong minds which go never after the same grain, but each in a particular way, – were often, especially in the women, very sizeable, – faugh!, as everything is sizeable, take this to mean : of good size, – strengthly, handsome, callused, scarred, capable, and very often of great mystery<sup>313</sup>,

(as shall be learned, for a Troke, – of a family whose heart and tongue went both one way, – was ever *centum puer artium*<sup>314</sup>),

and despite the short fingers, Troke hands, – a vital component of family character, drawing often eyes to their waving talk, – could easily be described as listy<sup>315</sup>.

Despite not particularly crinitory<sup>316</sup>, appearing at the first sight faintly simian, because in all his

<sup>307</sup> appearance

<sup>308</sup> well-made and active

<sup>309</sup> shoulder-width

<sup>310</sup> three extremes of human physical types : fat endomorph, thin mesomorph, and middle ectomorph

<sup>311</sup> of a type of man with a predominance of muscle, bone and connective tissue; often aggressive and self-assertive

<sup>312</sup> strong-necked

<sup>313</sup> craft

<sup>314</sup> one who can turn his hand to anything

<sup>315</sup> opposite of listless; of a glad and eager activity, of an energetic desire or craving, with the wish and the will always to be doing at something

<sup>316</sup> hairy

being he adorned his movements with a searching grace, – for the body needs the education of exercise as much as the mind, – he was soon found to be as extraordinarily rather<sup>317</sup> of body as of mind; whilst most blood women remained long shapely, when males were given much later in life to a little fat, – evident first at the sternum, yet rarely affecting his slender bitrochanteric width<sup>318</sup>, – this was solidier far than normal, and backed by a good wall of muscle; overall, then, by the standards of the day, (or of now), neither a handsome nor a refined or fine-bred creature, a Troke,

and what he looks he is : in giving free and asking spare, in promise slow, in performance speedy, in contract circumspect, in amity sincere, and in enmity cautious,

was a strong, healthy, clever, handsome, certainly a very hardy representation of his species, full of the hectic of passion, always hungry, ever rich in need, full of energy, the which only thoughtfulness controlled the use of,

and wise too, perhaps, for in *Characters of Virtues and Vices* of 1608, Hall, between otherwise saying much rubbish, of the wise man saith this :

*There is nothing that he desires not to know; but most and first, himself: and not so much his own strength as his weaknesses. Neither is his knowledge reduced to discourse, but practice... He is seldom overseen with credulity: for, knowing the falseness of the world, he hath learned to trust himself always; others, so far as he may not be damaged by their disappointment. He seeks his quietness in secrecy; and is wont, both to hide himself in retiredness, and his tongue in himself... He loves... to see the world, unseen... His passions are so many good servants, which stand in a diligent attendance, ready to be commanded....*

As Michael partook of one of his regular dozes, – content, for the moment, that knowledge and experience were finding place in children lessoned enough to take care never to disgorge what they eat in the same condition it was swallowed, – the boys quietly reviewed what they had just that hour learned, particularly the words, for than facts, these are less easier of remembrance, examples?

that the candle-nut was a fruit of a Pacific Island shrub, known also as the candle-berry, which when alit burned with a bright light, that a dead wall was a blank wall with no openings of any kind, that an entresol was a storey between the ground and the first floor of an extruction<sup>319</sup>, that a fardel was a cumbersome burden, that blewits or bluelegs were edible porphyrous<sup>320</sup> mushrooms, that a deaf nut was a nut without a cornel<sup>321</sup>, that acorns were called Jove's nuts in this place of the world, that sifflement was whistling, that a grylle was a cricket, that a neophite was an ignoramus, that puissance was power, might, and

---

<sup>317</sup> quick, swift

<sup>318</sup> hip-width

<sup>319</sup> building

<sup>320</sup> purple

<sup>321</sup> kernel

strength, that absonant was ridiculous and contrary to reason, or unmusical, or discordant, that....

Another gift Overslaugh possessed, (similar to the gift of subtly amplifying, of eloquently explaining, difficult ideas, one day to be possessed by Graham, called *the clarifier*), was condensing unto most delightfully simple that which seemed excruciatingly cryptic, such as the philosophies of Spinoza and Locke, and, conversely, that which was thought the most blazingly obvious he could make far less so by urging his charges look long at a simple something, then describe it exhaustively, so that sometimes whole mornings would be given over to never too tiresomely examining and discussing, say, a wooden cube, or an oak-leaf, or a winged snake<sup>322</sup> Michael held secure and unharmed between his large finger and thumb, and so the demerits<sup>323</sup> and otherwise of micrology<sup>324</sup> were more nearly examined; lying upright<sup>325</sup> in the sweet grass, and to any as cared to listen, – and with an eloquence which far overmatched those who in parliament, in the pulpit, at the bar, were reputed masters, – he would expound upon say eternity, believed (still) to stretch only forth, but to reach only back to 4004 B.C.E., to the twenty-seventh of October, a Thursday, to nine o'clock in the morning, or so saith a man called James Ussher (1581-1656), – titled Archbishop of Armagh, and Primate of Ireland, but both a fool and a paederast, – in his *Annales Veteris et Novi Testamenti* of 1654, a chronology of the world from its very creation to the dispersion of the Jews in the reign of Vespasian.

Also in his almost monologues, Michael would purfle<sup>326</sup> many subjects, such as paronymy<sup>327</sup>, or paralogy<sup>328</sup>, or the bounties of human existence, or juvenescence<sup>329</sup>, – in which he always included himself, or at least as he grew older his ever-active mind, – or that consciousness has no location, &c, and by contagiously exciting over a mere idea, he and his boys would pursue it far, himself alone unto the far empires of silent doubt, whereupon, emerging from his sweated enthusiasm, as if from a dream, he would often find his audience comprised now of adults, even servants, and until he was accouraged<sup>330</sup> to continue would simper and blush like a little girl; sometimes, not often, he would play games with words, – of which, with the world far too familiar, no examples need be given, – yet sometimes too, growing quiet, almost maudlin, he would explain that some words, because of their shamelessness, their greed, had wantonly meanings manymong<sup>331</sup>, that one word may be made to look two ways, many ways,

— Twire, for instance, now abased into obscurity, once bemeaneth to glance slyly, or to look askance, meaneth slowly also to peer, to pry, to wink, also to peep, to peep out, to twinkle, to sparkle, to shine, even to turn around,

<sup>322</sup> bee

<sup>323</sup> merits

<sup>324</sup> attention to small details

<sup>325</sup> flat upon the back

<sup>326</sup> decorate, ornament, embroider

<sup>327</sup> words derived from one root

<sup>328</sup> false reasoning

<sup>329</sup> the state of being young, a youth

<sup>330</sup> encouraged

<sup>331</sup> of many sorts

and whilst language was not a delicate organism, nor was it even fragile, yet of a nature needful of protection from corruption, by alone simply improprieties, language can decay and degenerate, (particularly in these, believed the end days of the world,

of which are here six modern examples : one, *hoi polloi* originally meant the rabble, but now, via *hoity toity*, is beginning to mean aristocratic, high-born; two, *titivate* originally meant to tidy up, but now, via *tits*, is trying to be *titillate*, tickle, or to excite agreeably; three, *fortuitous* originally meant occurring by chance, *chancy*, now, via *fortune*, means *happious*, fortunate; four, *fulsome* originally meant abundant, good, *fullsome*, now means offensive, nauseous, disgusting, or *foulsome*, and soon will mean full, wholesome; five, *sad* originally meant full, satisfied, also steadfast, or constant, but now means causing of sorrow, bad; six, *dishevelled* originally meaning without head-dress, now means unkempt, untidy.)

Hereupon shaking his head almost in despair, lumbering up from the grass, – for until upright Michael was almost wholly *devenustated*<sup>332</sup>, – saying *otia dant vitia!*<sup>333</sup>, he would suggest a brisk walk, or a game of *Mollish's Land*<sup>334</sup> in which they all battled sadly<sup>335</sup>, and with much laughter, or perhaps a nameless game of his own peculiar invention which possessed such *mysterial*<sup>336</sup>, such complicated rules the boys often accused him of inventing them as situation arose, at which the *ludibund*<sup>337</sup> bear would *forgab*<sup>338</sup> a great indignance, almost a sulk, then in amazed, high tones *withsaying*<sup>339</sup> the *accusal* pathetically<sup>340</sup>, pontificating,

— Unleas<sup>341</sup> I can be *confuted*, – which by endeavouring by such silvery discourse as best likes you, I give leave to any of you to attempt, – aye, till this come, I will remain a gentleman of *tried honesty!*,

and with the game carefully resurrected in words, so came they to be even more polished of memory, of debate, of reasoning, and of logic.

As the five Troke sons grew daily more bright, resourceful, and strong, – for how could they not?, – so in this *tenour*<sup>342</sup> the early years of residency at Troke Manor passed; Odette overcame her occasional *philopatridomania*<sup>343</sup> with yearly visits to her relations in France, often in the company of her firm friend *Virginie*, who confessing herself a widow woman was believed; to Lemuel, – while becoming an accomplished orchardist and *apiarist*, continuing his forlorn

<sup>332</sup> deprived of beauty or grace

<sup>333</sup> idleness tends to vice!

<sup>334</sup> in which one player wards off the rest  
from a space supposed to hold treasure

<sup>335</sup> heartily

<sup>336</sup> mysterious

<sup>337</sup> playful

<sup>338</sup> mock

<sup>339</sup> denying

<sup>340</sup> passionately

<sup>341</sup> unless

<sup>342</sup> manner of continuity

<sup>343</sup> homesickness

endeavours as an amateur perfumier, – life at this time appeared to him a fine thing, oh a very fine thing indeed!, and he smiled much, delighted to be maffled<sup>344</sup> at the prolificacy<sup>345</sup> of a world, – without any hand but time separated first into two firmaments, then into a myriad disparent<sup>346</sup> parts, – deservent of great wonder everichon<sup>347</sup>; in summer, through his nursling fields, into a neighbouring wood, Lemuel regularly led his two women and five boys, with to the rear the silently delighted Michael, and sternmost a servant carrying refreshments, ready to oblige whatever even whimsical need might eventuate, for as Trokes took as well care to be served as of them that did serve, servants were not unaware of their good fortune.

With the air warm, the shadows dappled, with birds darting, singing, gathering the boys about him, his melodious voice made quiet out of respect for the seeming delighted preoccupation of the parents up ahead, Michael explained,

— Somewhere over there is a musical willow warbler ever attempting to find the Lydian mode<sup>348</sup>, and there, see it?, a goldfinch, which, with its encrimson face, head black and white, and beautiful gold bars in the wings, see?, was known long ago, – when language, still moving, tending to a meridian not yet attained, was Anglo-Norse, – as the chelaundre, then the thistlewarp, more lately as the proud-tailor, and in Cheshire they call him the jack-nicker. Those with the ears for his excellent whistle searching, will find that handsome scholar the bullfinch, *Pyrrhula vulgaris*, with his stocky beak, his glossy black mask and cape, and do you know, – for many names is a sign of love, – in the west he is called the coal-hood, in the east the alpe and the blood-olph, in the north the bud-bird and the tonnihood, whileas elsewhere others do yet maintain otherwise his name, for in Lancashire he is called the black-cap and the thickbill, in Norfolk the olpe, and if in our neighbouring Devon simple folk refer to him as the budpicker, but here he is known as the tawny and the red-whoop, and manywhere he is called the nope and the redtail. Though we cannot see one, in similar case is the chaffinch, which is called the ribinet, the sheldapple, the spink, the roberd, yet up in the north, – marking of course that while my finger has no monopoly on up, north is an arbitrary polarity, – he is called the bull's-pink, the sheely, the piefinch, in Yorkshire the scoby, whereas here he is called the twink, and yet strange to say the handsome greenfinch is known by little more than the siskin, the grosbeak, and the green-linnet. Yonder crawling down the tree trunk is a nuthatch, and can you hear afar the carrion crow?, – a bird very smart, – called also the gorcrow and the black-neb, in the north the ket-craw, and despite his raucity<sup>349</sup>, and his dark reputation with farmers, he owns to a large vocabulary when he wishes, and that my gloppen<sup>350</sup> young man was red

<sup>344</sup> perplexed in the extreme

<sup>345</sup> fruitfulness

<sup>346</sup> varied

<sup>347</sup> every one

<sup>348</sup> medieval mode whose scale pattern is

that of playing F to F on the white keys  
of a piano

<sup>349</sup> raucous quality or condition

<sup>350</sup> startled

grouse rocketting<sup>351</sup>!

All this bloviation<sup>352</sup>, diatyposis<sup>353</sup>, and lamprophony<sup>354</sup>, but never lethologica<sup>355</sup>, nor ever paraphemia<sup>356</sup>, – and this reporting of which with such lightness as is here, of words and of children their joys and laughter, &c, must not be expected to elsewhere repeat, – delighted everyone present, even the half-literate servant who often moved in closer the better to overhear and so be, if not enlarged, then at least eased<sup>357</sup> by this ever delighting man who rhapsodised upon anything, even butterflies and beetles,

— Look!, a ladybird, called the ladybug, the golden-bug, the golden-knop, the fly-golding, by some the cushy-cow-lady, and my favourite which is god-almighty's-cow, said to bear a spot for every sorrow of the world..., gather and see, these are billetings, waggying, or scumber, which are the droppings of a fox, there same of a rabbit which are called sometimes cotying..., and these are fostale, which are the tracks of a hare., see here?, this is a wild orchid called Lady's Slipper...;

extolling then upon snails and spyncoppis<sup>358</sup>, showing them all a bee-bike<sup>359</sup> he had lately discovered, – for Overslaugh was not always companioned by his students, – he pointed then to dragon-flies hovering above the rillet<sup>360</sup> which were called also adder-flies and yedward, adding that within the hyaline<sup>361</sup> shallows of that stream there was the possible presence of fish, such as the tench, *Tinca vulgaris*, a good and healthsome fish of an excellent wholesome meat, or the carp of the family *Cyprinidae*, also choicely good, – though Salvianus esteemeth this fish no better than a slimy watery meat, – or even the anadromous<sup>362</sup> trout,

— And all about us, Michael said quietly, narrowing his eyes mysteriously, slowly sweeping his arm, — Are animals and birds which only silence, stillness, or chance, – said to be that sole direction one canst not see, – but above all : patience and a faith, will reward with the sight thereof, such as the pine marten, squirrels red and grey, of genus *Sciurus*, and that of or pertaining to squirrels is called therefore?, anyone?, yes, sciurine, and their nests are called dreys, such as the hedgehog, *Erinaceus europaeus*, sometimes hight<sup>363</sup> an urchin, or the vole of the family *Microtus*, or the badger which has an hundred names in these isles, and his droppings are called werderobe, and his lovely Latin name is *Meles taxus*, and look! blackberries!, which are called by some persons blacebergan and blackspice, and in the

<sup>351</sup> bird rising straight up when flushed

<sup>352</sup> ornate verbosity

<sup>353</sup> vivid presentation by means of exciting language

<sup>354</sup> shining, ringing oratory

<sup>355</sup> the inability to remember the right word

<sup>356</sup> the employment of wrong words

<sup>357</sup> entertained

<sup>358</sup> spiders

<sup>359</sup> nest of wild bees

<sup>360</sup> stream

<sup>361</sup> resembling glass

<sup>362</sup> migrating upriver from the sea to spawn in fresh water

<sup>363</sup> called, named

north bumblekites, and an huge hug to he who picks the most!,

whereupon the children, even Lemuel, even his women too, with even the servant tempted, rushed loudly toward the brambles, for his warmth of voice, contagious enthusiasm, and occasional mimature<sup>364</sup> deeply inderead<sup>✓</sup> him to the whole household.

Stopping to have luncheon beneath the great ilex self-planted in 1591, straightway afterward, with his baggie<sup>365</sup> full, in a backsunded<sup>366</sup> spot profuse of flowers, falling into an immediate smiling doze, within a half hour Michael would exuscitate<sup>367</sup> and after a good loud stretch, open his large leathern and mysterious satchel unfailingly carried, take out perhaps a wooden flageolet, and play a sweet but strange tune, partly of his own devisal, partly taken from an old Druidic manuscript,

actually written in mushroom, – the *Coprinus comatus*, or the shaggy ink cap, – its ink,

found in the library of his father, or from his pocket extracting a hard ball challenge his charges to a simple game of catch whereat he would attempt to cheat to learn them that honesty goeth never unbacked; oh there were many occasions like this, in truth hundreds, thousands, (indeed until his departure from Troke Manor in 1826, 52 family children, of which 23 were girls, passed through his wonderful hands and mind, and when the children of servants, – until Trokes dispensed with them in 1835, – and rare guests are included, then the total surpasses 100, and when the adults, who often attended his classes, are included, then it could be said that everyone, everyone passed through his hands!)

When the children sometimes asked their beloved tutor tell them again about his life, particularly how he chanced upon Troke Manor, Michael would smile, shyly colour, and so his story, which if a simple, short, essentially uneventful, but really quite a magical tale, was never told in the same way, (as futurely Jeffrey), never in the same words, – an unnecessary concession to verisimilarity, perhaps, but as there are no true synonyms,

for just as no man, so no word ever has exactly the same meaning twice,

this is a matter concerning which Words need not scruple to comment, – of how his father, coming from the pulpit of his well-attended church, to the pulpit of his dinner table, – bearing often a baked shoulder of mutton with potatoes under it, – and without adjusting his voice nor his need to disturb, – for he was a sermoncinator<sup>368</sup>, – would yet again urge his sole son, then aged seven, to turn from the devilry of the classics, toward a direction far more godward; every day boy Michael did indeed obediently turn more his mind, but with his always stout body remaining secretly more askance, for though he knew the bible to contain, – if little wit, no

---

<sup>364</sup> mimicry

<sup>365</sup> belly

<sup>366</sup> shady

<sup>367</sup> awake out of sleep

<sup>368</sup> one who constantly preaches

humour, and a many of doubtful truths, – much fine writing, none, in his unvoiced opinion, full compared to beloved Shakespeare and Donne.

So passed the years until he to a seminary at a miserable 17 was sent with a portmanteau containing as well all the requisite tomes which to his young mind were as dry as dust, hidden beneath his shirts and body linen, the seditious writings of Luther and Paracelsus; so passed an uneasy<sup>369</sup> year on what he thought terribly short commons<sup>370</sup>, a year in which he was often disciplined for too much thinking, – a subjective experience of the brain, of brain activity, – for not enough believing, for whereas whilst regarding discourse and behaviour Overslaugh observed a very right mediocrity between simple timid modesty and blustering forward confidence, it was nevertheless very difficult, particularly in a youth with such a nimble fancy, not to be so curious, so subtle in his struggle to comprehend divine matters, as to fail to hide his discontent at the manner in which a most profound piece of doctrine was stated in only such words as most distinctly transmitted into the simplest understanding,

for as saith one who was a fool, a nidiot<sup>✓</sup> : Gilbert Burnet, Lord Bishop of Sarum, – (today Salisbury), – in his *Thoughts on Education*, written in 1668 : whilst the learning of logic, – which teacheth youth sophistry, or pedantry at best, – should last a seven days at most, all philosophical discussion, – which maketh youth vainly subtle and contentiously jangling, – must be condemned;

so passed another year as if unnoticed, – for he had learned circumspection, or the art of shutting up, – then a third which brought anger and temptation, then came a fourth which so tried his inherited faith, his patience with it, very dearly, then upon the very imminence of his ordination, as stated, as if in an avision<sup>371</sup>, as if words themselves were oneiropompist<sup>372</sup>!, he was delivered unto the knowledge that it was not in god he believed, and not god which existed, no!, but simply the world of man and his words, so he wordlessly quit the seminary which he henceforth described as a *domicilium insanorum*<sup>373</sup>, a Bedlam<sup>374</sup>.

Knowing he would never make peace with his zealant father, nor even with his mother, who was too weak to be other than as strong as her husband, returning not to home he commenced search for those to whom he could spread the word that it was words that recognise, that acknowledge, hence bringeth this world,

this three-fold world, elementary, celestial, intellectual, which offers to its man no want of anything, if he want not money,

---

<sup>369</sup> difficult

<sup>370</sup> provisions or food provided for all members of a group

<sup>371</sup> a vision, a warning in a dream

<sup>372</sup> a sender of dreams

<sup>373</sup> madhouse

<sup>374</sup> formerly the Priory of Bethlem, in St Botolph Without, Bishopsgate, from 1675 a hospital for lunatics built near London Wall, in Moorfields

into the open, award it its light, and award man the eyes to see it; but, as his travels confirmed, – so few daring to believe him, for he was come too late, man saw with other eyes, false eyes, saw other things, things unreal, – after a month, a year, two years, on the road, four years, after many sad but unsorry adventures, beginning to fear of ever finding even a single man who allowed god to occasionally guest in his house, in the best room perhaps, ayel, but be bound still to the laws of that family, particularly hamesucken<sup>375</sup>, Overslaugh, at age 27, *post varios casus*<sup>376</sup>, came by the magic of chance upon the newly tenanted Troke Manor, – which he thought should rather be called Troke Palace, – and there, after the long walk up the drive to the front door, came upon two men, Anthony and his son Lemuel, whom he was delighted to discover needed almost no enlightenment, why even bimong<sup>377</sup> the women and servants he found god to be almost absent, as was only proper and wise, for as with anything else : that which does not properly, unmysteriously alert of its presence, cannot blame man for any disbelief howsoever felt, nor any violence; in the pure minds of five young boys, – of perceptive and intellective faculties vigorous and alert, of conception quick, of memory retentive, – Overslaugh came quickly to learn what was contentment, happiness in godlessness and knowledge, and so again ended his tale.

Suddenly gain-spurred<sup>378</sup>, he appealed<sup>379</sup> his charges to point to something, anything and he would do only his best, for his nature allowed it him not otherwise, – and those who have said : do not always your best, for it is neither wise nor safe for a man to stay stood upon the top of his strength : fools!, – to name it, and so with fingers darting out, he said to Jean,

— That my decimo-sexto<sup>380</sup> is the fluffy head of a dandelion when in seed, or a blow-ball, and far too simple a challenge, that, Harold, is a rusting chimbe<sup>381</sup>, and this my bicrural<sup>382</sup> friends, is a kissing gate<sup>383</sup>, and that, rude Claude, is the buccula<sup>384</sup> of your sitient<sup>385</sup> syntax, dominic, or bum brusher<sup>386</sup> ...;

but it was in the conservatory one day that Michael was at last bettered in this game which it seemed was always ongoing, for after Louis pointed to a mourdant<sup>387</sup>, Marcel to galipot<sup>388</sup>, Claude to a balaustine<sup>389</sup>, Harold to a bush of the *Ribus* family, with its specific epithet<sup>390</sup> *rubrum*<sup>391</sup>, Jean innocently pointed, whereupon Michael stood in silence before a small but not

<sup>375</sup> crime of assaulting a person in their own home

<sup>376</sup> after various hindrances

<sup>377</sup> among

<sup>378</sup> excited at the prospect of gain

<sup>379</sup> challenged

<sup>380</sup> youth

<sup>381</sup> rim of a barrel

<sup>382</sup> two-legged

<sup>383</sup> small gate swinging in a U, allowing one

person to pass at a time

<sup>384</sup> double chin

<sup>385</sup> thirsty

<sup>386</sup> schoolmaster

<sup>387</sup> tongue of a buckle

<sup>388</sup> resinous substance which oozes from fir trees and hardens when dried by the air

<sup>389</sup> pomegranate tree

<sup>390</sup> second name of the binomial given to a species

<sup>391</sup> red currant

young tree which he simply could not recognise; after the long silent surprise which was experienced by all, following loud and emotive<sup>392</sup> cheering almost out of measure, – not most of all by Jean, for he felt put out that he had not received from his teacher at least a pat on the head, – because he simply stood there with knitted brows and stared, the Troke literator<sup>393</sup>, on that instant, seemed to his students to become a great mite more human; (what caused this man to be so all-a-mort<sup>394</sup> was excusable, for the tree was a whitebeam, or *Sorbus leyana*, which was not officially recognised and named until 100 years later).

In case examples have not yet been presented enough : pointing one day to a chatter-pie<sup>395</sup> Michael explained,

— To see but one is supposedly apotmic<sup>396</sup>, to see two, as we are now doing, denotes to simple minds merriment, or a marriage, – or in Lancashire for reasons doubtsome : bad luck, – to see three is *indicium*<sup>397</sup> of a successful journey, to see four supposedly means good news, – or again in Lancashire death, – and to see five nanpies<sup>398</sup> denotes company coming; but all this is merely superstition, which, – despite needing to be looked far more into than it is, – is of service only to those who want to be afraid : their imagination demands it; look, a hare!, a solitary animal of the leporine family, its droppings called crotels, its killing called?, someone?, anyone?, yes leporicide, and a hare-lip, which the poor yoke-fellow<sup>399</sup> of Ainesmith the undergardener always hides under her hand, is called by a physic a lagostoma. Now whereas the sufferer is spurned unfairly as an afterling<sup>400</sup>, he or she is not of course, nothing like, for as the faults in man, – of course in woman too, for woman too is man, – can come only from without, so similarly the agate, or tiny person, nis<sup>401</sup> to blame, also the anebous, as are you all, meaning unable to grow a beard, for such can only by a fool be mocked, but by none with decence reproached, nor can veterescence, meaning growing old, be ridiculised, for this and death comes eventually to us all; so never forget, he who sees faults innate demonstrates also the shortcomings of his own experiences, as well a distinct want of wellwillingness<sup>402</sup> and understanding, and a child of unmarried parents is called a bastard, – facts of life are nothing to blush at, sir!, – and a fatherless child is also called a harecoppe as well as a whorecop, an avetrol, a whiz-bird, as well much silly else, and do you know there is even a word for a bastard son of a bastard father of a bastard grandfather?, no?, the word is uzzard, and they are none of them guilty, save of suffering a narrowness of fortune, and thus is delivered up a surplusage on the

<sup>392</sup> exaggeratedly emotional

<sup>393</sup> teacher of letters; schoolmaster

<sup>394</sup> struck dumb, confounded

<sup>395</sup> magpie

<sup>396</sup> unlucky

<sup>397</sup> indication

<sup>398</sup> magpies

<sup>399</sup> spouse

<sup>400</sup> inferior

<sup>401</sup> is not

<sup>402</sup> benevolence

subject!

To Lemuel and the misses Odette and Jeanette he then turning, in a different voice, – much softened, rather formal, yet still warm, for after all it was a servant he was, – he briefly informed them, recently hearing it of a gardener, – who in a tavern whilst sipping of his mahogany<sup>403</sup> had just had it of a local farmer sipping of a dram of rum, – that the hanger<sup>404</sup> they were now passing through, as well as the holts<sup>405</sup> they approached, to which were soon to cease to attach the rights of *nemus ad sepes*<sup>406</sup>, *nemus ad domus*<sup>407</sup>, as well as pasturage<sup>408</sup>, foldage<sup>409</sup>, pannage<sup>410</sup>, and, – though the ground was insuitable<sup>✓</sup>, – of turbary<sup>411</sup>, as well of the stream piscary<sup>412</sup>, were to be unselved<sup>413</sup> in the coming autumn, and the handsome standels<sup>414</sup> to be forever felled during their very office of yearly decidence<sup>415</sup>, for the whole was to be rendered as sartage<sup>416</sup>, and hereupon sighing, Overslaugh added that it was sad how man gobbled up the Earth as if there were no end to it; with this intelligence that evening discussed by the family elders, the very next day Lemuel commenced upon the purchased of the threatened 457 acres, (and so, in this manner, by the purchase of leases of fee-simples, – rather than again granting them for say twenty-one years and one or two lives, or for 31 years and three lives<sup>417</sup>, reverting then to the donor, – by little and little, Troke Manor attained to its present modest size of very near 5000 acres).

Now as Overslaugh was a man azytic<sup>418</sup>, – and with well-meaning Odette believing the anymphic<sup>419</sup> condition oh a sad one indeed, and much to be mended, – after numerous attempts over the years at finding the man a wife, usually at annual garden-parties, Overslaugh one day bowed to her, led her aside, and with a broad but peculiarly pained smile, the budge<sup>420</sup> man made it very clear to her that whilst appreciating her efforts, he simply could not be coerced into marrying, for though he no more read the fool book, which principally served to terrify evil with agony, and to glorify good with reward, – parts of the bible,

founded whole on fevers, on enthusiastical heats, inspired by the rants and rapt of oracles, sybils, and lunatics, the melancholies of the bereft, the hysterical distempers of the infirm, the reveries of dotards, the avantry<sup>421</sup> of drunkards, the puffings of powermongers, the

<sup>403</sup> Cornish drink made of two parts gin and one of treacle

<sup>404</sup> wood on a slope

<sup>405</sup> wooded tops of hills

<sup>406</sup> wood for fencing

<sup>407</sup> wood for building or a house generally

<sup>408</sup> right to graze stock

<sup>409</sup> right to fold or pen sheeps by night

<sup>410</sup> right to pasture swines

<sup>411</sup> right to dig peat as fuel

<sup>412</sup> right to take fish

<sup>413</sup> felled by the axe

<sup>414</sup> trees reserved for growth as timber

<sup>415</sup> falling off or away, as leaves in autumn

<sup>416</sup> the turning of woodland into arable land

<sup>417</sup> the lessee choosing three names, the lease ran for 21 or 31 years, then as long as any of the named lived

<sup>418</sup> unmarried

<sup>419</sup> without a bride

<sup>420</sup> brisk; stirring

<sup>421</sup> boastings

funnings of fablers, the tattles of talers, &c,

echoed to him still, particularly pertaining to the pure matters of chasteness and celibacy, a condition of which he was particularly fond, and in which he felt perfectly comfortable; overmore<sup>422</sup>, to a rare man such as himself, given to unashamed autolatry<sup>423</sup>, a wife would turn him malacissant<sup>424</sup>, and in a word : marriage would be a setting up in trade without a capital,

— So please, madam, let this ground therefore be laid : never again need this matter be broached, neither by words nor by actions!, for I far prefer the abstemious<sup>425</sup> before the conjugal estate, in spite of the inclinations, provocations, stirrings, stings, buds, branches, dregs, infections, tastes, feelings, scents, and the succulences of womenkind, calmly, – deliciously calmly!, – continuing very faintly in me still;

whereat Odette blushing, samly<sup>426</sup> kissing his red cheek, never pressed him more; but it is interesting to note that whereas he was a healthy gynophile<sup>427</sup>, yet, how to say?, wanting if not a terebra<sup>428</sup>, then a capacity for its occasional engorgement, and oh how well he knew this truth!, even unto his long-home<sup>429</sup> : he was far less disturbed by this aspect of his corporeality than by the fact he could not fly.

It could very easily be said, – all the more so for its great truth, – that these between 1770 and 1799, – (when the murder of young Joseph first revealed the presence of their Inimicus), – were the idyllic years for this larger and far more fruitful branch of the biramous<sup>430</sup> family, the closest they had ever approached to a small, near-perfect, Utopia, indeed, – for after all this fabled place nowhere existed, – Troke Manor was at this time, – (more in retrospect, of course, than at the time), – a veritable heaven; (in times to come, – for happiness in so sublunary a state can scarcely be felt, save by a comparison with misery, – so various, so changeable, with no time nor age yielding the like precedent, the family never would, neither could, look more for such days as these after this).

In the light, or more properly the dark, of what was soon to forthcome, (for with the disappearance of Joseph preparing the way thereunto, miserable times were soon to come to pass in which life would wax great and troublesome which before seemed so easy and light), it can be said therefore with certainty, or rather, – as certainty, in the sense of feeling sure, does not entail truth, does not guarantee knowledge, – *some* certainty, that Trokes very much required this not too brief Arcadian epoch to both find their strong legs and plant their strong roots, actually their very first roots, for with few brief exceptions Trokes had never before, neither in

<sup>422</sup> in addition

<sup>423</sup> self-worship

<sup>424</sup> soft or tender

<sup>425</sup> temperance in indulgence

<sup>426</sup> agreeingly

<sup>427</sup> a man fond of women

<sup>428</sup> instrument for boring

<sup>429</sup> grave

<sup>430</sup> two-branched

themselves nor in their ancestors, been other than tenants of another man's soil; Lemuel once saying to his sons,

— Enjoying so the current peace and flourishing estate of our growing kingdom, – for we are now in the prime of our world, – we must nevertheless concert and adopt such further measures as are necessary for securing the same to future generations,

within a few years coming death, calamity, intrigue, – which when superadded to villainy almost defied belief, – this would be said : he who would know that persons in the greatest affluence of fortune are happier than such as have only a competency, knows an untruth.

In process of time coming into a properly settled way, Trokes commenced to believe they were actually an empire, their barns all full, the krine<sup>431</sup> in warm shelter, the larders and the cellars all bounteous, the children laughing, the women not mostwhere less forward than the men, everywhere constantly learning, skills, and crafts, and words of course, millions of them; with empire cometh change : man taketh another step along that road to a mental evolution, – which like the physical, orders its life to multiply, variate, to live the strongest, and die the weakest, – which leadeth to grace,

a word of too vague meaning perhaps, but by the heart supposedly understood,

but alas slowly, for such progress is so very taken up, (even at present), with repairing those old damages effected massmeal by that debilitating disease in which a god,

taken in the following very gentle, indeed sheer cogger<sup>432</sup>, acceptation : plasmator<sup>433</sup> of all, owner, organiser, provider, master, planner, sustainer, cherisher, and giver to man of security,

always centred.

Growing all not too quickly into youth, into early manhood, so it was that one day, play finding a new harmonic in quiet, in company, Lemuel, after a silence, asking his five sons outright if they were happy, and they replying, here immediately, there thoughtfully, there echoing, Oh yes, papa!, Lemuel went on to ask if their happiness was in part attributable to their similar age, with all of them as if brothers, all of them friends?, and to this they also agreed; Lemuel had often before told them the history of the family, how at last the Troke tree was beginning to be ramous<sup>434</sup>, to put forth its shoots, and that every male improcreate<sup>435</sup> was a rownsepyk<sup>436</sup> ungrown, and every death a boishe<sup>437</sup> lopped, and how they five were not only the bloom, but

---

<sup>431</sup> cattles

<sup>432</sup> phoney flattery

<sup>433</sup> maker or creator

<sup>434</sup> to have branches

<sup>435</sup> unbegotten

<sup>436</sup> branch

<sup>437</sup> branch

the future fruit and seed, for if they could make this age to blossom, the next could not but greater bear; but because on this day an uncharacteristic seriousness was laid upon their father, – or uncle as he was called by the three youngest, – his latest recital of their history, going all the way back to Lemuel, almost unto his vision, which in slow-told, soberly words, because this caused the children to become too quiet and almost solempne<sup>438</sup>, Lemuel suddenly smiling, jumping up, offering a plaudit<sup>439</sup> to the one who could take his hat from his head, loudly followed quaquaversal<sup>440</sup>, he ran out of the library, down the hall, past the hat-stand, from which he snatched a hat, and madly into the garden pursued by youth at its most excited, most joyous; on subsequent telling of their history, again sowing the seed of productivity and fecundity in the variably fertile soils of their minds, the children grasping the urgency of matters less loosely, such was his skill in this matter that come manhood every son, already primed by Overslaugh with intellectual virility, had acquired also an eagerness to see himself impressively fathering an assembly of similarly indowed<sup>✓</sup> sons.

In the second half of the posterior of a day, or early one evening, in the spring of 1777, seven men : twins Louis & Marcel now 20, Claude 19, Jean 18, Harold 17, their father Lemuel now 43, and their grandfather Anthony age 69, were seated in the library, the leather spines all about them, many of them as much shining with recency<sup>441</sup>, as the old with the polish of bees-wax and hands, and each it is to be hoped, – despite showing their backs, – sapial<sup>442</sup>; if one is to believe that wrawful, irascible, disappointed Lord Chesterfield, – in the shadow of whose mighty name his hopeless son trembled, – who saith :

*Due attention to the inside of books, and due contempt for the outside, is the proper relation between a man of sense and his books,*

then Trokes were not a man of sense, for they were never so occupied in studying the contents as to have no time to service the bindings; seated not exactly around the circular table in the library, – for it was almost too large even to reach into the open centre, – but along one quadrant, Anthony, proud to have within his ken five persons descended of his body alive together, – whilst in the farms about 20 efforts were not unusual, many surviving, – was this early evening time quiet and withdrawn, for he lately feeling his years, – three score and near ten, – aware that one end or another was inexorably approaching, was beginning rather to resent the unhealthy tint that infirmity gave to his every thought and deed; for early that morning, rising with the worms to write letters to booksellers from whom he had received catalogues comprising thousands of articles,

C. Heydinger, William Otridge, both of the Strand, Samuel Hayes of Oxford Street, James

---

<sup>438</sup> solemn

<sup>439</sup> congratulation

<sup>440</sup> turning, running, dipping in all directions

<sup>441</sup> newness

<sup>442</sup> providing wisdom

Lackington of Chiswell Street...

but suddenly, feeling a futility, going forth into the garden, standing at the head of his tracks through the dewy lawn, his brain, rather his mind,

because not spacial, said to be naught but the activity of the brain, – an enormously complex biological system, — wherein reality is not passively recorded, but actively constructed, — consisting of physical, chemical, and neurophysiological entities engaged all in interactions multifariate: the point of interaction between the mind and everything else, as Descartes calleth it, – for as much as character, personality is naught but the style, the manner of such activity,

wondered what Nature had still planned for him that required such long nasal hair wherewith to deal, that necessitated his tragus<sup>443</sup> develop so marked an ototrichia<sup>444</sup>; as he looked up to the last-fading stars, then down upon the very leaf-strewn earth he bestrode,

thus in two looks gazing, merely gazing, first upon infinity, or near enough, then upon transience, sure enough,

with a cold shock he suddenly realised he knew now enough about life to acknowledge true what was before impossible : that even one's very own existence, one day, – not yet soon, but not far, – becomes, quite simply, if only for seconds together, almost insufferable.

With solemnity, and for the very first time, Anthony spoke of what he believed must have been remarkable : that advision experienced by his fourth great-grandfather Lemuel, then of his marvellous document, the which, pulling from his shirt the goatskin pouch, breaching its waterproof seal, – as six men leaned forward in amaze, – opening, he carefully showing them, explained that not 20 miles distant, 327 years before, was born its author; reading first verbatim the document, then in his own words explaining, listing the few simple rules of their quest, – the flame of which, — because the great destiny of Trokes must hold as aloof from that of worthies, as from the enormous<sup>445</sup> and the frivolous, — needs must burn brightly at its post, yet not be seen from afar, – which were entirely unknown to his five grandsons; Lemuel then informed the three younger men, rather nervously it is true, how their grandmother Gwendoline had so cleverly manipulated matters as to ensure that, quite unknown to his dear wife Odette, he was producent not of only two but of five legitimate sons; it has to be said that whilst Claude, Jean, and Harold responded to this amazing news with surprise, it was also with a calm graciousness of delight, for which Overslaugh was much responsible.

After a period of digestive silence son Anthony moved the matter onto their duty to meet the demands of the Lemuel Document, of their quest, whereupon these seven men discoursing long,

---

<sup>443</sup> small cartilaginous flap in front of the external opening of the ear

<sup>444</sup> excessive growth of hair in or on the ear

<sup>445</sup> wicked

broaching the subject of Vouchsafehood, it was only natural their minds came to a perplexed landing upon womankind, which considering the times, – despite, — save of course for the two elders, — the young men wanting of almost all worldly experience, – was a subject discussed almost without reserve; with their heads well-rinsed with wine, if many flattering, if not altogether true, things were said about the so-called *sexus sequior*<sup>446</sup>, also many things which were and are patently misconceived, and many things which are unsavoury, even unpleasant, but in greater part true, the conclusion arrived at, as the hornè Moon added its faint shadows to those of the lamps, – and till better obtain, curiosity would still rule, – was that women, – because of porcelain, as men of common earthen ware, – were to be entreated<sup>447</sup> with that delicacy, if not indeed that reserve, wherewith one deals with any unknown quantity or quality, and that pleasantly seeing women as a separate species, rather than as a counterpart or an equal, was perhaps a not unwise policy; with the appearance of a footman, the Madeira stoppered, so came the exodus to dinner.

Between the years 1778, – when youngest male Harold came to be 18, – and 1784, – when the children of Claude, Louis and their wives came of fuller age, – Michael Overslaugh having no one, – except, of course, himself, and everyone, – to teach : far from idle, for the man was never this, he devoted much of his time to deciphering, then translating, – with greatest care, else words be superfluous or either false, – six fifth- and seventh-century Latin glossaries, or word lists, – due to the many interlinear glosses by many glossators, in many languages, of inestimable worth to philology, – long in the Preterite family, as well a score of extraordinary<sup>✓</sup> rare manuscripts, still faintly redolent of oil of cedar<sup>448</sup>, from monastery and cathedral libraries, as well particularly a good amount of documents which removed from Cardiff castle escaped the destruction of the Cromwell soldiery, all of which descended to Overslaugh from his lately deceased father; (as shall later be revealed : when these findings were later added to both earlier and later discoveries, then properly ordered, the resultant document would prove to possess of a very wonderful yet enormously dangerous purport).

In early youth almost identic<sup>449</sup>, Louis & Marcel, the first of this generation to reach the estate of man, were now less so : neither was tall, but both were handsome, strong, scholarly, and a good friend;

there have been diverse that wrote before of twins, that they are endowed with special powers, that their fate is the fate of the communalty<sup>450</sup>, and whereby this was once true enough, it was alas, at this time, almost no longer so;

at a fête in Taunton in this year of 1778, these inseparable twins, meeting the individual<sup>451</sup> twins

---

<sup>446</sup> second sex

<sup>447</sup> treated

<sup>448</sup> anciently used for preserving manuscripts

<sup>449</sup> identical

<sup>450</sup> community

<sup>451</sup> indivisible

Angela and Charlotte, both 20, it was soon clear to Louis that though Charlotte, with whom he was dancing, was a delightful young lady, not only to his eyes and ears but to his gloved fingertips, he felt far more than a passing fancy for her sister Angela, who, smiling airily, daring barely to return his look, thought her partner Marcel, if a handsome youth, delightful to dance with, (as were all Trokes of blood, at all times, for their very plainest imitation of Nature could carry dance up to any degree of excellence), his brother Louis was surely a finer-looking man; whilst Marcel, smiling sweetly at his dance-partner Angela, believed in his heart that Charlotte was truly more striking than her freare<sup>452</sup>, Charlotte was thinking that if Marcel was certainly an attractive light-footed gentleman, his French-tinged word-strain<sup>453</sup> rather seductive in its way, surely Louis was a more gracious, far more comely young man; following an exchange of visits, in which innervation<sup>454</sup> with enervation contended as always for mastery, the result was firstly : the unreciprocated fondness which Louis felt for Angela slipped into an indifferent abeyance, and lastly : having entirely refrained from hoping that Marcel would look more to her own person than to her sister, losing for him the heat in her heart, Charlotte went into a fantod<sup>455</sup>.

One sunny day, as they rowed upon the river Tone,

in fact, not three miles by water from where great-great-great-aunt and uncles Ann, David, Paul, and Emil were all emdeluged<sup>456</sup>,

with, at a discreet distance of course, servants and maids in another boat, – Marcel felt his hopes of winning the favours of Charlotte must be abandoned if he was ever again to find peace in his mind, for he observed how, only an hour before, hanging so on the words of his brother, she now seemed, laying one of her legs over the other in a very unconcerned posture, so indifferent to them both as to find the shaping of doly<sup>457</sup> ripples, come of the slow circumfluous<sup>458</sup> glode<sup>459</sup> of their boat, by far the more entertaining; in her turn, because Angela felt her unexcited converse was with her own self, for no responses nor laughter forthcame from her company, particularly from Marcel to whom her every word and smile was aimed, she abruptly cooling, sliding deeper into the quissions<sup>460</sup>, looked up right into the Sun dappling the leaves of the trees; approaching then a sasse<sup>461</sup>, and needs must call the lock-keeper from his Sunday dinner, after the lockage<sup>462</sup> coming, after long and not unapprehensive minutes as the two boats slowly rose in the chill dank lock-chamber<sup>463</sup>, the sunshine again, the tossed shilling, with careful oarage<sup>464</sup>,

---

452 sister

453 accent

454 vigour

455 crotchety way of acting

456 drowned

457 melancholy

458 surrounded by water

459 glide

460 cushions

461 lock in a river

462 toll paid for passing the locks of a canal

463 the basin of a canal lock

464 motion of oars or rowing

gliding out through the head gate<sup>465</sup>, pursuing an anabranh<sup>466</sup>, they soon coming upon a delightful ait<sup>467</sup>, disembarking in the shade of a weeping-willow, opening the large seron<sup>468</sup>, they quietly partook of game, salad, sweet meats, and a French wine reputed to have a good face<sup>469</sup>.

Becoming again light-hearted these four lovers then resuming both the river and their converse, – which again came under the mercy of such emotions as are gerful<sup>470</sup>, – after adjusting his pontius<sup>471</sup> on the stern thought<sup>472</sup>, turning to Angela, – his manner full of new *empressement*<sup>473</sup>, – Marcel spoke cordially of how pleasant all this was, how succulent the weather, how sweet the birdsong, and look a kingfisher!; Angela not looking but smiling, nodding daintily, pulling tighter her glove, leaning forward, said to a daydreaming Louis that they really should have brought fishing rods for she had just seen a fish quite distinctly!, to which Louis absently agreed; after a pause, with marked sincerity in his eyes and voice, Louis asked Charlotte what she seemed so thoughtsome about, but she, shaking her dear head, only smiled and sighed; minutes passing, slowly rising from her position of languor, Charlotte then said to Marcel, had he heard?, there were some gipsies down by the village quar<sup>474</sup> with the most brightly painted caravans?, but Marcel made only an appropriate noise, for he had been thinking of what he might say to her sister Angela which would be far more absorbing than hitherto, because she seemed hardly to have listened to a word he had said all day!; barely had he taken breath to begin expounding on hopefully a most exhilarating subject when Angela began speaking to Louis about a very singular oddity in the latest style of peplum<sup>475</sup>, to which Louis merely nodded, for knowing nothing at all about blessed flounces, he was anyway trying to formulate a way of informing Charlotte about someone he knew in Bristol who made capital good riding boots, but then recalling she was afearing of horses, she would therefore be even more uninterested in what he had to say; Charlotte was anyway disheartened, for after showing Marcel the fine lace her maid had sewn to the edge of her kerchief, yet he barely glancing at it, – partly for this reason : that a too niceness of detail, particularly of frivols, was mainly to show one superlatively curious, – she lay back beneath her lowered parasol, and, trailing an ungloved hand in the water, stubbornly thought of nothing; ah, when a catenation<sup>476</sup> is broken in one link it may as well be broken in all.

Later in the afternoon, after Marcel adawed<sup>477</sup> from a brief doze, sitting up looking anew at Charlotte, at present herself dozing, he thought that even whilst asleep she was certainly the fine-boned lovely young creature he had at the first taken her to be, and he truly a fondling<sup>478</sup> for

<sup>465</sup> upstream gate of a canal lock

<sup>466</sup> branch of a stream that breaks away and later rejoins

<sup>467</sup> small island in a river

<sup>468</sup> hamper

<sup>469</sup> cheek, impudence

<sup>470</sup> variable; giddy

<sup>471</sup> small mat tied to fixed seat of boat to

prevent blisters

<sup>472</sup> bench on which a rower sits

<sup>473</sup> animated display of cordiality

<sup>474</sup> quarry

<sup>475</sup> short skirt attached to a bodice or jacket

<sup>476</sup> chain, or series like links of chain

<sup>477</sup> awoke

<sup>478</sup> fool

thinking, because of her slightly greater interest in Louis, she would not come to realise that he himself possessed at least all the fine qualities and looks of his brother; hereupon bringing from his pocket forth a volume by Shakespeare of sonnets, amidst such islands of scanty ground he sought one appropriate to expressing his new and more sensible feelings; as the boat drifted slowly along with the flow of the river, Louis at the tiller, looking to the meditabund<sup>479</sup> Angela, thinking her really a remarkably affable young lady, with a fine sense of dress, and a decorum most becoming, gazing patiently upon her, as she intently upon the water, he determined to await an opportunity to renew his suit; Angela was disesid<sup>480</sup> that she had acted desaly<sup>481</sup>, for exactly as she first intuited, – that Marcel was certainly at least the type of man she would wish to one day marry, – quickly glancing at him at his book, his fine profile, his strong veined hands, she vowed to patiently await upon an occasion to apologise for her stuntness<sup>482</sup>; beside her Charlotte was not asleep but troubled also : she now realised that she should simply have trusted to her initial feelings for that wonderful man Louis, yet she had foolishly embayed<sup>483</sup> her emotions, indeed quite as she must if her doctor was to be obeyed, – an expressly good apothecary physician, or so she had heard, – and her health made more sound, but alas yet again, condemning in her heart what her wits could not gainsay, not behaving as her senses dictated, here making a small moue, – which, noticed, unexpectedly trilled the loins of Marcel, – promised at the very next chance to respond to Louis with a great deal more grace.

But enough of these petty intrigues!, these piddling stirs!, of relating far else than this saga cares to chant; (but here, with feeling, must be said two things : firstly : this silly romancing will leave but short smart upon what is a work of drama, – an adventure perhaps, or a tragedy, – with the coming soon of murders, suicides, a wood mad Vouchsafe, mass infanticide, fire, monsters!, aye, such rhapsodising will seem unto that sweetness of past irretrievable times of which all man, whether in secret, or in open, dreams; secondly : it is perhaps a requisite of honest biography, whatever the travails, not to drown in blank silence any special thing wherein the providence and effectual working nature of the subjects are to be observed and pondered); suffice it to say they married, as the brothers originally intended, – their love, evidently, more extemporary<sup>484</sup> than of the sisters, – Louis to Angela, Marcel to Charlotte.

So it passed these new wives coming to live at the family seat, – for the house at that time was certainly spacious enough, (yet in 1851 Troke Manor was required to be more than doubled in size the better to accommodate the growing family, which in 1869 would swell to a maximum of 77 servantless residents), the grounds tolerably extense<sup>485</sup>, and the resources to finance a life of leisure, of intellectual and personal dreams, certainly not, (nor would they ever be), wanting, – to the proud husbands arrived felicific<sup>486</sup> sons, to the rapturous wives sweet daughters : to Marcel

---

<sup>479</sup> absorbed in meditation

<sup>480</sup> troubled

<sup>481</sup> foolishly

<sup>482</sup> foolishness

<sup>483</sup> enclosed as in a bay

<sup>484</sup> intuitive

<sup>485</sup> extensive

<sup>486</sup> causing of happiness

& Charlotte came first Edwina in 1780, then three sons in succession, John in June 1781, – the same month Hortense, wife of Anthony, mother of Lemuel, — truly, a wonderful woman, but, as warned, one of those, perhaps fortunates, by whom words are not inspired to overmuch prate, — peacefully died in her sleep at age 67, – then birthed Frederick in March 1783, finally Alexander in November 1785; meanwhile to Louis & Angela came first a son, Joseph in August 1780, then two daughters, Gwendoline in 1782, named after the still lamented Vouchsafe, (but who was to die of consumption at age seven), then in 1783 Antonia, then two further sons : Steven in July 1786, and finally Richard in May 1789,

the year, it is said, the period of Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason<sup>487</sup> came to an end,

the year also the maze, – which will receive far fuller attention anon, which means in a little while, – was doubled in size to a full quarter of an acre.

In June 1778, – as elphamy<sup>488</sup> overran the country hedges with its emerald leaves, its luxuriant white flowers, – friends of a distant cousin of his Aunt Odette, as Claude still called her, – she was more properly his once-stepmother, – visited the manor, including a cousin name Giselle, a handsome but not beautiful girl of three-and-twenty, whom not word one of English could speak; if at first an incontrollable<sup>✓</sup>, high-wrought passion governed the union between this lass and Claude, – who it nill<sup>489</sup> yet be forgotten was the firstling<sup>490</sup> to Virginie by Lemuel, – yet soon realising that lust, particularly when too long depended upon, becoming catakinetic<sup>491</sup>, soon asperates<sup>492</sup> a relationship : they gently subsiding, there budded a respect, which blossomed into a friendliness, then into a sweet smiling affection, and yet halted a bittock<sup>493</sup> beyond extreme fondness; marrying in January 1779 their children were as follow : Mark, born that year in the month of solgrave<sup>494</sup>, then Jeanette in 1780, Tristan in October 1781, and finally in May 1783 Allan, ah a fine child indeed, a sweet, a loving, a fair, a witty, of great hope, and of such beauty it maketh no matter if nothing more were spoke,

yet Words will a little touch it by the way : Allan was wonderful fair, of hair goldenest and of eyes bluest, marvellous amiable, too, and of good temperature of body, for he could debate in French, could sing in Latin, and delightfully do much else, and for being for a child, for a boy, even at four years age, – in the early April of his life, – yet already a sort of man, he was beloved everywhere he came, see him, – he cannot see back of course, – see how handsome a child?,

but alas at this age of mere four he slipped and fell to his death from a top-floor window, ah that

<sup>487</sup> 1687-1789, from *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* by Newton, to the French Revolution

<sup>488</sup> bryony

<sup>489</sup> will not

<sup>490</sup> first-born

<sup>491</sup> destructive of energy

<sup>492</sup> makes harsh or uneven

<sup>493</sup> little bit

<sup>494</sup> February

such innocence and future genius should both together suffer to drop into nonexistence, to be killed in a moment by gravity,

(which, as is said today of the supposed four fundamental forces, – the strong nuclear, the electromagnetic, the weak nuclear, and gravity, – gravity, if it be a force, – for man doth still not know what it is made of, – is the weakest, ),

and on such a sunny day!,

aye, but because Allan landed 17 feet out from the wall, – not upon dark gneiss<sup>495</sup>, — scarcely less brutal hard than concrete, upon which even the earth breaks its teeth, — but upon the hard grass, – the parents learnt also this from grandfather Lemuel who alone saw it all and understood : whereas flight was possible only if thrust was greater than drag, and lift greater than gravity, clearly gravity was at least sufficiently impeded by the drag of his linen nightgown, – despite much lengthening his shriek, – for the boy to not actually plummet, but almost to fly!, or at marvellous least as flying as a squirrel glid<sup>496</sup>;

in July 1781, after suffering for years from his heart, father of Lemuel and recent widower of Hortense, Anthony died quietly, suddenly, without knowing of it, in the night, at the age nearly of 73.

The second-born son of Lemuel & Virginie, Jean, married pretty Louise in 1786, after two years of hard wooing, for she was a nurse he met in London whilst his broken leg was resetting after a throwing from an owlhead<sup>497</sup>, and if she held his hand as he bit down upon the spatula as the doctor let his hammer carefully fall, she would not thereafter hold his hand more despite flowers and gifts, as well as he vowing to himself all celibacy other, the which at times seemed more painful than the osteoclastis<sup>498</sup>; it came about later that same year that he again broke the same leg, drunkenly tumbling out of a carriage madly speeding around a corner in Pall Mall; if he was pretty well, – all that was left of him, for he escaped a killing, as many drunken do, by sheer want of all physical governance, – he was certainly more so when he awoke to find Louise again holding his hand, – she at last realising Jean was not as so many of her patients seemed, (known hodiernally<sup>499</sup> as a threpterophilic<sup>500</sup>), – and more so again when she gracefully accepted of his proposal of marriage.

If Jean forever after limped, used a stick, for his leg was now stiff as well as short, this in no way impeded<sup>501</sup> his conjugality,

<sup>495</sup> hard stone composed of quartz, feldspar  
or orthoclase, and mica

<sup>496</sup> glided

<sup>497</sup> horse that cannot be trained

<sup>498</sup> surgical breaking of bone

<sup>499</sup> relating to today

<sup>500</sup> with a fondness for female nurses

<sup>501</sup> hindered

for there is no virtue, no good work, but has some impediment to it,

for within five years came four girls : Aimee, Ellissa, Henrietta, and Phoebe, then, at last, in September 1791, a boy, a rather sickly one, named George (yet destined to become one day a fine healthy doctor); despite family reassurances that it was an act of no small arrogance to assume the responsibilities of a chance production of fourfold daughters, Jean agreeing but thereafter feeling lessest of all his brothers, – save Harold who was abroad travelling, – who had all contributed far more fruitfully to the quest than he, – Claude with his two surviving sons, Louis and Marcel each with three sons, – as a consequence Jean became somewhat a morose father whom in time his son avoided, his daughters pitied.

Regarding sole bachelor Harold, the youngest son of Lemuel : after first travelling throughout France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Egypt, and that way, – in youthful pride of life enjoying all the lusts of the flesh, all the lusts of the eyes, and in all over seven years away, therefore understandably backward in becoming a productive being, – with his skin tanned almost to the colour of ebon<sup>502</sup>, returning home on three occasions with crates of artefacts, works of art, – many of which, even the few Christian articles, were gained, — though he never spoke of it of his own head, — by nefarious, and defended by often violent, means, – each evening after dinner, to his ever-growing audience, with Overslaugh, all ears and smile, certainly not the least delighted, without need for that license for lying which travellers into far countries have always levied upon facts,

a sort of tax or fine, for remunerating their risks,

without reserve, Harold related his multivagant<sup>503</sup> adventures of great seas, faraway places, magical folklore, of things pleasant and unpleasant, reading sometimes from his journals, (to be found in the archive), which, – minute in the detail, yet not trivial in the amount, – recorded many sights, many strange, exciting experiences such as are meet for the squaring of life; the servants too, – Vouchsafe Odette saw to it, – if they so chose, were often present to hear so gifted a storyteller never the like seen.

Watching the so tanned, so apertly<sup>504</sup> but closely dressed young man, – beneath which he was all bronze skin and whipcord, – gallivant about the room as if the devil himself held his strings, – his slender arms flashing, his words of almost Pegasean imagination building this scene and that, bloating, shrivelling himself before their eyes as he mimicked shadeeful characters, poor waifs who seemed to drag the winter behind them, strutting sultans at their rich evil doings, – caused many to wonder if monopolylogue<sup>505</sup> Harold was not perfectly whole in his mind; (here is evidenced another Troke talent : that of storyteller, later to reappear, but with even far greater skill, in the body of Jeffrey, as shall far less briefly be explained when it comes time to treat of

---

<sup>502</sup> ebony

<sup>503</sup> wandering much

<sup>504</sup> plainly

<sup>505</sup> single actor playing many parts

one of the brightest ornaments in these annals); save for life when in brisk motion, believing there was nothing sweeter than peace when at rest, Harold after sleeping much, was one day gone : the house awaked to learn he was again away on his adventures, which to fully recount, or as well as words are able, might too much violence do to their natural modesty.

In 1793, – the sibylline<sup>506</sup> skill of Vouchsafe Odette confirming, came the French *Reign of Terror*, which lasting, – so say historiagraphs<sup>507</sup>, – 420 days, from May 31, 1793, to July 27, 1794, – the slaughter making no distinction between nobleman and labourer, women and children, nuns and priests, – claimed well over one hundred thousand lives; after eyewitnessing much of this horror, Harold at age 34 returned permanently to Troke Manor, from an extended stay in Paris,

where it was said goeth many a bashful British blockhead to gain personal force, social effectiveness, and to complete the polishing of their parts, but return oft a fine French fop,

accompanied by an untidy, nervously curtsying, pregnant woman named H el ene, and their year-old twin sons Jacques and Justin; shortly following their return, Vouchsafe Odette asked Harold outright if he was a wed<sup>508</sup>, and were the children if not conceived, for that mattered not, but born in wedlock?, whereas certainly Harold recalled the Troke quest, but as a man who felt himself far now too worldly to attach to superstition any more than the very poorest faith and significance, feeling the question came rather of a perhaps lately awoken moral if not religious conscience, thinking to repaise<sup>509</sup> his good aunt, making sweet answer, Odette knew on the moment that he had answered her false, yet she said nothing; ignoring the fact, as a Vouchsafe often must, that the sensibilities of others were of lesser account when it concerned their quest, she asking that they marry again, simply as she said to aggrate<sup>510</sup> her, and he laughingly protesting, she inflamed<sup>511</sup> him by saying he was the only son whose wedding she had not arranged and attended; in short then, a cleric finding, – a sort of *locum tenens*<sup>512</sup>, who fortunated to jingle, quibble, and play least the fool with the texts, of birth name : Not Wanted James, but who called himself William, – was summoned to the Troke chapel, and there Harold and H el ene were wed.

In that same year of 1794 came their first legitimate child, in December, – once, the tenth month, – the last of this generation, whom they named Samuel, (or Samuel the scribe as he later came to be known, – already met with above, – but as this to many was soon to prove a far too flattering title, many suggested Samuel the screed<sup>513</sup> a far better eunym<sup>514</sup>, for, as forementioned, scarce was a man more verbose in his writing, as his 42 diaries and the three bound volumes of

---

<sup>506</sup> oracular; prophetic

<sup>507</sup> historians

<sup>508</sup> married man

<sup>509</sup> appease

<sup>510</sup> please

<sup>511</sup> reproached

<sup>512</sup> one who holds office temporarily in place of the person to whom the office belongs

<sup>513</sup> long and tedious speech or tale

<sup>514</sup> name that is suitable or appropriate

his letters, all to be found in the archive, will vouchen, for in addition to the faults already listed, – prior to quoting the much-doctored extracts of his description of Troke Manor, – he was far too busy giving out miles of ink to notice the azygous<sup>515</sup> correlative conjunctions<sup>516</sup>, misplaced clauses<sup>517</sup>, allusive commonplaces, and both scylla<sup>518</sup>, and charybdis<sup>519</sup>, – indeed so much so that he painted the city of Bath,

in which, when one has sucked in above six or seven mouthful<sup>✓</sup> of air, one discovers to be an excitingly colourful sink of profligacy and extortion, a place where disease and diseased delight so to rendezvous,

as a drear locality indeed, – that it seemed first unto some, afterward generally : in producing the least possible effect by means of the greatest possible quantity of words, – and naught tended in the least to negative this suppose<sup>✓</sup>, – nothing but the greatest talent applied with the exquisitest care could possibly have made his style as bad as it was; to measure his tongue by his pen would be to condemn Samuel largiloquent<sup>520</sup>, which fortunately he was not, oh would that he were, for it is impossible for one who is habitually silent in company to write well,

for the which there are three necessaries : the reading of best authors, the hearing of best speakers, and the much exercise of one's own voice,

for he was a Troke perhaps less rare then than later, whose eyes and ears, – but with surely want of both eyesight and insight, both simultaneous and successive!, – always far busier than his mouth, were far less busier than his pen; but to give him at least a small piece of credit : it was Samuel and no other who wrote an authoritative, detailed, if achingly overlanguaged<sup>521</sup>, account of the shocking events very soon to feature).

No more children forthcame to Harold because in 1796, two years after their arrival and marriage, leaving a note in poor French, Hélène, – in her cape of shepherd's holland<sup>522</sup>, believed with her merry-begotten<sup>523</sup> sons Jacques and Justin to be long out bringing the cows in, – ran away back to her mother, all the way to their large Auvergne farm, but leaving behind her true Troke son Samuel; (because there is an<sup>✓</sup> vast of people of which history does not tell anything, as well a far less vast of people of which history says only that they lived, this history will not omit mentioning, at least once, briefly, the fate of every person, either married to a Troke, or with Troke blood in his or her veins : so : Hélène, – becoming not only a prude,

---

<sup>515</sup> unpaired

<sup>516</sup> connectives used in pairs, such as either/or

<sup>517</sup> failure to place a clause as close as possible to the word it modifies

<sup>518</sup> omission of the possessive when the sense is not clear without it

<sup>519</sup> insertion of the possessive when unnecessary

<sup>520</sup> talkative

<sup>521</sup> verbose

<sup>522</sup> holland linen used for shepherds' smocks

<sup>523</sup> bastard

or one who demolishes every another character to set up their own by maliciously prying, by magnifying into crimes every unguarded innocent liberty taken by unwary persons, but an hypocrite,

or one who, in the utmost secrecy and security, is a most voluptuous private libertine, died naturally enough in 1833 at age 67; of her son Jacques, neither fell out his end very fortunate : when attaining to his age making good use of the generous stipend Samuel allowed his mother by buying up a propinquant<sup>524</sup> farm from which he and his hogherd<sup>525</sup> grandfather so greatly benefited, he was able to win him a wife of small rank in that rural backwoods, but this availed him poorly, for in visiting the family of his newly pregnant wife in Tours in 1818, they all of them fatally contracted diphtheria; twin Justin fared scarcely better, for after bravely surviving a foray by his *enfant perdu*<sup>526</sup> at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, – slain all to a single three, – he too died undescended after a *tire-balle*<sup>527</sup> was too deeply inserted into an otherwise shallow wound, by an overworked dresser<sup>528</sup>).

It can be seen then that by 1794, from the three brothers Jean, Claude, and Harold, from the two brothers Louis & Marcel, in all ten sons were legitimately added to the regenerative core of the family; the hurry with which these events and actors have been treated comes in part from a want of notable incident, and in part, not so much a want of Troke character, but of its sufficient development and display, which, – no doubt already seeming of very oddball stamp, – shall begin shortly to come to the fore when the whole family is beset by calamity, for pain as much teaches as fashions very identity,

for to suffer is that supreme modality of taking the world seriously, as saith Cioran; with seven male children between the ages of eight and 15 proving somewhat a drachm<sup>529</sup> even for tutor Overslaugh, who believed in individually giving to every child only his best, two further tutors, – of names Peter Loveness and John Finnucane, – were employed to teach the younger their pothooks and hangers<sup>530</sup>; selected from nearly 30 applicants, these new tutors alas soon proved so woefully poor in comparison with Overslaugh, – particularly in their eagerness to fill young sails with the wind of knowledge before a good ballast of wisdom be laid down, – that within a year these were dispensed with in preference to supplying schoolmen from out the family itself; so, as scholarship continued to be assured, and a somewhat uneventful childhood and youth moved in train amongst the latest, rising generation, – of which all but two sons would fully ascend to the new monarchy of adulthood, – this history, – the better to move itself

<sup>524</sup> neighbouring

<sup>525</sup> keeper of swines

<sup>526</sup> suicide squad

<sup>527</sup> forceps to extract bullets from wounds

<sup>528</sup> assistant to a surgeon

<sup>529</sup> handful

<sup>530</sup> the practice of handwriting : p-shape, s-shape

on to matters far more interesting, – will now make a small leap to the terrible year of 1799, whereat awaits events of more than interest and disturbance enough.

Despite their isolation, their one could say unworldliness, – Harold only excepted, – not unfamiliar with the ordinary bales<sup>531</sup> of life, – so far containing the death from his heart of Edmund, the death from age of Hortense, stillbirths, Allan dead at age four, &c, – Trokes were certainly unprepared for the tragedy, of a markedly horrid and unsearchable<sup>532</sup> stamp, – (but which was to prove merely the first in a long series of assaults which in one form or another, for better than 200 years, would continue to repullulate<sup>533</sup> to subvert the Troke quest, toward which, in one way or another, knowingly or otherwise, the whole family so diligently laboured), – which this year smote them from so mysterious a source, so unexpectedly, (and in light of later knowledge : so unnecessarily prematurely); the two events about to be narrated, which so distinctly monstered the general happiness of the family as to never allow its full repair, commenced to unfold in June, when the ages of all 19 males totalled in the whole a handsome, a very promising, 453 years, when the blessed event was at only 29 years distance, and, – with yet four young men on the very verge of manhood soon surely to contribute further, – not inconceivably within reach of all, even Lemuel who was then 65.

Joseph, the first son of Louis & Angela, then in his nineteenth year, becoming secretly, oh deperditely<sup>534</sup> besotten by the 16 year-old daughter of Jackson the gatekeeper,

renowned by those not alone of her own class as owner of the prettiest foot and ankle in the country round,

for despite a Troke he was no different to any other lusty young man on any part of this planet at any point in history,

save that, as a Troke, he was far less ambitious, proud, self-conceited, vain, prodigal, deceitful, envious, malicious, unjust, revengeful, and factious, as well, therefore, far less experienced,

it would be far more fair to say that the more animal, therefore the far more real, healthy parts of Joseph were possessed, in that he seemed prey to a sort of erethism<sup>535</sup> which, – restricting the main of its location to no higher than the belly down, to no lower than the thighs up, – because wholly denied of utterance, seemed at times to almost consume him; this girl, Penny, Penelope,

from the Greek : bird with a purple neck,

owed her virtue to a somewhat misinformed prurience, come of one only cause, one only detail

---

<sup>531</sup> woes

<sup>532</sup> inscrutable

<sup>533</sup> recur

<sup>534</sup> hopelessly

<sup>535</sup> unusual or excessive degree of irritation or stimulation in an organ or tissue

in the venereal arena, which to relate bluntly : she was markedly frightened by the dire size, compared to herself, which the human male sexual member might possibly attain to in the protuberate or expansile state, for only the year before, when she first witnessed with both horror and wonder a stallion putten to a mare, even setting aside her not yet vigorous imagination, then, with only slightly imperfect sums, scaling accordingly, she nevertheless came up with a measurement which dwarfed the diameter of any finger, or even pair of fingers, she had ever seen, even those of her father who was of a sturdy coarse build; had this fear not bolstered so her moral virtue,

which, by intimately knowing appetites, strives ever to reduce the natural thereof to a lean mean, and the unnatural and vicious thereof to expel,

her purity would, with a little pain, even a little blood, have vanished perhaps two or three, or even five, or even more, years before.

So Joseph stalked his may<sup>536</sup> with flowers, little gifts, trochaic<sup>537</sup> verse, sloe-eyed looks, also with his hands, sometimes his lips, – provided of course a darkness or at least a good gloom was present, company distantly absent, or audibly asleep, – which were allowed with almost full permission to widely roam her abundant upper body; but as he could not tice<sup>538</sup> her to let him proceed farther, so grew he pale, wan, in dreams soiled his bed linen, and yet every day on his afternoon walk, – dismissing that of which the eve consumed him : that never in so great a labour could he remember to have wasted so much time with such both sorrow of heart and grief of mind, – he again visited the gatehouse cottage, which, – (now very sad, almost a ruin, as may have been noted), – is append like a limpet to the boundary wall; after the knowing father, touching his forelock had gone off in search of some expedient employment without, Joseph resumed his chase, often with words alone,

sifted of course into language so open, so drawn out, that it was straight levelled to her understanding,

which so musical, so mysterious, by bringing her to often gasps, sometimes gained him not more but sooner ground than the acts of nibbling at her neck; when, unlacing her bodice only a mite more speedily than she laced it back up, thrusting then his exosculating<sup>539</sup> flushed face amongst her ample white bosom, asking in a muffled voice, whether her fears would not still be fears after they were wed?, neither to herself nor to her lover could Penelope offer answer.

Disordered daily in the starlight of his reason, his brain put upon the rack, Joseph was one night taken up by a dream, – exactly as silly as all and any another, – wherein, finding himself carcerated in a dungeon with a great thirst, espying beyond the bars a small barrel of water, he

---

<sup>536</sup> maiden

<sup>537</sup> a foot of two syllables, first long, second short, or first accented, second

unaccented

<sup>538</sup> entice

<sup>539</sup> heartily kissing

raught<sup>540</sup>, but insufficiently, despite every effort; when he awoke, finding an idea fresh come to him, which sprung, getting to sudden station<sup>541</sup> into his head, determining it to pursue, – for if they had almost but not quite openly discussed the sore of the matter, he believed he knew precisely the fears the girl entertained, – proposing his notion to Penelope at their next meeting, naturally she blushed, protested, yet clearly seeing the security inherent in his proposal grew first pale, then with a sudden rufescent giggle, acquiescent; the simple idea was as follow : by reaching through the bars of her bedroom window, he would prove to her that his slender finger was not grossly smaller than that which her own reaching hand would discover, and yet, if this were not so, then she need but pull away to be again safe.

Late that night, as arranged, creeping to the southern side of her cottage, after rapping quietly on the green jalousies<sup>542</sup>, their opening, he found Penelope in her sleep-attire, a heavy cotton shift, – from which only her head, her hands, and her renowned feet, displayed, – blushing and trembling; seeing as the Moon if not full was nevertheless too bright for her liking, insisting Joseph bind his eyes with his celeste<sup>543</sup> silk kerchief, (one day to be known as a watersman<sup>544</sup>), which he did with a smile, then insisting further on his promise not to peep, she then knelt upon the window-seat, shyly lifted her robe, and with flight available with but a flexing of her largest muscles, they slowly, – she her eyes tight closed, he blinded, – ventured through the bars their first horizontal then netherward<sup>545</sup> arms, their delicately waving fingers.

Not to dwell *too* long here : at first asynartetic<sup>546</sup>, as if both were paraphrasic<sup>547</sup>, but after quiet giggles soon attaining a manual eurythmy<sup>548</sup>, her sudden animal yickers<sup>549</sup>, – which coming from lips lustrous swole, between furnace gasps thrown all in his way, – awoke her father who lumbered bear-like into her room, where, from her swythe<sup>550</sup>-gained bed, she professed to a night-mare; when her father returned to his room, from which after a few moments snores again thundered, to the unmasked elate<sup>551</sup> face of Joseph appearing again at the window, the flushed, disbelieving girl stared back with all fears, or nearly all, forsaken, whereupon, rushing to the bars to embrace him, they clasped each one other in their arms as best they could; overtaken now by a more mature, more sensible passion, the girl again venturing out and down her now hungry hands and fingers, these were proud to confirm to her eyes, which were now widest open, that he, blessed bel, was no stallion, or not quite, but wondrous terete<sup>552</sup>!

---

<sup>540</sup> reached

<sup>541</sup> fixity

<sup>542</sup> outside shutters

<sup>543</sup> sky-blue

<sup>544</sup> worn by friends of Oxford and  
Cambridge at the annual boat-race

<sup>545</sup> in a downward direction

<sup>546</sup> having two members with different

rhythms

<sup>547</sup> unable properly to perform purposive  
movements

<sup>548</sup> rhythmic and harmonious movement

<sup>549</sup> sharp little cries

<sup>550</sup> quickly

<sup>551</sup> elated

<sup>552</sup> smooth and cylindrical

What with the bars, as well a slight fear for that part of her which such an<sup>✓</sup> mighty machine seemed very fit indeed to lay all in brief ruins, a mutual consummation of a manual order was quickly achieved, which from the looks, the sounds, – such a mixture of seeming pleasure and pain, – there is no giving a definition of; hanging from the bars, panting their new wonder, therefore new love, this caused further heating, which obliged them to clasp afresh, &c; with the Sun in debt soon to rise, with their lips speaking all the good words that might be, they at last parted happy, delighted, and yet still imperfectly satient<sup>553</sup>,

for nonsense like this is not to be compared with a woman fully enclosing a man, when, it may be, supplying to her cool his heat, then to his drought her moisture, a complete, full, every way sufficient satisfaction is supposedly achieved,

yet with her half-promise of a far less inconsummate morrow, the still trembling Penelope watched Joseph march tiredly waving away; neither she nor a Troke ever saw him again living.

With Joseph vanished not only from Penelope, the family, the manor, but as if from reality itself, – as if his name alone remaining, he in flesh was henceforth entirely without being, – his occultation<sup>554</sup> was not noted until a servant thought the matter odd that his bed had not been slept in, but said nothing until that afternoon when greying-haired Lemuel asked at dinner where Joseph could be; as it was not until dinner that it was realised no one in the house knew of his whereabouts, come the late evening when an at first casual, then an intense search was instigated, learning from her father, – who was preparing pine torches, – what was the fare<sup>555</sup> up at the big house, blushing from temples to throat, from carnation to scarlet, Penelope giving him a much truncated testimony, so it became known at least where Joseph had last been seen.

With the whole estate combed, venturing then beyond their own lands, with soon every local farmer and labourer awoken and axed<sup>556</sup>, and nothing discovering save a slight oddity by a local ostler<sup>557</sup>: an unknown carriage had been late-heard to pass, with silver passing about many were conscripted in the search; as night drew mornward on, as black night made off with all her sickly dews, energetic grandmother and Vouchsafe, Odette, in this year of 1799 aged 63, taking to her finest horse with a hantle<sup>558</sup> of mounted grooms, – on foot farmers, their wives and woken children, for miles around making ever deeper and wider inquires, – it was learned that an elderly farmeress had also heard the carriage, light and two wheeled it might have been, she said, drawn to one shod horse, and prone perhaps, said her blacksmith husband, to occasional forging<sup>559</sup>, but as none knew of exactly such it was presumed the occupant was not indigene<sup>560</sup> to the environs;

---

<sup>553</sup> satiated

<sup>554</sup> disappearance

<sup>555</sup> commotion

<sup>556</sup> asked

<sup>557</sup> innkeeper

<sup>558</sup> good number, considerable quantity

<sup>559</sup> the striking of the hind foot against the front foot

<sup>560</sup> native

then, in very shabby clothes, in linen marvellous foul, a young farm-boy catching up with Odette, after a little bow circling out of windward as he had been often beaten taught, panted that they had found footprints!

Twice more poor Penelope explained their madding<sup>561</sup> meaning outside her barred window, the first in the presence of two fetisly<sup>562</sup>-dressed grooms, the second time to Odette, who sitting the bestraught girl down in the small kitchen, dismissing everyone from the room, gently demanded every little detail; because this was rather a labour for the poor girl, – for she was frightened, as well not by nature of mind scenical, – Odette encouraged the girl to employ her hands, face, and body, which proved more than demonstrative enough; giving the girl a crown<sup>563</sup> to debarass<sup>564</sup> her, Odette strode to her waiting horse and there spoke loudly to the gathered searchers,

— I do nor will accept such a thing as this, why it is all, – how do you say?, – a too ludicrous<sup>565</sup> bolus<sup>566</sup>, for when a palmerin<sup>567</sup>, such as my dear Joseph, is leaded so patiently, so resourcefully to a very brink, then another meeting, which would be all that any poor boy could wish, would be as inevitable as an arrantest tomorrow, why, the whole matter is... preposterousest!, unexcreable<sup>568</sup>!; with new fury calling loudly for a *montoir*, — or how do you English say?, a horse-block<sup>569</sup>, human or otherwise, quickly!,

stepping onto the broad back of a kneeling groom, finding her footstall<sup>570</sup>, remounting her great sweated, spurgalled destrier<sup>571</sup>, – though he was near 20 years old, she preferred him for his piece of sure service, – with a bite of her single prick spur<sup>572</sup> she was away with her meiny<sup>573</sup> to prosecute further her search.

But after a week of inchmeal exploremet, even with printed advertisements offering reward for information of any sort, even confidentially, from whomsoever, from wheresoever, it was at last accepted, separating the precious news from the vile, that the statement *non est inventus*<sup>574</sup> was to remain true, (not forever but long); naturally, foul play was held as inescapable, but poor Penelope thinking at first not, sitting at her window, with love intermixing passion, waited every evening to again hold in her hands that superb piece of mindfilling furniture with which Nature had so liberally enriched her lover, but he came not; when after two months she at last believed herself utterly forsaken, resuming her life, she next year married a seedful tinsmith, (and in 20

<sup>561</sup> frenzied

<sup>562</sup> elegantly

<sup>563</sup> five shillings

<sup>564</sup> to disembarrass, to disencumber

<sup>565</sup> ludicrous

<sup>566</sup> mass of medical material larger than a pill

<sup>567</sup> knightly hero, champion, of age of chivalry

<sup>568</sup> unable to be spit out

<sup>569</sup> used for aiding to mount a horse

<sup>570</sup> stirrup of a side-saddle of a woman

<sup>571</sup> war-horse

<sup>572</sup> worn on the instep

<sup>573</sup> retinue

<sup>574</sup> he has not been found

years bearing seventeen children, with 12 surviving, eight of these reaching manhood, the loss to the Troke family, hence to the quest, may, however improbably, have proved as considerable as this).

It was not until late in the following month when the second traiterie<sup>575</sup> occurred that this was acknowledged : far too little weight had been accorded two words of warning in the Lemuel Document : *marplot*<sup>576</sup>, and *Inimicus*; John, handsome 18 year-old son of Marcel & Charlotte, first cousin to the fugacious<sup>577</sup> Joseph, was a quiet young man of usual Troke stature, – though the addition of extra solidity gave the impression he was overly shortish, – much taken by books, by poetry, even to the point of writing fine odes to strength and manliness; it was afterward suspicioned that his reticent mien, slightly routed bearing, taken together with his aversation<sup>578</sup> of strange company which had slowly burgeoned from age 14 to be full-blown at 18, was due, and here the brothers, half-brothers, lowered their voices unto nothing to sacrifice words to facial lineaments and gestures.

If upon ordinary occasions this making of a very chaity<sup>579</sup> point as clear as wordlessness would allow would have been utterly unacceptable to Troke honesty and outspokenness, it seemed on this rare occasion to have sufficed for the business, for, in a word, – with that chilled sympathy of unregretted aversion come when the head is more exercised than the heart, – the younger men thought that John might be sexually transposed, a poor victim of the terrible affliction of loving boys, – of taking a way traditionally so very beastly, so much to be abhorred, as to cause not only at the mentioning, but at the thinking of it, the utmost detestation and loathing, (an attitude today considered narrow perhaps, and unforgiving, but biologically, and backed by Nature, because natural, eminently sensible and sound), – and that this disease, in establishing in John a kingdom, had proven so unendurable he had done away himself, for had he not openly expressed adulation for Mr Milton who, despite the beweté<sup>580</sup>, tendresse<sup>581</sup>, unequalled delicacy, even overnicety, of his words, (as one day soon a Mr Keats, for he too will have something feminine and twisted in his mind, also a Mr Poe, in whom there would be also too much of the woman in the making), – even of anger in his splendidly indignant *Areopagitica*, – was markedly wanting in masculine energy, strength, and action?

To the latest and last Vouchsafe it was clear and irrefutable : sexual inversion can rarely be brought about by many means, such as abuse, ignorance, conditioning, and of course infection, or adopted for reasons of opportunity, fashion, fear, and rebellion, but these are but means, and not the main, for inversion is predominantly a damaged condition,

to which, for the victims, sympathy and an understanding are perhaps considered proper,

<sup>575</sup> treachery

<sup>576</sup> one who, or that which, mars or defeats  
a plot

<sup>577</sup> quickly disappearing

<sup>578</sup> abhorrence

<sup>579</sup> careful; nice; delicate

<sup>580</sup> beauty

<sup>581</sup> tenderness

but, – as with Nature her horrified self, – not condonance,

into which a babe is innocent born, as is often alcoholia and other addictions, manias, phobias, perversions, excesses, greeds, angers, &c, as better microscopists will one day learn; ah, but John was anyways not a badde<sup>582</sup>, not in the least!, but simply suffered from occasional anorology<sup>583</sup>, as did Overslaugh, but with this difference : whereas the latter thought nothing of his permanent condition, young John, – even realising that his invirility was but temporary, and would one day find aligement<sup>584</sup> in a patient and loving woman, – thought all too deeply on the matter.

It will be here stated also, that save for those if not never, then rarely, repeated, innocent, healthy, pubigerous<sup>585</sup> experiments or games undertaken everywhere at all times in history, entailing contests of strength, length, distance, even speed, there has been no incidence of even a possible sexual inversion since long before the original Lemuel, when, – by a vast transition passing back nearly eight centuries, – on the nineteenth day of the fourth month,

remembering of course that until 1752 the English year began in March, so that by the calendar then in use, June was the fourth month,

of the year a thousand an hundred xxx and vi years<sup>586</sup>, at a little after three-twenty-five in the afternoon, in a chill cloister in Isleworth near London,

later to become part of the Syon monastery of the Brigittine<sup>587</sup> order,

atavic<sup>588</sup> Jude Truke, age 20, for want of eyesight enough, want of firmness, or rather callousness, and, too short, denied the occupation of soldier, for want of humour and musicality certainly no entertainer, and with naught remaining in his future save famine, theft, imposture, death, &c, the only profession that afforded an opening into a career at least slightly intellectual, was to run the smallest risk to his faithlessness by running his head into a monk's cowl, for which he was eminently fitted : of moderate entendment<sup>589</sup>, of average moral standard, and not a man to put himself forward, or to stir.

After years amidst a stable of clerks made scribe to a senior *armarius*<sup>590</sup>, one night, in the light of a small candle, sitting at his portable desk, listening too closely to a lonely bromopneal<sup>591</sup> astrologaster<sup>592</sup> who told him that certain pleasures were very combinable with both business and studies, Jude, very briefly, indulged what was, even in sum, simply his perfect, too long

---

<sup>582</sup> homosexual person

<sup>583</sup> male impotence

<sup>584</sup> alleviation

<sup>585</sup> pubescent

<sup>586</sup> 1136

<sup>587</sup> founded in 1346 by St Brigit, or Bridget,

of Sweden

<sup>588</sup> remote ancestor

<sup>589</sup> intellect

<sup>590</sup> monk who presides over a scriptorium

<sup>591</sup> suffering bad breath

<sup>592</sup> fraudulent astrologer

innocence battling his confuse<sup>✓</sup>, much brow-beaten feelings concerning his utter nequience<sup>593</sup> to believe in a deity, particularly one so wanting of intelligence, wisdom, and sanity, for it was astonishing to him,

far less so were it known that from indolence, weakness, indifference, or incapacity, doubts are impotent to arise,

that man would make such show to believe what to Nature, logic, and reason, even in that thirteenth century, was so repugnant, to all the propensities of the heart so opposite, to all the sensual pleasures so inimical, whereupon, – small wonder that, not a virtuous man,

for the virtuous man is an impossible man, nay, a monster he is, more a monster,

but an honest man, should actually seek to be alone, – he next morning fled; in the years to come, after suffering a difficult period as that most prevalent parasite of late medieval society : a mendicant friar, than another as a jocolator<sup>594</sup>, by learning the language of court and castle, of church and constitution, of chivalry and the chase, giving great satisfaction to the quality, – taking for reason of no matter the name Peter Passelewe, – Jude eventually became, – besides a court lovmonger, – a respected professional storyteller to the French nobiliary<sup>595</sup>.

For further evidence of Troke sexual aberrancy, also feeble, it would be necessary to travel one thousand and one hundred and twenty-one winters agone, to a time when, with Nature seen as merely a collection of mystic symbols, of divine or diabolical allegories, – whose meaning could be discovered only by correct interpretation of the scriptures, – wherein visions, miracles, whether worked by a god or a devil, were of continual occurrence, for every natural event, – not only an eclipse of the Sun, a comet, even lightning, but a dream, even a sneeze, – stood for something else, at a time when symbol of some spiritual event was concealed behind every the least phenomenon; but this will not be made matter for these pages, nor that amongst female Trokes, – though in date this belongs elsewhere, – one recent spinster came sensibly to realise that her slight lesbian tendencies of thought were simply yet another strategy for escaping patriarchal conceptions of femininity and female sexuality; else further occasion hereafter be not found, it will be timely to mention also that no Troke was circumcised, nor ever had been, and an acuculophile<sup>596</sup> would have had a lean time of it in the Troke family, oh a very lean time!

To be done with such matters : masturbation<sup>597</sup> : save in certain instances, – tedious to enumerate when the experiences of common life are so decisive, but mainly for the reason that if taken to the extreme of actually replacing coitus, such would prove very barayne<sup>598</sup> to the quest,

---

<sup>593</sup> inability

<sup>594</sup> professional jester or minstrel

<sup>595</sup> of or relating to nobility

<sup>596</sup> woman aroused by a circumcised penis

<sup>597</sup> masturbation

<sup>598</sup> unproductive

– rarely actually<sup>599</sup> encouraged, this healthy and necessary practice,

which idoneity<sup>600</sup> quickly recommends to favour, for apparently this *splendidum peccatum*<sup>601</sup>,  
– yet another imperfection man believes he hath by the fall of Adam, – fleets the time not  
unpleasantly,

was rarely in anywise discouraged, particularly in Troke females, (which this saga will alas soon show were always in spinsterous flock-meal<sup>602</sup>), else old maid's insanity<sup>603</sup> develop; despite much irrisible<sup>604</sup> literature quoting of Chrysippus : *abstain and endure*, much pernicious gadgetry, (especially during the upcoming Victorian era, when her manufactured in plenty machines to deny its deleterious effects upon the energies of budding flesh and mind), no Vouchsafe, – save in fearing immoderacy might prove a rust to the soul, – could ever find the least harm in this practice of paying oneself out of one's own purse.

Thus it was on an innocent, exciting, yet soon afterward unboastworthy, occasion, in the library, that John and his second cousins once removed, the brothers Steven and Richard, discovering a volume of licentious sketches, – the very commissioned by the late Vouchsafe Gwendoline to encourage her grand-daughter-in-law Odette to greater fecundity, – were soon, two of them, in tumescent wonder, but because the then fashion caused the brech<sup>605</sup> to conceal very little, it was clear that John was markedly unlike themselves, which is to say : marcescent<sup>606</sup>, a condition which it is not inexpedient to observe came almost equally from distaste, disinclination, bashfulness, and, – his very nature allowing himself no place for any crime, – shame;

additionally, – save for twice involuntarily during sleep, – John was wholly even proudly chaste, continent, virtuous, – which he little knew was in the common lump of men not to be, – for he suspected it true that *multum sibi adjicit virtus lacessita*<sup>607</sup>, – which, – despite causing virtue to remain more innocent than virtuous, – required, – else shame, fevers, orbatation<sup>608</sup>, torments, even death, ensue, – a considerable strength of will in the avoiding of such temptations as fortune, – conducting ever to disturb with rough and stormy eftures<sup>609</sup>, exotic appetites : inordinate difficulties to rattle<sup>610</sup>, – delights to supply, so as to best interrupt the speed of a noble career; whilst these were not the fullest truths, – for John was afraid to impair his strength, and terrified by contagion, – it was nevertheless from this most sorry piece of evidence, witnessed on a sole occasion, that his more lusty coevals, – who had heard that not a lineage but hides a few in its

---

<sup>599</sup> actively

<sup>600</sup> convenience

<sup>601</sup> splendid sin

<sup>602</sup> great numbers

<sup>603</sup> erotomania, insanity arising from  
unanswered erotic passion

<sup>604</sup> ridiculous

<sup>605</sup> breech

<sup>606</sup> drooping

<sup>607</sup> virtue is much strengthened by combats

<sup>608</sup> poverty

<sup>609</sup> passages

<sup>610</sup> wrestle

history, – in the manner of those who squinting at but the poorest part, distort it to be greater even than the whole, – half believing that John was sexually conversed<sup>611</sup>, attributed to suicide his evanition<sup>612</sup>.

Though similarly thorough searches of the convicinity<sup>613</sup> were launched, – with now an anger adding scrupulousness, but coupled to an hopelessness on the part of many, – despite every firearm counted, every water searched, despite men in dozens skyward eyed seeking a gibbet, with dogs everywhere sniffing, in a row to every horizon everyone conscripted to comb all the lands about, the woodlands, the beach, with in short everyone, local and imported, given according to his work shall be<sup>✓</sup>, no intelligence was anywhere garnered; within three weeks, as with Joseph Lowell Roland Troke, both to the family and to the quest, it was accepted that John Cornelius Troke too was utterly without being; at the coming of the year 1800, which was the tricentenary of the Troke quest, with the death in March of aforementioned William in Quebec, with the ages of the eight members of the rising generation ranging from six to 21, the reckoning was of males 16, and their tally of years 387; as well illustrating to the family that their exclave<sup>614</sup> was threatened by perhaps the whole world, these two very mysterious disappearances, treated as deaths, even as murders, retrahended<sup>615</sup> the blessed event ten years, to a distance of 39, in other words,

for it would be wise always to remember, particularly in this saga : if it can be said in other words, then it has not yet been said,

60 percent, or 300 years, of time was passed, and only 40 percent, or 200 years, – time surely sufficient to create with say 15 old men, or 50 young, a mere 613 years, – remained.

---

<sup>611</sup> reversed

<sup>612</sup> vanishing

<sup>613</sup> neighbourhood

<sup>614</sup> part of a country, province etc, disjoined

from the main part; enclosed in foreign territory

<sup>615</sup> drew back