

1821-1839

With Janet soon proving not only the most prescient of all Vouchsafes, – (if, thereafter, this talent was so declining that the last four sisters could not, as stated, foresee at all, be it noted that the final Vouchsafe, could, in a sense, reshape the past,

called an object of knowledge,

to meet the future,

called an object of faith, of imagination,

as shall be explained at a later time), – but far less fearing of her inheritance than all her forebeers : greatly given to shaping, to steering her talents, these surfaced and developed with great rapidity.

In 1822 when a propelling pencil was manufactured by S. Mordan & Company, and a gross of this curiosity were acquired,

yes : gross : not a word much recognised in America, it means twelve dozen :
144,

so many of the family grutcheth¹ at the thick brittleness of the lead, Steven, at 22 purchasing a small lathe,

made, actually, by Henry Maudslay,

determining to improve upon the design : despite many accompanying problems, his

¹ complained

own pencil, perfected in silver the following year, the difference as everyone agreed was not alone that the opifice² was far superior, but the treated lead was now strong and fine; a small matter, it might be said, but almost solely from this little undertaking resulted the workshops, and Troke industriousness, (whereof glass, cast-iron, and much else were soon included, as shall soon be revealed), indeed, almost as soon as the family moved into the manor the women began to display interest in such crafts as weaving and perfumery, as the men in bookbinding, beekeeping, winemaking, &c; as these and other pursuits were greatly encouraged, and almost no expense spared in their promotion, so was nearly everyone in Troke Manor expected to discover, – many putting it very strong about that every power not called into vitalic action was a power buried in sloth, – then to express, his and her very several talents; when late in 1822 died the Matriarch Virginie Garfouillat at age 84, for long after, this neglected, long-retired woman, by many almost forgotten, – for so it goes, – was suddenly very greatly missed.

In 1823, with the rising generation of 14 young males, aged between one and 18, continuing bobbish³ to prosper, and with no male mortality, barely even a morbidity, for five whole years, believing their family a hardy one indeed, this was in part attributable to a certain regimentation doctor George, a devout exponent of the quest, placed upon their otherwise very free lives concerning occupation, diet, exercise,

which throws off superfluities, clears the vessels, raises proper ferments in the humors, promotes the circulation of the blood, and dissipates any growing distemper,

and in part too of course to their continuing safety maintained by Guardian Samuel; yet in May 1825, as earlier stated, when in faraway Boston died Barryton at age 28, and then in the following month, with the quest at twelve years distance, died Marcel suddenly at 68,

² workmanship

³ in health and spirits

of what is called an aneurysm, – which Cockeram defined as : dilation of the hollow sinews or veins, wherein the spirits of life do walk, – which is a tumour on the wall of an artery,

these two deaths caused the quest to disheartening retray⁴ a further five years to 15 years afar; in the glorious July of this year, from her adytum 14 miles away, the fifth Vouchsafe Janet attended, – or so to speak, – the wedding of her first daughter Christine to one Francis Wray, a gentleman of London : with her eyes closed but all over blubbered, she watched all the glory unfold as the handsome couple, – who the previous month had performed a solemn subarration⁵ before the whole family, – exchange their promises at the altar, which truth to say were all but kept in their long and fruitful lives.

1826

At his celebratory retirement dinner, Michael Overslaugh,

lifelong champion of words, unvalued⁶ tutor to Troke youth for 56 years, and quite possibly a thaumaturge⁷,

delivered so strange, amusing, and animated a speech, – full of course of his usual particularities⁸ and affections⁹, – he proved to all that even at 83 he in no way suffered from even the slightest decay in his faculties : his mind continuing a storehouse of sunsets; but the family little knew that his speech, seemingly delivered without book¹⁰, on the contrary, was a very rehearsed test of his theory that words

⁴ draw back

⁵ ceremony of betrothal by the gift of a ring

⁶ invaluable

⁷ miracle-worker

⁸ peculiarities

⁹ qualities, passions, feelings

¹⁰ impromptu

possessed magical properties, which of course they might well do, provided, as has been said, placed in an extraordinary mouth they enter a similarly endowed ear; upon his sitting down it seemed to him that his formul¹¹, whereon he had been working for nearly 60 years, still insufficiently developed, required more time, if it were to be brought to a first perfection, or rather, more to the point : total and undistracted isolation, for it is not true, – and they do evil who make men to believe it so, – that stillness and solitude can afford satisfaction only to innocence; three months prior to this dinner, to such utter delight he dropped the book he was reading,

an 800 page catalogue of bookseller Thomas Thorpe of Bedford Street,

he was presented with the papers of ownership of a quiet cottage in neighbouring Devon, with a large and fruitful hortyard¹², as well a small, covered, well-sprung amepton¹³, with an elegant bay gelding, for visiting purposes, and papers promising of a generous pension wherewith to finish his researches.

1827

In March this year Charlotte awoke next to husband Marcel, a man no more in life at age 68, and in July at only 22, – as Vouchsafe Odette long ago feared, – Daniel at age 22 swiftly succumbed to a strange fever which, greatly troubling young doctor George, he was unable not only to treat, but even identify; when in October 1828, because blood was driven up into his head faster than it could find its ways down, Claude at 70 died of a brain haemorrhage, thus, in these three male deaths, 160 good years subtracting, the quest was dispatched to nearly 17 years distance; those of the family who carefully charted the progress and check of their years well knew that this loss could be retrieved, – marriages coming, babes following, – in three

¹¹ formula

¹² garden of fruit trees; orchard

¹³ light, open carriage of Landau-type

years or four, if all would be well, and all seemed very well, for in 1829,

in which, it might be interesting to note, though perhaps fatuous, that if the sum of female years, rather than of male, was the goal of the Troke quest, a chiliad years was attained,

Theodore eldest son of Steven & Janet married pretty Clarice, and Hugh youngest son of Alexander & Imelda married a lass called Gwen; in 1830 Herbert second-eldest son of Janet married the perpetually smiling Aloise, and Barry brother to Hugh married a rather quiet young woman named Mildred, who had worn always an encolpion¹⁴, but which soon mysteriously lost was replaced by a gifted priceless lavalier¹⁵ and a first lesson, a short one, in mythogenesis¹⁶, which proved to her a matter of great moment, indeed so profitable to be learned, so necessary to be remembered, seeking again and again evidences, she soon amassed a weighty heap.

As stated : until recent times there was always a firm understanding that when a sweetheart became a Troke wife she commenced living at Troke Manor, (and save for one single exception the reverse of this custom was also always obeyed : married daughters departed the manor), and whereas it is true that some wives and wives-to-be protested that, not even including servants, tutors, and governesses, so much people lived there already,

in this year of 1830, 54 people dwelt the house,

intending husbands responded by making it very clear that this tradition of patrilocality¹⁷, – which they did not admit : safety principally recommended, – of no ordinary binding, was not only beyond all compromise, not only unbendingly

¹⁴ cross worn on the breast

¹⁵ jeweled pendant worn round the neck

¹⁶ the origin of myths

¹⁷ residing with, or near, the family of the husband

customal¹⁸, but a firm indeed irrevocable qualifier to marriage; it so proved, over the years, because some balked at this, that sweethearts were lost, – Theodore for instance lost his very first love because of her dislike, or rather fear, of his accursed¹⁹ family, and Harold it will be recalled was deserted by his French wife H el ene in 1796, – but generally speaking, once their minds opened out, – which in so active, liberated, prepossessing²⁰ an environment did not always take an eternity, – new wives soon became very aware of, indeed soon dependent upon, the many advantages the comradeship and assistance the large Troke community offered.

Children particularly benefited, for growing up in as if a remote village community, with to each hand not strangers but relations, friends, and teachers,

for wonderful bad was that restraint placed upon excitement, independence, particularly upon the development of character, which common society imposes;

with Trokes unable to long keep themselves from the odd diversions which insular environments often conjure, – as well all the errors and absurdities no want of friends make clear to them, – their often very contrary natures, emperished²¹ only a little by all the advantages of eccentricity,

(soon to be illustrated with great, even exhaustive, fullness of detail and articulation, for eccentricity, – the which is proportional to the amount of genius, mental vigour, and courage which a society contains, as Mill saith, – is the surest defence against evil, as saith Brodsky),

developed with remarkably speed and confidence, to the point indeed that for years together scarcely a Troke felt the loss of their beautiful unfitness for walking in the ways of other men; therefore, until her death, – unless she desert or divorce, – as

¹⁸ customary

¹⁹ called together

²⁰ that predisposes favourably

²¹ impaired

well as thereafter, – when, — even if requesting far otherwise, — she would be laid in the family cemetery under a very plain stone, – every Troke wife would see out all her days at Troke Manor.

In 1835, with the last maid departing the manor, (and within a further five years no *valet pied*²², stable-hand, gardener, or even *dareman*²³ remaining), the duty of running the house, – which in whole,

(because a Vouchsafe was not then that which now she is, Trokes not now that which then they were),

an often very troublesome matter, – was discharged by parts to such as responsibly and carefully ordered themselves, and if no talents could be unearthed from a wife or daughter, then to prevent that idleness which unskilfulness always giveth in the end,

and idleness, as even bibles teacheth, overthroweth even strong men into sin, quencheth virtue, nourisheth pride, and maketh the way ready to go to hell straight,

as well to prevent some busy craftswoman, grimed and sweated, from saying to an idler,

— What reason may you render, my dear, what answer shall you give, when in idleness is none excuse?,

she assisted with such distaff, or female, occupations as cooking, housekeeping, or by taking up duties as their parts best suited, (which, save of course for Vouchsafedom, were not always to remain gendered- engendered occupations).

Whereas the lot of servants was not what many wives imagined, neither suffered

²² footman

²³ dairyman

they horrid hours, poor wage, poorer conditions,

(later that century to be a subject so obsessively but honestly castigated by Dickens),

nor reprimands for pattering²⁴, for with a careful rotation of duties, with responsibilities falling accordingly to ableness, inclination, to the colour of respective prejudices, so it was, with surprisingly little objection felt, less voiced, that life at Troke Manor proceeded not a mite less smoothly or pleasantly than it did when there was a domestic staff of 37; rare visitors, unless made wise to the knowledge that Trokes servanted themselves, – which despite their overall amical²⁵ nature and house-pride was neither proudly admitted nor shyly denied, – often knew no different, save sometimes in a response to a churl.

It was not uncommon, then, to see, say, a woman dusting in the library as she gaily chatted to a tapisser²⁶ at her graticulation²⁷, then that evening with the former at her bobbin lace²⁸, her babe nuzzling her breast, to see the latter serving her a tray of tea, or perhaps tilleul²⁹; to accite further examples, even if these years are markedly lean of both incident and character, would be to battologize³⁰, but it would be not unwise to henceforth see the manor as if a sort of factory,

but without working up articles of utility to an extent beyond what necessity required,

wherein was producted in addition to cloth, paper, enginery, &c : children, meals, warmth, entertainment, knowledge, and of course, upcoming : magic.

²⁴ the pert replies of servants

²⁵ friendly, amiable

²⁶ maker or weaver of figured cloth or tapestry

²⁷ art of dividing a plan, &c, into small squares for reduction or enlargement

²⁸ design laid out with pins around, which thread is drawn and interlaced by means of bobbins

²⁹ tea made from lime tree flowers

³⁰ repeat words or phrases excessively in speech or writing

The discontinuance of employing servants at Troke Manor brought so abrupt an end to the purvey³¹ and famigation³² of half-reliable information sufficient to lay a tongue to, that local pross³³,

tattle, babble, prate, chatter, and prattle, borne from lip to lip,

gossip with gossip consulting,

for insofar as the subcontractor³⁴ is not glad to tell but to him or her that, before he or she art weary, art glad to hear, it is necessary to supply the resistance and defect in the conception of another by adding something of his or her own invention, for thereunto is given license to the next to obnuntiate³⁵, the better to translate contempt out of one breast into another,

became so very starved,

for the actions not of men of more ample dignity afar, but of mean men local, be they good or bad, by reaching not far, are not greatly inquired into, except by such as dwell at the next door,

that neighbours were soon eager,

as their faces to be effervescent with that state of excitement nursed by novelty, – which the vulgar are so greedy to hearken to, or gaze after, – by expectation, by the vague anticipation of a scene, possibly even a quarrel!,

to take, from even the vulgarest, smallest things, at first leaky ear, upon the very smallest trust, all news and opinions of a so odd family,

³¹ supply

³² reporting abroad

³³ gossip

³⁴ detractor

³⁵ tell evil tidings

whose vices many, virtues either few or of a negative sort, and their ways altogether past the finding out, sometimes set the whole neighbourhood together by the ears!,

who allowed some of their women for instance not only to obequitate³⁶ strideways, but to suspend to[✓] their necks small figures representing the male organ of virility!

Were these gossips merely funnels of information who did not put in anything of their own in passing it onto another,

for the tongue runs the faster to the tape the lesser weight of truth it carries,

and were they not attempting simply to satisfy the vulgar craving for authorship of the resultant sensations of their hearers, then the continued security of the family may have come under threat, but fortunately it was true : this constant chinwag of the rustic neighbours and villagers,

who, bless them every one, were a brutal, suspicious, gripulous³⁷, envious people, whose ignorance was an inexhaustible fund of conversation, whose pleasures were mean and inordinate, their language base and filthy, and their behaviours rough and absurd, in short : they were near all fefnicutes³⁸, liars, and whisperers³⁹ without business, busiest in petty things, but whiffery⁴⁰ in the main, inclined to narrow, illicit profits, to mean interpretations, and to coarse flattery of the stronger,

suffered much loss when, – wonderful already, but because of too wonderful additions, – passing into prating incredulous minds which had not extent enough of

³⁶ ride about

³⁷ grasping

³⁸ hypocrites

³⁹ slanderers

⁴⁰ trifling

thought and observation to reason truly, causing first wonder, caused then disbelief, for whilst in gross these tales of Trokes entertained them, by becoming far less credible when considered semovedly⁴¹, they never achieved the status of indubitable fact.

With lies so easily winning brief belief in hasty opinions, particularly in the women, – for women are so very porous, – that greatest scandal of all,

which considering the times could have supplied grounds to support the belief that Trokes, despite their duende⁴², were of an evil disposition,

this, of course, the absence of all gods at Troke Manor, would have been thought an evil the most inexcusable were it not for three reasons : wanting by far good matter enough to build up a legend or folklore, without a continuing nutriment of substance, even rumour soon dies of effect : first then this, withal secondly : the gaiety, industry, skill, and harmony unmistakably evident during the investment of that one day every year when the magnificently hospital halls of Troke Manor opened their doors to the annual garden-party, (because a several branch of this saga, requiring a several treatise, this will soon be more fully treated of), at which every circumstance that can make society pleasing was supplied, even to those who,

great by title, but little by merit, wearying at the length of a day, yet awfulising at the shortness of a life,

regarding existence more as a dullsome pastime than as a serious occupation, by some offending word or thing, wait, even patiently, even with a smile, for occasion of offence to draw their mouth tight-closed until it was puckered to the size of a farthing,

as with the taste sudden of alum upon the palate, or the trigger of a purse-net⁴³

⁴¹ separately

⁴² power to attract through personal charm

⁴³ net for fish or rabbit, with a mouth closing like a purse

by its prey;

withal thirdly : when at their garden-party the remarkable wines began to flow, one or two locals of small note, of no very small importance, men in short of less unfreethinking mind, less meddling their noses into Troke affairs, began to be of the opinion, – let custom be ever so strong against them, – that after all it may *not* be impossible for an atheist,

inflexible in his rejection of everything that suggested the priest and the prayer, to be vaguely virtuous, to share, in a degree, their own honesty or merit.

Of course, such toleration was far less observed by their wives,

who, falling in with the cant in fashion, talking of grace, regeneration, &c, believed they succeeded so very handsomely in counterfeiting piety, they were held sincerely devout,

to whom it came as a singular piece of scandal to learn that,

though people free from superstition were animals thankfully very rare and far-scattered,

at Troke Manor there were people, – a whole crew of them!, – who, laying no stress upon predictions, nor upon good or bad omens, believed neither that certain things were lucky, others unlucky, nor even that an overruling power anonymously meddles with, interferes in, human affairs!; to these one or two locals of note and of unclosed mind : these, – unwittingly preventing local opinion of Trokes from attaining too dark a shade, – were inclined to believe, and to state publicly, that there may be an atom, – perhaps not more, – of truth in the notion which Trokes sometimes placatingly voiced, to the following effect : if man must insist that gods must exist, then very well, let them exist, beautifully, in all things, aye, everywhere, but *not* upon the Troke

estate, so that, – without thoughts sliding into the disaster of other men's trains, – their lives may the more fully, more completely, be lived.

So were born the next generation, the eleventh after original Lemuel, his ninth great-grandchildren : to Hugh & Gwen, in August 1830, came Ronald, then in May 1831 Christopher, and in 1832 Lavinia, then to Theodore & Clarice came Charles in July 1830, and Leigh in December 1831, to Herbert & Aloise came the twins Arthur & Paul in October 1831, and to Barry & Mildred in March 1832 came a sole son Brian; in 1833, by special dispensation from first a member of parliament, then an archbishop, – both sweetened by an especially generous gift, – resourceful doctor George acquired all the civil powers necessary to officiate over matters of nuptiae⁴⁴, as well, – though this was unnecessary, – funerals; in December coming for most the sad, for some the tragic, news that Michael Overslaugh was dead intestate⁴⁵ at the age of 90, those who had been his pupils, insisting that his body be buried at the manor where the greater part of his happy life had been spent, so was a lay service performed in the chapel which Overslaugh would have greatly enjoyed, for few were the tears, – for as he once said, *To shed tears is a sign of a great as well as of a little spirit*, – laughter unrestrained, and tributary speeches plentifully strowed⁴⁶ with obsolete words and phrases, unusual barbarisms, comic rusticities; (if these few words seem rather of ungrateful homage to so remarkable a man, then be assured : further homage will later be paid).

In 1834, – with railways commencing their remarkable operation, with full half the population of the country living in cities and towns, – Janet mentally attended the wedding of her lastborn daughter Charmain : after leaving the village church, – which for reasons of safety was far more profusely attended by the relations of the husband than of her own family, – just before stepping into the flower-bedecked fly, she stopping, turning leftwise in a heliograde motion⁴⁷, and waving at the sparkling sky,

⁴⁴ wedding

⁴⁵ leaving no legal will

⁴⁶ strewn

⁴⁷ from east to west

blew a cosse⁴⁸ to her mother who promised her she would be precisely there, which brought a fresh flood of tears to Janet who looked directly into the bright chalybeus⁴⁹ eyes of her daughter from not five feet away.

1835

Harold, 74, – lately content to cloffin⁵⁰, to rove no more a-questing anything, instead pottering after hearthside comforts, playing the physician with myself, striving not too painstakingly to make dear of his 215 bones, – one morning in late August unable to rise from his bed, as soon as certainly he perceived, then understood, that it was his end that was approaching, thanking those who around his bed were flattering his appetite, amusing what they imagined were all the dismays and discomforts of a life coming to closure, – which he said were now so sufficiently lodged and laid up in his bosom as to almost be against he be laid in the bosom of the earth, – within a week, – the while wondering what hath death in it so hard that man should take it so heavily, – quietly died; the very next day Brian at barely three, the only son of Barry (who to his unwarranted shame would remain to his death *sine prole superstite*⁵¹), dying of mononucleosis⁵², these two losses were so deeply infelt, the whole family of 59 persons attended the funeral service, first in the newly instaurated⁵³ chapel, – usen[✓] occasionally by the Troke wives when they remembered to miss their old gods, or took deliberately a break from the knowing that gods were man his glands merely, – then at the family cemetery, – wherein, as shall soon be better explained, the interred remains of every Troke was laid out like a family tree, – beneath a simple, unadorned gravestone finely carved by the self-taught Frederick.

With only doctor George at age 44 and the safeguarder Samuel at 41 remaining

⁴⁸ kiss

⁴⁹ steel-blue

⁵⁰ sit idly by a fire

⁵¹ without surviving issue

⁵² glandular fever

⁵³ renovated

unmarried from the previous generation, the next to wife was youngest son of Mark & Leonora 25-year-old Frank, in 1836, to a jolly⁵⁴ young thing, all of 18, named Jenny, but following an almost fatal miscarriage, out of the afright of the experience, she becomed[✓] a sterile, maudlin woman, (soon so infrigidated as to later prove even more costly to the quest); then son of Frederick & Josephine Rudolph, – at 24 a large cheery man, intelligent, sharp, his hands good hands, but really still a boy at heart, (this imperfection, if it be such, passed on to him by his mother, allowed him to remain so to the end of his days), – fancying to marry, his hopeful choice of mate was a somewhat common, illiterate, but certainly not inscient⁵⁵, nor fatigable, farm lass named Hilary Bunt, who, because she shall feature somewhat in this chronicle, will here earn herself a few words more than the ordinary.

Despite shamelessness allowing for conjecture to keep to no bounds, Hilary was not one of those whose habits villagers and local farmers delighted much to discuss, but she was nevertheless included, despite her rather homely looks, – of which, upon her face, there was still a great deal of youth, – in an untidy parcel of vague stories which in calm times languidly travelled amongst the lower orders, of which, Rudolph of a gardener hearing, but believing not, or not wholly, asked for the opinion of his first cousin once-removed Vouchsafe Janet; now, since shortly after taking up the mantle of Vouchsafedom, for a few pleasant hours each day consiliary⁵⁶ Janet could be found in the thrum⁵⁷ garden when the weather was fine, or else, when the weather was not so fine, in the small simply furnished room, known as the locutory, or room for conversation, (the which, in 1901, without converse ceasing to be one of the finest seasonings of their existence, Hilary would be instrumental in converting into the family museum).

Of those coming to the Vouchsafe who were troubled, or vaguely unwell, or in their most need of answer, they all in an amazement, – of which this house will many

⁵⁴ beautiful

⁵⁵ without knowledge

⁵⁶ giving counsel

⁵⁷ green and vigorous

times more be the theatre, – heard Janet advise, diagnose, judge, and other while⁵⁸ predict, with a high degree of accuracy, (for this was not yet a time when a Vouchsafe got herself into solitary places, out of the presence of every person, when she mind to work her enchantments); but despite helping many, Janet could not of course help at all young Jenny the new wife of Frank who would frequently advocitate⁵⁹ Janet to ask if she was yet pregnant, for she so dearly wanted a babe; now as Jenny had been fully and clearly informed by doctor George that her infertile condition was conclusively forever, because she could not yet believe it, and partly because sympathy, affording her no consolation, seemed so unhandsome an addition to calamity, Janet could do nought but touch the hard flat belly, squint, sense deeply her innards where were the gut stitches, the dead highways, and say no, it was simply not possible, which was truly all she could say, for there are no words, nor hugs, nor tears, nor even one hope enough, to balm a barren woman who knows in her blood that to Nature,

forgetting never that as much for man is birth the beginning proper of his end, – for d—d as fast as born, man is from his very onset deep sunk in his dark cellar, and help not near, not afar, but nowhere, – as the birth of man the end proper of everything, (as science, at this day, doth bring forth great matter to prove true),

she is cherished, a favourite, no more, perhaps even unwanted : spayed⁶⁰ by giving birth to death, Jenny, – her mind not all hale, – did indeed feel herself a redundance, of no further use to the world, in fact, sometimes, she daily wished simply to die, (yet she was to live sadly but resolutely until she was 79, whilst her poor husband Frank was to suffer a bitter unsociable death).

Further simple examples of Vouchsafe counsel : Lavina the only daughter of Hugh asking one day Janet if her pet rabbit, – once a baby oarlop⁶¹ she found in the

⁵⁸ sometimes

⁵⁹ call upon

⁶⁰ rendered sterile

⁶¹ rabbit having ears at right angles to its head

garden, – would get better for he was not eating, taking the heavy fat thing onto her lap feeling all its life, Janet said that it was indeed a fine perfectly healthy animal, but at present was simply resting between feasts; when of the Troke cooks for that month, not the calm Leonora wife of Mark, but wife of Richard Jennifer, – a woman forever in a flusteration, – ran blaking⁶² up the well-trod garden path to Janet sitting sedate, reading and crocheting in an old straight-backed pillowback⁶³ chair,

complete with plumped banker⁶⁴ and dorser⁶⁵, placed there, that she would take no hurt, every fine morning by Frederick, – who never missed a day, rain or shine, but he would be in the garden, – whose love of floscles⁶⁶ was to some of the family a fetish without limit,

to ask, as if in a panic, if the two sample potatoes in her hands were still edulious⁶⁷ for there were still six sacks of them, but turning all a strange blue!; holding one into her hand, – a red-skinned variety from Ireland, called *The Cup*, – feeling its healthy living heart,

but soon enough to be killed, murdered by a boiling,

Janet pronouncing the stem tuber hale, thereupon smiling with such relief she even curtsied, – to her own *fratria*⁶⁸!, – Jennifer ran excited back to the kitchen.

So to Rudolph : at a distance from Janet, in a circle of various shrubs, – for here at busy periods it sometimes was, — without forcing by proximity to share with others what may after all be too mysterious or secret or shameful, or too silly, even for words, — those of the family requiring counsel patiently awaited their turn, – with gracious urging, Rudolph came to ask about young Hilary, whether he should

⁶² crying, out of breath

⁶³ chair with a padded oval section for the head

⁶⁴ cushion or covering for a seat

⁶⁵ cushion, especially for the back of a seat

⁶⁶ flowers

⁶⁷ edible

⁶⁸ brother's wife

introduce her to the family, for she was uncultured, unpretty, utterly unlettered⁶⁹, and at present in the kitchen garden,

for he left her between what he knew positively to be the broad beans and the cucumbers, for these, personally mighty physagogues⁷⁰, he at least could recognise,

and closing her eyes Janet soon found the solid, nervous, very slightly strabismal⁷¹ rustic, dressed in a poor best adorned with a borrowed brooch of pinchbeck⁷²; Hilary at this time was thinking, (of course so early a Vouchsafe could not read her thoughts) :

— Though I may well be an illiterate malkin⁷³, I amn't⁷⁴ as many boys believe me : a malkin⁷⁵, nor a malkin⁷⁶ as some local wives suppose, nor ever was I a malkin⁷⁷, for I am more than willing to hitch up my skirts and use a malkin⁷⁸ till my fingers bleed, nor am I so uncomely as to flayte⁷⁹ a good man away, like a malkin⁸⁰ a crow, nor am I such a sawney⁸¹ as to not know master Rudolph a good man, a beautiful man!, here she applied a sexless adjective, since the cave leased to the female, to the male, — in need of a woman with a malkin⁸² heated and pure, and with so much love to gift as would send a lesser woman acrased⁸³.

⁶⁹ illiterate

⁷⁰ substances causing flatulence

⁷¹ cross-eyed

⁷² an alloy one part zinc and five parts copper, used for cheap jewellery

⁷³ female personal name applied to the lower-classes

⁷⁴ am not

⁷⁵ strumpet

⁷⁶ slut

⁷⁷ untidy woman

⁷⁸ bundle of rags attached to stick to clean out ovens

⁷⁹ scare

⁸⁰ scarecrow

⁸¹ fool, simpleton

⁸² female pudendum

⁸³ crazy

If this, English it how one will, may read rather oddly, it is here in its earliest demonstration evident, that Hilary was clearly of words proclive⁸⁴, particularly of homonyms⁸⁵; (as she had never been to school, wanting in those skills of knowing how in the conventional sense to learn, retain, and remember, if her coming to literacy was to at first prove ordalian⁸⁶, it was thanks to her husband Rudolph and their compatient⁸⁷ efforts, when she did at last wear off her *vestigia ruris*⁸⁸, that she arrived at learnedness with the stately grace of a galleon; indeed, in later years becoming a renowned authority on words, – something even of a blue-stocking⁸⁹, – it was often to herself alone that family members turned when involved in that verbal combatancy so much a part of Troke occupation, particularly words polysemant⁹⁰, for whilst she openly acknowledged two very important points, firstly : that merely memorising lists of words, as well of course their denotation, was of dubious value, particularly when, due to want of citations,

unknown in dictionaries prior to Bailey,

connotation is wanting, as well pronunciation,

unknown in dictionaries prior to Johnson,

secondly : that a dictionary was simply a dispensary of truth, an instrument which by defining language, confining meaning, is a malevolent literary device for cramping its growth, for meaning cannot derive from the indexical features of linguistic expression : only oral usage was the proper legislator of same; aye, only the lexiconophilist⁹¹ Hilary read dictionaries as others read works of imagination); opening her eyes Janet said,

⁸⁴ having a proclivity for

⁸⁵ words identical in sound and spelling but different in meaning

⁸⁶ of or relating to an ordeal

⁸⁷ suffering together

⁸⁸ signs of the rurality

⁸⁹ literary lady

⁹⁰ with more than one meaning

⁹¹ collector of dictionaries and word books

— The impeccancy⁹² of the girl might not be of the vertuosest, – for in her various employments she has transient journeyman to dismettle, and during her occasional visits home young cousins eager to see and touch, – but as her heart is as pure as her virginity certain, with no deficiencie to be found, Hilary is worthy well your cherishing, your honouring, and your love,

whereupon Rudolph departed a very happy man.

1836

In this year, in which in these isles it was made compulsory to register births, marriages, and deaths, (a demand, it need not be said, when these occurred at the manor, they never honoured, for Trokes were an unruly people : they could not, they would not, be ruled), Hilary and Rudolph were wed in the chapel before doctor George, (whereafter theirs proved a very fecund union, for if death flanked their progeny, – their first child, — whom they would have named Meadow, — was born almost dead, their last, — whom they would have also named Meadow, as if to show the name no warye⁹³, — nearly dead-born, – between these two sacrificial outriders, – each seemingly of no other business but to be born, to make their parents much glad, then in dying make them a heap care-tuned⁹⁴, – came six hale children, James in February 1838, who would die at age four, John in September 1840, Mark in June 1848, Kate the year after, Chevonne in two years more, and then Paul in November 1852).

Coming one day to Janet with his rolling gait, Erwin the one-leggéd, 22-year-old son of Frederick & Josephine, – that hour down from London where he was studying law so that this post too would henceforth be filled by a family member, for by now the

⁹² sinlessness

⁹³ curse

⁹⁴ mournful

complications of matters legal were becoming overly burdensome to their elderly London advocate, despite his small clientage, – he asked for the Vouchsafe opinion of a young lady who with her maid was then showing to a lovely guest-room on the first-floor, particularly of her fittingness as a wife; when, with only vagueness coming from her incorporeal look, Janet asked that this person, – whom Words ask no permission to keep unnamed, for there is no need to record names which it is wisdom to forget, – be introduced to her : a very first look at the too bedizened⁹⁵ girl proved oh very unpromising : though she appeared in very fine dress, Janet required but one glance into her inaurate⁹⁶ eyes, then, the better to admire the pretty, and stolen, ring she wore, holding briefly her hand, one touch, for her suspicions to be confirmed.

When the girl departed to resume her unpacking, with a sigh, with a look, shaking her head, and in five words making clear her utter unsuitability as a wife, upon his paling pressing for details, Janet spoke further :

— Like her mother, a child also of seven months suffering that tenuity of fibre which prematurity so often entails, this young lady entered upon her race of life with that handicap of defective viability which can bode only ill for our family. Specifically? : the girl suffers, perhaps painlessly, perhaps blamelessly, – yet she seeks nowise to be rehabilitated and her health and honour restored, – from the belief, – simply an emanation of her vapour-breeding brain, – that gentlemen of a certain misfortune are of a more devotional and understanding aspect. More? : the girl has known so far five lovers, – three criminally, and each, like yourself, somehow a lameter⁹⁷, – and even now as I speak is dallying in her mind, – which is weak and flashy⁹⁸, – with a sixth who has a withered hand, perhaps a law-stationer⁹⁹.

⁹⁵ dressed in finery

⁹⁶ having a metallic golden lustre, as of insects

⁹⁷ cripple

⁹⁸ impetuous

⁹⁹ person specialising in law stationery

Whilst these and other details, – her choice of words, — but without changing an atom the intent or substance of their meaning, — admittedly a little polished, – coming to her with no small clarity and accuracy, may well be cause for astound, but in matters of defending Trokes from folly and danger, Vouchsafe skills seem often a little to stretch; when he was alone with his guest, in a royal passion,

which all reformations begin upon, for Erwin was a man as subject to like appetites as other men,

ripping away her silly frisettes¹⁰⁰, telling the newly large-eyed dysmorphophiliac¹⁰¹,

(who would one day suffer dangerously from *globus hystericus*¹⁰², when her acrotomophilia¹⁰³ became ungovernable, then, when she sought medical counsel : from iantronudia¹⁰⁴),

who in a new light Vouchsafe-cast seemed newly not even snoutfair¹⁰⁵, what he now knew of her, thereupon her face,

(which would one soon day tend to the florid, as her body to the pinguid¹⁰⁶),

suddenly penetrating the paint, assumed an eburnine¹⁰⁷ cast; aye, with but a tolerable pair of eyes to set up with, a woman may go far by her own industry, adding lips, cheeks, eye-brows, even bosoms.

As a one of those that usually cast away their armour, rather than wrestle with the difficulties of the unknown and uneasy passages,

¹⁰⁰ row of artificial curls worn on the forehead

¹⁰¹ one who derives sexual arousal from a deformed or physically impaired partner

¹⁰² sensation of a choking lump in the throat to which hysterical persons are liable

¹⁰³ attraction to the absence of a limb

¹⁰⁴ arousal caused by undressing for a doctor

¹⁰⁵ possessing of beauty but nothing else

¹⁰⁶ fat, greasy

¹⁰⁷ resembling ivory

through which the real warrior, man or woman, strengthened by both difficulty and danger, wielding skilfully say a spardoon¹⁰⁸, passes through,

the young lady, thinking but for a moment to employ all her fiercest forces in her own defence,

those even of superficial learning, envious affection, vainglorious conceit, and covetous desire!, for when knowledge, even should it be forever afterward exiled, is in all its state more solemn even than the tedious pomp that waits upon princes, ignorance does not always stoop, but crouches, the better, by well-coloured shifts, by all increase of a cunning which daily grows on, to shoulder it out,

but making not a word, with her smirkly maid,

in whose eyes no mistress can be a heroine, for the servant need only discern that the mistress is *slightly* lower than the level she claims for herself,

left the manor at once; Erwin did then afterthink¹⁰⁹ of his actions, not of his treatment of the jezebel, but that he had perhaps given a perilous air to the suspicion that he was somehow privy to knowledge of a too weirdward¹¹⁰ purport.

It was at about this time, – for too confusing was it for all for two Trokes to be namelings¹¹¹!, – that the practice was undertaken firstly of ensuring a child was not given a name already in use by a living or even recently living relation, and lastly, – to overcome existing conflicts, to ensure a perfect clearing in this matter, – of utilising nicknames; so : came one day to Janet in the sunny garden the troublous Paul, not the five-year-old twin son of Herbert & Aloise, but at 20 the youngest son of Tristan &

¹⁰⁸ sword, lighter than a broadsword, made to cut and thrust

¹⁰⁹ repent

¹¹⁰ bordering upon the supernatural

¹¹¹ persons bearing the same name

Caroline,

yet it must be here conceded that with so many names here banded, – particularly when, for the most part, the first mention announces their birth, the next their death : hardly material enough for a character to fix its individuality, – it seems of scantish matter to explain which Paul is referred to when all Pauls are confused, or worse : forgot,

who, because his money always burned out the bottom of his purse, was known as rakehelly¹¹² Paul, or Paul the wastrel.

Living up at London supposedly studying architecture, – not in the least disturbed, nor even in the least caring, that of all arts this was the most synthetic by reason of the number of proofs concurring in harmony, – coming with great ease amongst a loose crowd, not a one possessing sufficient sharpness of mind to people the better coffee-houses,

such as those then called *The Globe*, *The Rainbow*, and *The Mitre*,

and drinking therefore, to excess, in much lower places, and what with gambling,

not at *Crockford's*¹¹³, or *Carlton House*, in Pall Mall, or *Wattier's Club*, in Piccadilly, – for Paul was not a one either to possess sufficient sharpness of pocket, – but in the seedier Hells¹¹⁴, such as *Graham's*, *The Union*, *The Cocoa Tree*,

it was not long before the unthrift¹¹⁵ Paul, his not ungenerous exhibition¹¹⁶ all spent, must come home to request an advance, which is a loan, and, on this occasion, to

¹¹² dissolute, debauched

¹¹³ exclusive gambling club in St James Street

¹¹⁴ gambling-houses

¹¹⁵ thriftless person

¹¹⁶ allowance

ask Janet, how with the assistance of her magic he might alter the odds at the tables whereat *primero*¹¹⁷ and dice were his greatest victors; in her great offices, as every Vouchsafe, ever setting last the wants of the left hand, she Janet sighing, looking closely at this boy, a wastethrift¹¹⁸ of himself as of his chattels, for there was a strong smell of claret on his breath, his chinbowdash¹¹⁹ was askew and stained with gravy, his shoes were scuffed, and because his jauntiness of walk and glibness of tongue failed in a most tragedious manner to mask his shame, so it was she beheld a rather rare example of the Troke spice¹²⁰ : an inabstinent¹²¹ dissolute, a despairful *ferae naturae*¹²².

Taking sudden firm grip of his damp hand realising at once, – for with touch such could not be concealed from the discernment of a Vouchsafe, – that here was a fast-darkening sheeps who, – with neither hope of preferment nor fear of punishment, neither counsel of the wisest nor company of the worthiest, able to alter his humour, – would not return to the fold until great deals of anguish had befallen both himself and others, she calmly deliberately arund¹²³ the blushing but too impenitent hotspur¹²⁴ who then angrily departed the house with 20 guineas borrowed of his sister Elizabeth; wondering first at his likely fate, whether it might be other than fatal, then idly, briefly, – if she were of another, wholly different, mercenarian stamp, – whether she indeed could be instrumental in managing a gamener¹²⁵ soon a terror of the gaming-tables, one who could vaticate¹²⁶ the next throw or the next card, or at best, – for surely no more could be looked for, – the outcome between agonists¹²⁷, cocks, dogs, or bears; but as the family was in no way financially needy,

117 ancient game of cards

118 spendthrift

119 the tie of the cravat

120 species

121 one indulgent of appetite

122 one of a wild nature

123 scolded

124 hot-headed, impetuous man

125 gamester

126 foretell

127 prize-fighters

despite of late problems with demurrage¹²⁸, bottomry¹²⁹, excessive shippage¹³⁰, a bothersome case of plunderage¹³¹, and in particular a laden vessel made man-bound¹³² because she was iron-sick¹³³, as well as a few substandard investments, especially in Cuba, which returning a profit of only cent per cent had removed a tiny shine from the fortune the family made in potash 50 years before,

this talent, – (which was anyway not in her possession, and besides : nothing could be more below the grandeur of a Vouchsafe), – was a neednot to the quest.

So Paul returning to a London,

a city teeming with beings saprophagous¹³⁴ and saprophilous¹³⁵,

chastened certainly, but ever more resolute in his gaming, alas came he soon into even greater debt, indeed so much so that Patriarch Mark, – a man vigorous of 56, handsome, upright, leonine, his word good always, — which his gestures, face, body, and emotional emphasis asserted he standest steadfast in back of, — and full capable of supplying, in very satisfactory manner, what his eyes to garden-party ladies suggested in their cerulean twinkle well possible, – forced as if to cry notchil¹³⁶, threatened disherison¹³⁷, which sent the re proven boy even more distant from his family; as Trokes did not, generally speaking, socialise, save at their annual garden-party, they heard no more of Paul save from their agent later in the year that with architecture no more a relish pleasing enough to his mind, neither with his happiness squaring nor his interest, he had abandoned his studies, and was living

¹²⁸ compensation for undue delay or detention of vessels in port

¹²⁹ system of lending money to shipowners for voyage on security of the ship

¹³⁰ freightage

¹³¹ embezzlement of goods on board ship

¹³² detained by lack of men

¹³³ ship with its bolts, &c, very much corroded

¹³⁴ feeding on decaying material

¹³⁵ living in rotting waste

¹³⁶ advertising that a man will not be answerable for debts incurred by his wife

¹³⁷ the act of disinheriting

with a woman and her son in her rented Mayfair house, from which, in the night, they were soon to flee to avoid the bailiffs.

Chance meeting at four-fifteen on a sunny Sunday afternoon in August, at a village fete, at a gruff and handsome Scot, – for it was once as permissible to say *at* a person as at a time or place, – who, lately ending a half-year of posting through the kingdom gathering subscriptions for the *Bible Christians*¹³⁸, – mighty at chapter and verse, – was shortly to return with his sister to the Colonies to take up a clerically fetial¹³⁹ position, Diana 30-year-old daughter of Frederick & Josephine offered, – and with such festinate¹⁴⁰ daring!, – first her services, then after hesitation her purse also; despite their relentless efforts, honest Diana never saw, never even glimpsed, such light as brother and sister claimed, nay, swore, was cast everywhere by their deity, particularly upon their missionate work; (alas in 1840, after becoming in appearance more than half pagan the better to convert the Red Indians, – or Native Americans as it is now in this day considered far more polite, and proper, to call them, – but alas in their words still clearly far more than half Christian, after performing numerous services of charity,

such as treating smallpox and *morbus castrensis*¹⁴¹, diseases entirely unknown before the paleface, or albiculi¹⁴², began their exterminating rampages,

Diana, – by now willing, — of course, without question still far preferring her dignity, independence, and sanity, — to admit to herself that Christians generally, in all their shame, dependence, and blindness, *seemed* less ill-content, somehow, less troubled, happier, possibly, in a frowsy sort of way, – unfortunately received a fatal arrow in her side when trying to calm some intoxicated braves suddenly angered at the knowledge imparted to them by the Scot,

¹³⁸ Protestant sect founded in 1815 by William O'Bryan, a Wesleyan, of Cornwall; also called Bryanites

¹³⁹ ambassadorial

¹⁴⁰ hurried; hasty

¹⁴¹ syphilis

¹⁴² white people

of name John Damms, by the way, a man who considered a day forever lost in which he did not good,

that, – if the half-breed interpreter could be trusted, – all their ancient gods were base, insulting, and false).

In August of this year, – with plums of all sorts in fruit, pears, apricots, berberries, — efficacious in fluxes and fevers, — filberts, *Corylus maxima*, muskmelons, as well the colourful but poisonous monkshoods, – Hugo youngest son of Mark & Leonora asking his cousin Vouchsafe Janet if 17 was too young to marry, for he had foolishly gotten a young lady with child, she smiling at how Dame Nature could sometimes be so impatient, so impetuous!, particularly with a young man like Hugo, who, – despite his few years, a strapping, craggy adult with a thick bullet-head moustache¹⁴³, – was possessed of all the urges attendant upon the fierce orders, – as well, obviously, some of the fiercer mistures¹⁴⁴, – which virility so early in a life, seemingly so improperly, corners; asking if there was love present in the relationship, replying for his own part alas not, for he now knew his true course in life :

— For I wish to study the science of building and so supplace¹⁴⁵ my fool cousin Paul, who, with judgement no more one of his natural faculties, and overall too irreparably debauched to resume not only his education, but his old wits, is now so hurried away by his dissolution as to heed naught else but what it alone reasons and preaches. It may be said of course, that by following merely honourable methods of life, ceremony for example, – that invention of wise men to keep fools at a distance, – or good breeding, say, – that expedient to make fools and wise men equals, – one denies oneself not only the possibility of enjoying a great many disorderly satisfactions, but also the numerous happinesses, of ill-governed desires. Be it so, but it is now obvious to me, Hugo

¹⁴³ curled at the ends near the corners of the mouth

¹⁴⁴ misfortunes

¹⁴⁵ replace

went on with growing confidence, — that our home will soon require the addition of new wings our ever-growing population, – now, I believe, in numbers 60, – to accommodate.

When Janet replied that as marriage without love was internecidal¹⁴⁶, certainly either a husband should be found, thus a father for her child, or else an offer made recompensive of his lunar folly, Hugo agreed, particularly as the lass had made a tender of her virginity, for which, even as she lay there, paroxysmally exsuccous¹⁴⁷ of what was wondrous snugly, – feeding each upon the other, gaining what is given, – at the end almost wept the eyes out of her head; as a proud relieved Hugo was dispatched to London to commence study, explaining matters to her compatriot the aristarch¹⁴⁸ Mark, – making first the comment,

— If he get him child by play, what will he do when he goeth to it in good earnest!,

– he agreed that with the *enceinte*¹⁴⁹ girl a mere daughter of a village inn-keeper, and otherwise destined perhaps not otherwise than to aspire to no better than an ale-wife¹⁵⁰, he would send dour lawyer Erwin to visit the girl.

After putting her mark to a paper carefully slowly by Erwin read to her clausemele¹⁵¹, it was thus assured that she would henceforth, disassociating herself from the family, renounce all present all future claims to name or property howsoever her life should fall out or chance or happen or otherwise come to pass thereafter whether in doctrine or in discipline in earnest or in devise in whole or in part, and if any doubt or doubts, darkness, or diversity of understanding should later befall or happen to be found in either the audible or the identical authentic¹⁵² document, – whether in

¹⁴⁶ mutually destructive

¹⁴⁷ in the act of sucking out

¹⁴⁸ good man in power

¹⁴⁹ pregnant

¹⁵⁰ female proprietor of ale-house

¹⁵¹ clause by clause

¹⁵² document written by author

singular articles, sentences, clauses, words, or parts thereof, expressed, implied, or suspicioned, – then all would be forfeit, and for all this the girl would be given more than means enough to sustentate¹⁵³ herself and her forthcoming child for the duration of their lives; (but the babe, who was anyway only a daughter, no more benefited from the bequest than its mother, for first the babe lived only a brief way into its third year, secondly its celebrating grandfather was slain by his own cellars, and finally the destitute *fille de joie*¹⁵⁴ died of a cramp colic¹⁵⁵ six years later).

In October of this same year, via the organ of his heart, the lately echinate¹⁵⁶ Frederick, in expectation of soon making¹⁵⁷ a good dinner, suffered a skirmish with death : a brief grimacing tussle amidst a settlement of sempervirents¹⁵⁸,

comprising holly, ivy, bay called laurel, juniper, cypress, yew, pine, fir, orange-trees, lemon-trees, and myrtles, as well rosemary, lavender, periwinkle in white, purple, and blue, flags, and germander, which gives in its season a good flower to the eye, and sweet marjoram,

to which he succumbed so suddenly, his heart was arrested in diastole, instead of the usual systole; despite stealing two and a half years from the quest, many believed and remarked that though his goodness, his noble courtesy,

said to be all one with honesty, modesty, and decency, for he who having a courtly¹⁵⁹ disposition doth justly whatever he doth,

deserved a far longer time enjoying of the world, the poor man did rather scant justice to his 53 vigorous years; poor Janet, blaming herself for her invigilancy¹⁶⁰, felt

¹⁵³ support

¹⁵⁴ prostitute

¹⁵⁵ appendicitis

¹⁵⁶ prickly

¹⁵⁷ eating well

¹⁵⁸ evergreens

¹⁵⁹ courteous

¹⁶⁰ lack of vigilance

wretched at her inability to predict this anyway avoidless calamity, for after bringing her daily chair, lingering not far, the better to kindly consult her first comforts, then working long and hard in the hot garden at sarculation¹⁶¹ beside the last two of the once army of 20 gardeners, Frederick had then laid him down on a sheltered bench as he was usant¹⁶² in the mid-afternoon to nap, and at three o'clock and 20 minutes *p.m.*, his heart stopping, he simply died, an oblivious sleepaway¹⁶³; looking again at herself, at her custodianship of the massive library wherefrom her skills seemed to issue, Janet railed at her unsharable responsibility.

Thus in the fifth Vouchsafe was properly launched that feeling of utter aloneness which in her every successor would grow only more deep, more deeply troubling, for if in one sense a Vouchsafe, of all people, if the least alone in the world, is yet in another truly the most isolate of beings, (indeed to the tenth and final, there is not anywhere, not anyone, on this world, save now one, impossibly a stranger, with whom she can relate on almost equal terms), to everyone an alien,

(aye!, thou hast been, shalt be, art, alone, for thou only art self-like, and very soon thou shalt have nothing in common with any creature!);

if it is not so already, it is to be hoped that it shall soon become far less unclear that though they are furthest from anapodictic¹⁶⁴, the ever-developing Vouchsafe gifts have inherent in their very matrix, as if a clause, (as if hard-wired), a faculty, which denies their verbal or written description.

Nearly all Vouchsafes attempted, at first almost desperately, to keep journals and diaries, (as may, or may not, be touched upon at a later time), but words failed them all, for what is a Vouchsafe is inatriculable, cannot be explained, particularly as polysemous¹⁶⁵ words are almost, save as said for demonstrance, the sole mean[✓] of

¹⁶¹ hoeing

¹⁶² in the habit of

¹⁶³ dying without disease, peaceably, gradually

¹⁶⁴ undemonstrable

¹⁶⁵ having many meanings

describing even the most mundane of the miracles whereof each successive is ever more capable; feebly : on the one side some Vouchsafe talents seemed so simple that explanation would only make them complex, and on the other side some gifts appeared so complex, so almost impossible, a mere few hundred words, all choice chosen, could satisfy even the most wretched of men, – even those who reject difficult things from impatience, sober things from dejection, and deeper things from superstition, – and yet on another side again some magics, with no time between need and event, – with, as it were, no moving parts, – could fully prove that reason, as much logic, is not always the principal directress of all best doings; because the human understanding, unless narrowly directed, widely assisted, is quite unfit to contend with the obscurity of such things, later Vouchsafes, upon husbands, as well the soon to be formed Inner Council, cast a little spell of eucatalepsia¹⁶⁶ to a little balm their solitariness, (but which in the too present instance is of course impossible); it was, then, principally for this reason of helpless inexplicability,

for as Nietzsche saith : that which is defined, loses its power, and yet it is also said : even endowed with highest gifts, what is a one who cannot speak them?,

that Vouchsafes henceforth kept many of their gifts occulted¹⁶⁷.

Janet soon enough becalmed herself, for whereas her library was certainly of very size, yet not immensive¹⁶⁸, and the shelves that housed metaphorically books pertaining directly to members of the family really very few, she realised she must tend to their pages with far more diligence than hitherto, – for whatever is to be done with ease must first be done with diligence, – and enjoy less her freedom, which for a Vouchsafe is never truly hers of right; in time she learned even in her sleep to as if read these books, so that at waking one morning, realising that the remaining stump of leg left to Erwin, owing to the chafing of the straps of his wooden limb, would soon show signs of corruption¹⁶⁹, by conveying this intelligence to doctor George, so was

¹⁶⁶ provision for true understanding

¹⁶⁷ hidden, concealed

¹⁶⁸ immeasurable

¹⁶⁹ infection

danger averted; also sensing that young Christopher the son of Hugh was newly vulnerable to a cold which would develop into a furious and possibly fatal fever, though the chill came when the child was rescued from a soaking in a sudden serotinal¹⁷⁰ shower, and the fever full followed, Janet, somewhat foolhardily, gave her word to the mother that the boy would be back in full circulation well within a month, which was true.

But it was not long following this event that Janet, by almost fatally erring, never again claimed, nor even vaguely inferred, that her forwiting¹⁷¹ was irrefutable; matters fell out suchwise¹⁷² : aged now 50 lately daring to peer into her own book at this page and that, dreamily delighting in what she saw, or perhaps read, by almost unthinkingly fanning to the last pages, there, before realising, glimpsing her own death, snapping closed the book else the details, perhaps the precise date, be seen, she managed to calm her fears by acknowledging, despite her remarkable theurgy¹⁷³, that she really knew no more than any deadly¹⁷⁴ man, which was simply that an extinguishing must one day arrive; so : sitting one day in the shade of a lusty¹⁷⁵ laurel, with business so to speak slow, allowing herself a doze, there in that sun-dappled garden she dreamt, she dreamt of herself sitting exactly as at her present, but watching the approach of her cousin Christopher proudly mounted on his horse Gyp, recently received upon the advent of his sixth birthday.

It might be noteful to mention that Gyp possessed not one of the 15 several points of a good horse cited in 1496 by England's first typographer, second printer, Wynkyn de Worde,

yes, three whereof were of man : bold, proud, and hardy, three of woman : fair-breasted, fair of hair, and easy to move, three of a fox : of a fair tail, short ears,

¹⁷⁰ pertaining to late summer

¹⁷¹ foreknowledge

¹⁷² in this manner

¹⁷³ power to do supernatural things

¹⁷⁴ mortal

¹⁷⁵ bushy

and of goodly trot, three of a hare : of great eye, dry head, and well running,
and three of an ass : of a big chin, a flat leg, and a good hoof,

but for all these supposed failings Gyp was silkenly tame, fat, bosome¹⁷⁶, reliable, affectionate, rarely animated, never kicking, with a bullet head, a snip¹⁷⁷, a ewe-neck¹⁷⁸, and a very full flowing mane and tail, for Trokes were as disinclined to crop their horses as themselves; atop his polysarcous¹⁷⁹ blonk¹⁸⁰ proud Christopher waved proudly at his auntie Janet, – actually they were first cousins twice removed, – and as Janet waved back, it was thereupon that existence seemed gradually to slow, – as if the better to maximise her horror, – for in dropping the reins, commencing, arms windmilling, to pitch slowly backward over the rump, Gyp, in its horsey way, trying to as if recapture the boy by first halting, then backing a step, then, as if to meet so urgent a need with equal sacrifice, the good steed rearing up, so, as the horse rose so did the boy more scrabble for purchase, until pitching over backward, with a whicker¹⁸¹, a mad kicking of legs, the boy was completely buried.

Hereupon, with a shriek Janet awaking, before the relief of consciousness was properly come to her, seeing right there, prenasal¹⁸², the very same scene : young Christopher atop his fat horse waving as if at the world : without other a thought, save to rescue the boy, – for she would not suffer even the affections of them who loved her singularly to hold her back from hasting thitherward, – she rushing forward, the otherwise worldly horse, – who thanks to carrots, apples, and affection, knew her and, one supposed, in its stupid horsey way, liked her, – shying at her waving charge, less out of fright than incomprehension, so was the brief tableau of her dream repeated exactly; despite suffering the full weight of nearly half a ton of horseflesh atop himself, Christopher escaped completely scart-free¹⁸³, as did the

176 obedient

177 white or pink patch on nostril or lip

178 thin, poorly arched neck

179 corpulent

180 horse

181 whinny

182 in front of the nose

183 without a scratch or injury

sorry horse, the saddle it was that broke its back; from this event, however incorrectly, Janet summarised existence in this way : whereas the future will arrive by whatever means is available, – for all things come to pass by absolute necessity, – with prudence, – proven often, in other realms, in time effectual, – this future, if not entirely unavoidable, could in part be shopen¹⁸⁴ and even directed, provided adequate recompense was supplied; but to recognise and to sit in judgement over such delicate matters, Janet realised, required far greater skills than she yet possessed, yet like most of the early Vouchsafes, living well into grandevity¹⁸⁵, it can perhaps be seen how tempting it was for her to aview the last pages of her book, when the drama of her death could, possibly, she believed, be gainsaid.

It may not, therefore, in this place, be improper, nor untimely, to recount another strange Vouchsafe anomaly from this time, (even at this day that is now, continuing unexplained) : it so came about that Jenny, cold childless wife of Frank, casually asking the now greying but entirely unbent Janet, when passing her in the hall, to be a dear and locate her wedding band, of which's[✓] whereabouts she was yet again in ignorance; with but a few moments of thought, then in one word, two word¹⁸⁶, Janet could very easily have performed this tiny service, again, but far too often of late finding herself becoming the memory and conscience of a few lazy individuals, – particularly those who without a great push from necessity could not apply themselves to that mental effort which address the million trivias of life, – she chose to not immediately reveal the location of this item; in all fairness to Jenny, she had already quickly looked for the ring by the wash bason[✓], in the flour barrel, in the laundry in her old pinny pocket, and in her bed, so she was surprised, even agilte¹⁸⁷, when Janet nodding went on her way, whereupon Jenny resumed her search, even looking in places unvisited : thus the morning passed.

Come the populous family luncheon, observing how concerned was her face, simply to encourage Jenny to even greater efforts, – greater even than she Jenny imagined

184 shaped

185 great age

186 plural word

187 offended

a strict regard to health would have dictated, – Janet suggesting a most unlikely place to look : atop the gate-post of the swinery¹⁸⁸, laying down her knife and fork Jenny immediately went in search of the ring, for it was very dear to her, far more so than he who presented it to her; little thinking till she espied its glint that it had been full three weeks since she had been on what was called hogcote¹⁸⁹ duty, Jenny reasoned that one of the children, finding it somewhere, had forgotten placed it there for later retrieval; when Janet saw the relieved face of Jenny, heard her ecstatic words of relief and gratitude, all capped by the promise to be in future more careful.

Intrigued, turning to her library, there wending back and forth through this small segment of time, she found that whilst chatting with a kitchen colleague, Jenny had unthinkingly placed her ring in a broken egg-cup on the window-sill while she peeled some onions; by carefully watching this ring, – now that time was hastened madly elamping¹⁹⁰ in the sunlight, – so it was to her astonishment that she saw the ring vanish, simply wink out of existence; giving next her attention to the post where the ring was found, by again travelling quickly back and forth she observed the ring as suddenly materialise; in short Janet came to realise, at that middle stage in her Vouchsafe life, that she could at least of one small inanimate thing, if not determine its existence, then at least, under the right circumstances, its inadvertent location; (but this anomaly, of which there were a strange few over the years, not least of all the levitation and other marvels practiced by the seventh Vouchsafe, could never precisely be repeated).

1837

With so many characters, marriages, deaths, and dates seeming to clutter this narrative, a few important incidents and interesting events neglecting : if only to have the subject in the past, – as well to dispel any suggestion that, however elsewhere in

¹⁸⁸ place where pigs are kept

¹⁸⁹ pigsty

¹⁹⁰ shining

England true, Trokes were an imperfectly washed nation, – the matter of fresh water, necessary for lestals¹⁹¹, baths, cooking, washing, and in fact all plumbing generally, will now be treated of : almost all credit for this must go to Henry son of Richard & Jennifer, – to have such honour before he was a man grown, this was marvellously noted, – for he was as aware as any member of the family of the disjoynt¹⁹² of performing untroubled bodily evacuations without undue waiting, undue haste, particularly during this year of 1837, – when even Buckingham Palace possessed not a single bathroom, – when at the tender age of 15 he and five other youngsters, overwhelmed by rather violent attacks of drift¹⁹³, caused the stour¹⁹⁴ for a vacant jakes to be often in such earnest that not a one of this six could quietly stay without a while to let him within obtain his groaning relief.

Some eat and then defecate, some eat to defecate, some defecate to eat, and some eat and defecate indiscriminately, all in various ratios, intake to outlet, three to one, say, for the industrious, the studious, those who love not food more than their need for it, or five to one perhaps for the slightly less occupied, or those of a speedier, hungrier metabolism, or even ten to one or more for those who far more nibble than eat, doing it may be their duty by the gardens and orchards : here with the teeth and tongue examining a choice representative of apples soon to be harvested, or there, book placed under arm, beneath the big bannut¹⁹⁵ tree, inspired first into badding¹⁹⁶, then, book lad down, to splash¹⁹⁷, or there again, with tea-tables set up on the flagstones, – lately relaid in a very soothing wavelike design of subtly melding hues, with tree-shadows slowly lengthening across the lawn, in the feel of a languid cooling breeze, in a brief hiatus in conversation, – into tea dunking a *petite madeleine*¹⁹⁸; howsobeit, as much respect and attention for eating and defecating, – for these of life are the poles, – must be paid to the one as to the other,

¹⁹¹ water-closets

¹⁹² difficulty

¹⁹³ diarrhoea

¹⁹⁴ battle

¹⁹⁵ walnut

¹⁹⁶ shelling walnuts

¹⁹⁷ beat down walnuts with a pole

¹⁹⁸ small rich cake, baked in a shell-shaped mould

(for it is true, as Laporte futurely saith : there is a wickedness in human sterCUS¹⁹⁹ that must be given time to dissipate, else it turn upon man).

Regarding the Troke larder, a little somewhat has already been said, – no doubt, in a more proper situation, with ampler disposable space, words shall be used to thoroughly expose this subject in all its strength, – but regarding the Troke ablutions, too little, for however low a subject, it deserves pains : during the eleven years beginning 1837, Henry saw to it with his own hands that fired clay and copper piping were installed throughout the house, so that by 1848 virtually all living-quarters contained hot and cold running water, particularly first the kitchens, which were relieved also of the four rather smelly lavatrines²⁰⁰; in 1840 Henry began experimenting,

(as Moule was to do a few years later, resulting in his *Earth Closet* of 1860),

with different soils mixt[✓] with disease killing chemicals, with odour-blanketing herbs, so as to arrive via a little enginery at an effective means of abolishing the need for various silver and pewter pot jerrys and lasanons²⁰¹ which were emptied every morning into the occasionally odorous cess-pit beyond the rear garden by whoever was unfortunate enough to be allocated the weekly duty of gonge-farmer²⁰².

Despite incorporating in each of his new kocays²⁰³ a small spirit-fired furnace, the soil was so troubled by problems caused by English dampness, – such as boneaches and corns do engrieve, – as proving so hindrous to its easy gravitational flow, the waste too often remained uncovered, for even when situations were ideal a certain amount of often chocking dust would rise airward at the pulling of the lever; after a great many of attempts, – demonstrating even at the age of 22 his

¹⁹⁹ dung

²⁰⁰ square stones in a kitchen, with a hole to void water

²⁰¹ close-stools

²⁰² emptier of privies

²⁰³ privies

indomitable persistence, – Henry returned to gravity-driven water as the only reliable means of flushing away human excrement²⁰⁴, and, as well as its smell, its assident²⁰⁵ threat to health; by ingenious designs, thanks also to suggestions from members of the Troke pottery, Henry came up with various bowl designs which on paper at least promised with the minimum of water to swiftly remove what may, – of the roughly ten tons produced in a lifetime, – daily weigh at most but a very small number of pounds.

Unaware that in *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*, printed in 1696, Sir John Harington set forth plans for a flushing, valve-controlled donnicker²⁰⁶, also that 30 years before the *Dolphin* sanitary convenience was invented by he to whom, and wrongly, the word john is believed to owe its source : the Reverend Johns,

(and all this unawareness was also 24 years before the arrival of the *Hopper Closet* of 1870, – which as the more worldly women visiting their friends far and near were thereafter to avouch, was clever enough certainly, but so severely wanting in design, a feeble fall of water so prettily twirled, lost so much of its energy, it could achieve little more),

a system of his very own devising, but not without initial bow-hand²⁰⁷, was provided the family, which admittedly a trifle busteous²⁰⁸, proved unquestionably thorough; not yet expert in matters of hydraulics, his first experiments, carried out on the ground and first floor of the slightly more populous south-west corner of the house, were upon bowls flushed by water contained in five constantly replenished copper tanks scited²⁰⁹ in a corner of the attic, well insulated against the freezing colds of winter, each of five gallons capacity, therefore supplying all the volume, all the gravitational force, necessary to ensure that even the primmest outsider was only rarely dismayed at the biological mysteries of the previous occupant; when with duty done the shiny

²⁰⁴ refuse, dross, waste

²⁰⁵ accompanying

²⁰⁶ toilet

²⁰⁷ failure

²⁰⁸ noisy

²⁰⁹ situated

brass stirrup, – hanging low enough for even the smallest child to reach, – was heartily pulled, via a wire running an ingenious labyrinthine path through the walls and floors of the manor, causing a valve to one of the five reservoirs to open, with a roaring heard first far above, – which sometimes disturbed those actioning for sleep, – so did the water, via a three-inch pipe, hasten to the service of the ablutionist.

Until the judicious design of a vital lip to the bowl was finally proven adequate, the force of the water upon the stool,

(even when of ideal consistency : according to the *Bristol Stool Scale*, or *Meyers Scale*²¹⁰, type 4 : like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft),

was sometimes such that it inundated the tiled floor, but rarely the occupant, who was long gone, or else, of those experiencing so to speak second thoughts, the nether parts, and, alas, with more than simply water!; in time a two-gallon tank, with a siphon and ball device, situated above and to the rear of the backhouse²¹¹, (almost standard in this day), proved a far more workable option for what eventually became 53 *chambre-forenes*²¹²; at the three exterior nettle-houses²¹³ available to guests during the annual garden-party, a crowd often gathering were heard to remark, circumspectly of course, that the Troke plumbing, anent²¹⁴ the bog-house, seemed blissfully free from all the troubles and combustions which so blighted the lives of most of England at that time, especially in the cities, particularly London,

where, – despite it being, as everywhere, a bit of earth with a bit of sky over it, – in perpetual harvest of catarrhs and consumptions, apoplexies and palsies, – yet never so fool as even to attempt to set up for a place of health and amability²¹⁵, – between 1848 and 1867, during three distinct epidemics of

²¹⁰ medical aid designed to classify the form of human feces into seven categories

²¹¹ privy

²¹² privies

²¹³ privies

²¹⁴ concerning

²¹⁵ loveliness; loveliness

cholera, – which, sparing neither priest nor lay, innocent nor nocent, left scarce alive whom to bury the dead, – more than 30,000 people died because of poor sanitation.

With the quality of the alvine²¹⁶ matter produced by Trokes indisputably healthy for a family given neither to swoopstake²¹⁷ defecation nor to too often lamenting undelivered egesta²¹⁸, this still made for a great variety of stools, as varied almost as the faecants themselves,

for as everyone hath a several picture of face, everyone a diverse picture of mind, everyone a form apart, everyone a fancy and cogitation differing, so everyone hath a varied stool, from narrow, long, and one could say almost rashly, vehemently swift, to broad, short, and insolently, almost luxuriously, slow,

and though Henry laid to them no blame,

for he believed then that whatever is after eating performed by the animal economy, a man contributes no more directly to than after winding the going of his watch, for he is as unconscious of natural transactions as kitchen utensils the operations they are employed in,

such excrementitious diversity proved to him very troublous, particularly as he was unable to satisfactorily synthesise a comprehensive range of turds,

including the extremes : almost liquid, and what he cursing called : the week-old log,

in his laboratory; three further factors prevented the soon finding of an adequate

²¹⁶ pertaining to the bowels

²¹⁷ in an indiscriminate manner

²¹⁸ excreta

solution to his problems : first the almost wilful resistance put up by, – neither turdine²¹⁹ nor turdiform²²⁰, but, – faecal buoyance, caused perhaps by a somewhat floatant²²¹ diet, second : the annoyingly adhesive and consequently bowl-staining stool, and third : the large, copious, heavy, dense, solid, two- or three-day stool, particularly when attacked, – though it requires but five to knock a whole man down, – with only two gallons of water.

When a member of the family, known to produce one or a set of these troublesome faex²²², entered one of the public ground-floor garderobes²²³, it was by almost supersensible²²⁴ means, – which some thought worthy of a Vouchsafe, – that young Henry, wishing to observe the latest stage of his handiwork, would suddenly appear, – with lead pencil, ruler, and waterproof paper in hand, with feet galaged²²⁵, eyes goggled, and head galericulate²²⁶, – knock at the door, – if the subject were not an occasional hydrargyrist²²⁷, – and after introducing himself pleasantly request of the occupant, not without a note of pleading, *please, not to flush yet!*; despite for the times a very open, liberated family, not everyone obliged him, and some, particularly the outsiders,

which is of course to say, those so newly married into the family as to be still imperfectly liberated of their more ridiculous repressions,

indignantly refused, for as they later said : though it was one thing to avoid²²⁸ and then to partake of the very sensible and healthy practice of peering down happily or otherwise upon a foot or two of the three, – no, actually, — averaging widely, — nearer four, – miles, of stool one produced from the 30 tons of food eaten in a

²¹⁹ of or belonging to songbirds comprising thrushes, &c

²²⁰ thrush-shaped

²²¹ causing flotation

²²² faece

²²³ privies

²²⁴ beyond the reach of the senses

²²⁵ bearing galoshes

²²⁶ covered with a hat

²²⁷ one who defecates with the door open

²²⁸ evacuate

lifetime ordinary, it was quite another for another, – even upon the 100 gallons of pee produced each year average, – and so they thought Henry a somewhat morbid young man, often calling him so to his flushed and innocent face, bearing suddenly a rictus²²⁹ of silence,

(a far cry from the response he would have delivered when later he became notoriously a man, – not alone of great ingenuity, prodigious fertility of thought, and of the rare advantage of being always demoniacally in earnest, but, – tainted to excess with not only the scrofula of impracticable crotchets, but of a furious, even violent, temper, as meet is for so great men to have),

for as saith one once, before oozing away :

— That a house is this in which some ablute with the door widest open, some others caring nothing to have earnest converse in the middle of the doing of one's needings!, very well, but you, sir, wishing even to observe and measure my business, are the worst : a morbid eccrinologist²³⁰!, and I doubt but a little that besides your fascinations stercoraceous²³¹, you are probably given over to other, – besides wild, beside mad, – very strange and indeed utterly insapory²³² excesses!;

(when the complex ironmongery of the *Optimus Valve Closet*, which the family purchased from its manufacturer Hellyer at its introduction to man in 1870,

so heavy incidentally that it gave Albert a small ramex²³³ when he helped Henry install it in what was to be called the *honeymoon cottage*,

²²⁹ open-mouthed gape

²³⁰ one who studies excretion

²³¹ of or relating to faeces

²³² tasteless

²³³ hernia

this turned out to be a far inferior article despite its grand ornament²³⁴).

As to baths, later showers : there existed in the manor at this time five very mobile tin baths from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, as well a variety of old hip-baths, but in 1841, after much discussion, much more experiment, the Troke workshop, utilising sheet brass and copper, manufactured first one, then ten tapered baths five foot apiece, with a comfortably high back, and yet light enough despite thick enamelling, after sufficient bucketing out, to tip up, properly empty, and carry between rooms; come the installation of proper drainage and the management of used water, (what is today called greywater²³⁵), the family resorted to the simplicity of purchasing baths, (particularly those of wrought-iron when the process, – requiring 4000 degrees in the Fahrenheit, – became very workable in 1880, even going so far as to purchase three *Ewart Improved Spray Baths* in 1882, – which with their banks of ten taps permitted the thrills of spray, douche, wave, and sitz, as well as plunge bathing, to be enjoyed, – and in 1890 two *Froy Patent Oriental Spray Baths*, which by the time the cabinet maker had completed his work somewhat beyond the day which he appointed, the enormous bill for each footed up, – to use an anatonym²³⁶, – to nearly £250!); as modernisation slowly took a holt of Troke Manor, all the old tin baths, the old lavabos or lavers²³⁷, including a sabot bath²³⁸,

as well 14 rare wash stands by Percier of 1801, 19 Hepplewhite pot cupboards, 14 Hepplewhite night tables of the late 1700s, 24 Chippendale bason stands from the middle reaches of the seventeenth century, 13 Sheraton bason stands of the early 1800s, 22 French night tables...

together with various stools-of-office²³⁹, all went into the attic.

²³⁴ decoration

²³⁵ waste water from clothes washing machines, showers, bathtubs, hand washing, lavatories, and sinks

²³⁶ part of the body used as a verb

²³⁷ wash basins

²³⁸ slipper or boot bath

²³⁹ close-stools

Regarding sewage and sewerage, contents and system : before piping was laid in 1862, this was carted in a special cart to a small treatment-plant, which, with innocuousness restored, was fed to the proud garden; as to hot water, this came from a not inexhaustible supply provided by a massive boiler situated at the west end of the conservatory, fired up each morning, kept burning till dusk, whereafter it functioned all night upon residual heat; as to soap, this was manufactured by the family in various shapes, colours, sizes, and scents, but without the problems attendant upon their abortive²⁴⁰ attempts at perfume manufacture, (a subject actually of no small embarrassment to this proud history, but which, it is supposed, decrying all reluctancy down, must soon be addressed); torchercul²⁴¹, produced in the Troke paper-mill in five-foot perforated lengths, – 40 years before the idea was elsewhere patented, – was of a smooth silkience, (yet of a durable quality unknown at this day despite synthetic aid); in addition : brushes were also produced, including of course the teethbrush, as well a teeth-soap or dentifrice,

made of of soot, urine, ashes of both the dumb-nettle²⁴² and the bee-nettle²⁴³, tobacco, honey, charcoal, areca nuts, and cuttlefish bone,

which proved so efficacious to the Troke teeth,

which were anyway of remarkable strength and durability, and often of size, – particularly the upper central incisors, the laterals²⁴⁴, and the cuspids²⁴⁵, which in some Trokes gave the appearance of possessing a class II malocclusion²⁴⁶, – that it was of very rare occurrence for a blood-member of the family to require the urgent services of a dentist,

a patent on this item alone would have provided a fortune for the family, had they

²⁴⁰ abortive

²⁴¹ toilet-paper

²⁴² red dead-nettle, *Lamium purpureum*

²⁴³ white dead-nettle *Lamium album*

²⁴⁴ adjacent to the centrals

²⁴⁵ pointed teeth just behind the laterals; also called canines

²⁴⁶ in which the upper teeth protrude past the lower; also called overbite or buck teeth

needed another.

1838

As an epidemic of smallpox raged through England, even unto the city of Bath,

renowned a place of health by reason of its plenty of waters,

soon to claim 50,000 lives, Jeremy son of Tristan & Caroline, now 21, was still smarting from that emotionally scarring skelp²⁴⁷ received, – not without caveat, for Vouchsafe Odette gave good warning, – when, at three years of age, of Mrs Royce, then the cook, he asked a question of a wholly intimate and private nature,

which to relate precisely was not in the least unconnected with her twat²⁴⁸,

and though Mrs Royce was immediately and forever afterward sorry, she was equally forever afterward unforgiven, even when long-deceased as she now was; if it is true, as some claim, that within the masculine psyche there exists an unrazed²⁴⁹ man, wise, believing in good, indubitate, and, majorly a part of the warrior-self, unafraid to die if the reason be sound,

if not then not, for it is of far more great good hap to live, than to die,

then let it be true also that in Jeremy this deep self was also wounded, with the result that, shaped by an innocent, immediately regretted slap, – actually more of a potch²⁵⁰, – he was now a silent smouldering young man who, unable to trust the miscalled fairer sex, – nor, as a consequence of this, his own feelings toward them, as well therefore his feelings toward himself, – knew no way better to avoid the folly

²⁴⁷ smack with the palm of the hand

²⁴⁸ female pudendum

²⁴⁹ unwounded

²⁵⁰ generally painless, light, cup-handed slap

and madness of humanity, than by taciturnity, by admiring such men as doctor George and Guardian Samuel, who were wise, for they were without any thought of ever encumbering themselves with a wife and children; realising that it followed from this that he was not at all in the ideal position to resolve a number of strange feelings he felt for an ycore²⁵¹ young lady in the village, of name Rosalind, – the first, favourite, therefore most spoilt daughter of a clergyman, – the boy sought Vouchsafe advice.

Jeremy little knew that this young lady had been steeped in much defamous²⁵² falderal²⁵³ concerning, if not the most notable, if not the most dislandered²⁵⁴, then certainly the most eccentric, most well-to-do, family in the county about, and despite the unlikeliness of so much of the material,

(today called factoids, first in first the first, but then immediately in the second of its two meanings : small facts, not real facts),

it was through filial obedience tipping the balance in favour of the veracity of her pious father, that a very inauspicate impression of the family, and holus-bolus of its every member, found soonest and deepest root in her spacious, or rather : little-furnished, head, but not with constancy, for whilst in one thinking chamber, – in as if a darkness such that neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, – dwelt a wholesale contempt for anything even remotely of Trokeness, in another, a sunny chamber of feeling, came messages of a more biological import concerning for instance how good-like²⁵⁵ Jeremy appeared in his gaskins²⁵⁶ which from behind set off his metasthenic²⁵⁷ haunches most favourably, and from before displayed to great effect perhaps a powerful set of implements.

²⁵¹ comely

²⁵² defamatory

²⁵³ nonsense

²⁵⁴ defamed

²⁵⁵ handsome

²⁵⁶ kind of breech or hose

²⁵⁷ strong hider parts, as a kangaroo

Thus these two parts of her battled : one day the sequacious²⁵⁸ would be dominant, another day the wiselike²⁵⁹ would attain ascendancy, such that, yesternoon, in the village street, she smiled him so warm a smile it seemed to amount almost to lirophthalmy²⁶⁰, yet today she crossed the same street to avoid his distastable person,

thus adding a fifth category of cut²⁶¹ to the four listed by a very minor writer, the cut direct²⁶², the cut indirect²⁶³, the cut sublime²⁶⁴, and the cut infernal²⁶⁵;

but Rosalind was too young, too hot-blooded, to allow of another little-used chamber of the mind, reputed imprejudicate²⁶⁶, to stand judgement over her confusion and so commend to her consideration consistent sleeps instead of that dretching²⁶⁷ which alternated now exhausted, now empassioned; indeed the girl was so troubled she called upon her god,

supposed to hath made all men to enjoy felicity and constancy of good,

not for enlightment[✓], for she would have received naught,

for there is no silence like that heard when a god is appealed to,

but for strength, which was a plea as equally unavailing.

Thus Jeremy asked Janet of her opinion both of this fickle Rosalind and of the

²⁵⁸ mindless adhering to the thoughts or opinions of others

²⁵⁹ sensible

²⁶⁰ lewd-eyedness

²⁶¹ the renouncing of acquaintanceship

²⁶² stare an acquaintance in the face and pretend not to know him

²⁶³ look another way and pass without appearing to notice

²⁶⁴ admire the top of a building or cloud

²⁶⁵ analyse the arrangements of the shoe-strings

²⁶⁶ impartial

²⁶⁷ troubled sleep

annoying waltrot²⁶⁸ of his feelings for so erratic a creature, for if she already had brought him much discomfort, because he was now speaking of it bringing him yet more, unless very providently came intervention, he would be destined to continue in disquiet for perhaps time immemorial; now, as Janet knew from a long-departed maid something dishonourable concerning the ecclesiastic doubts of the Wesleyan minister father, – which to the Vouchsafe demoted him from the status of simple madman to that of pharisee²⁶⁹, – she quickly sent her mind to his house and up the stairs to the summer-heated room where Rosalind lay *déshabillé*, but, due to a hand, rather a finger, in so humefied²⁷⁰, intumescent²⁷¹, so succussive²⁷² a condition of *accenus libidine*²⁷³, nothing could be gained from the girl in so panting wild a state, Janet informed Jeremy she would see what she could do; later observing the disconsolate boy mooching about the garden-house²⁷⁴, she immediately machined²⁷⁵ to personally visit the girl, who, if she was in any way discerning, could surely be made to easily realise that the sensational claims made by her father concerning the respectability of Trokes were utterly groundless.

Late the following morning asking Guardian and scribe Samuel, who was then vigorously 44, to prepare the barouchet²⁷⁶ in which she would make an unaccompanied call upon the clergyman, knowing him to be out, professing to be soliciting funds and aid for such unfortunates as, to survive, must pump for life, insisting the idle creature accompany her on her rounds, before she knew it, could act, Rosalind found herself scandalised out of her five senses,

visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory,

²⁶⁸ absurdity

²⁶⁹ hypocrite; also one of the most elevated religious ideals

²⁷⁰ moistened

²⁷¹ swollen, expanded with heat

²⁷² shaking

²⁷³ sexual arousal

²⁷⁴ summer-house

²⁷⁵ contrived

²⁷⁶ small or cut-down barouche, driven from the interior to one horse

at the realisation that she was travelling at a fastly clip up the long drive to the palacious²⁷⁷ Troke Manor whereat an unprompted, but potentially vastly antidotary scene met her eyes : beneath a skyscape of nubecules²⁷⁸, with aromatous²⁷⁹ flowerage everywhere colourfully abounding, there first in an undergrove²⁸⁰, reclining on the grass at their externat²⁸¹, with sunshine to help in its dealing, were four boys and one girl aged between six and eight, gaily laughing with their crassulent²⁸² tutor Stanhope, a man who, – considered worthy of saying at his first mention, considered worthy still, — save for sometimes his acute sensitivity, due often to the simple tenderness of the subject, rendering him so beteared with wordlessness, this defect his tutees, very apt to receive impressions, made up, — a good enough teacher, – was in turn delighted with his bright honest young wards,

particularly after 20 scattered years of tutoring sons of gentry who by so soon believing they could go alone in the high road to ruin, left off their books, donned raiment fine, mounted spirited horse, and with gold in pocket departed to meet with disaster even at the wayside, – which they were eminently qualified exactly so to find, – as departed then Stanhope to alas qualify others for the same short journey;

as the carriage rounding the drive approached the towering manor, – so grand, proud, and groundstalworth²⁸³, and dignified further by its shining ivy gown, – fancying herself in a dream, Rosalind was helped benumbed down from the carriage by a warmly smiling but unbuttoned servant with a dudeen²⁸⁴ in his mouth!

Trotting then to catch up with striding Janet, approaching a mighty oak beneath

²⁷⁷ palatial

²⁷⁸ cloudlets

²⁷⁹ aromatic

²⁸⁰ grove of low trees growing under others that are taller

²⁸¹ day-school

²⁸² very fat; grossly obese

²⁸³ strongly and firmly fixed in the ground

²⁸⁴ short Irish clay tobacco-pipe

which an enormous clastic²⁸⁵ table was set for lunch, after the warm announcement by Janet, *Everyone, this is Rosalind!*, the girl was by all heartily welcomed, offered a seat at the table, and in an instant was amidst dozens of adults and lickerous²⁸⁶ children, all eating with goodly manners, drinking rosolio²⁸⁷, orgeat²⁸⁸, and lemonade, with mothers and fathers sipping tea, coffee, perry²⁸⁹, shandygaff²⁹⁰ and much else suitable to addressing the exsiccant²⁹¹ effects of a hot summer day;

there were cut-glass bowls containing slices of strange things from the conservatory called she was told ananas²⁹², pomelo²⁹³, and alligator pear²⁹⁴, – not very palatable, which make some disgust it, but nutritive, – and a tiny fruit peeled with the gloves on called opuntia²⁹⁵, and for those with the acquired taste for them, nicely fracid²⁹⁶ medlar, a small, wild, brown, stone fruit, once called *open arse*, – which in the moment of his full ripeness is known to be in full rottenness, – and on exquisite porcelain plates sat cracknels²⁹⁷ made with Jew's ear²⁹⁸, praline²⁹⁹, fumade³⁰⁰, and nut-butter³⁰¹, and there was a giant pound-cake³⁰² delightfully pranked³⁰³ out with remarkably detailed subtillies³⁰⁴, and a simnel-cake³⁰⁵, a sally-lunn³⁰⁶, with bowls everywhere of noten³⁰⁷, and

285 detachable into component parts

286 fond of delicious fare

287 sweet cordial made from raisins

288 drink of barley-water flavoured with sweet almonds

289 fermented drink made from juice of pears

290 drink of beer mixed with ginger-beer

291 drying

292 pineapple

293 grapefruit

294 avocado

295 prickly pear

296 rotten from over-ripeness

297 kind of thick, puffy, dry, crumbly biscuit

298 kind of edible fungus growing on elder tree

299 sweetmeat of almonds or other nuts covered with sugar, and baked crisp and brown

300 smoked and salted fish, especially pilchard

301 substitute for butter made from various nuts

302 rich kind of plum cake containing a pound of each of its ingredients

303 adorned

304 representations of castles, knights, ladies, beasts, &c, raised in pastry

305 fine, rich plum cake, highly spiced, first boiled then baked and covered with almond paste

306 kind of tea-cake with currants, served hot

307 nuts

applen of so many various species...

and a wonderfully monogrammed napkin of whitest linen was placed on her lap; because of the enormous vocabulary everyone possessed, much of the conversation, – which to Rosalind seemed very deep, yet very wide-ranging, and apparently highly stimulating, – was beyond her comprehension, but one thing she did not fail to notice : a perfect absence of anywhere anything in the slightest way morose, unmeet³⁰⁸, or macabre, and, well, all this utterly confused the young visitor.

Janet soon warmed to this open-faced girl who darted her agazed³⁰⁹ eyes to all who addressed her, and then in wonder,

which is oft nothing else, save to the child of rarity, but contemplation broken off, or losing itself,

she observed a maid, in traditional uniform, complete with cap and frilly apraine³¹⁰, friendlily but firmly arguing, and in a language which seemed in parts almost foreign, a matter of nutrition with a bare-footed woman dressed in the best of summer finery; she then saw, – from his velvet jacket surely a *sort* of servant, even a footman, – in a condition of pronounced unray³¹¹,

the very words her aunt, who enjoyed state, used upon her own venerable specimen, – distinguished for nothing but a very splendid person, – when he appeared gloveless,

bring a fresh teapot of tea to the table, sit himself down, refill his cup, put a ruined boot up on a vacant chair!, and with his face ashine with an anticipation which painted the world in rose, take up a new book from two parcels lately received from the booksellers *Bowes and Bowes*, and *Lackington's Temple of the Muses*,

³⁰⁸ unseemly

³⁰⁹ amazed

³¹⁰ apron

³¹¹ undress

this was Theodore, not a man to believe that books were scarce worth the reading, nor none deserving of kudos³¹², until they had stood the criticism of at least a whole generation,

and no one so much as glanced at this ludicrism³¹³!

Over to her left sat a craggy, erygmatic³¹⁴ presbyte³¹⁵ who, from his beflobered³¹⁶ knees, the smut on his nose, and his old hat, which he wore at so arake an angle it failed entirely in its duty of containing his long, wild grey hair, was obviously a very odd, very low sort of gardener, but who was sitting at the head of the long table laughing and laughing at what the children were delighting so in telling him, and with such long words!; as she made to herself more or less this observation :

— Opinion and affection are the very same with these people!, whereas for myself opinion is something wherein I go about to give reason why all the world should think as I think, and affection is a thing wherein I look after only the pleasing of myself!,

behind her strolled a tall very well-dressed man cradling a rifle,

for the heart of man is in his weapons,

with at his waist an open holster containing a large revolver of cowboy sort, a gamekeeper perhaps, she thought, taking a break from protecting the Troke fowls[✓],

the *campestres*, such as partridges and quails, the *sylvestres*, such as woodcocks and pheasants, the *aqua tiles*, such as mallards and herons,...

³¹² glory; fame; renown; praise

³¹³ burlesque

³¹⁴ given to belching

³¹⁵ old man

³¹⁶ muddied

but he was surely a poet also, for he reflectively wrote in a small notebook, and oh the way she felt in danger near him, Rosalind thought him charming.

This of course was Guardian Samuel who, like his penned words, tended to much overdress, indeed to one who accused him of apparelment after a gross fashion, more fitly appointed to the camp, than to the carpet, wise was his reply,

— Though it were well I be not accused of any negligence, – come either that I am not prepared so much as suffiseth for warlike skilfulness, or that there hath not been any part thereof deep thought upon, – it is surely well for us all to permit a mere one of our number, – a man, if not the most willing to forsake all pastimes and pleasures, or, save for the study of force and arms, all arts and sciences, then perhaps a man who most clearly realises that if our defence be not prepared, all hope of a future should be in vain, – to not forsake the just regard essential for our defence and the safeguard of our house, else we be brought to a most sudden horrible misery and calamity;

aye, whereas future Guardians might more hardily perform duties whereunto the discipline of their order, together with the sincerity of the oath taken at their entrance into their office, constrained them, Samuel the chair of Guardian did not take but as such a one as behoved that a good conservator³¹⁷ should be; for see, out in the big world,

amputated from sanity as it was, and not like to mending,

where was so much ambition, so much dishonesty, and all the gear of corruption : he only was worthy to be an officer which was in office against his will, – clearly a proposition which doth stamp the mark of absurdity upon the very front, even whilst it is delivered, – whereas in their own differently mad world, – where also was

³¹⁷ Guardian

ambition, but of self, yet without dishonesty, without corruption, – he always was worthy to be an officer which was in office with a whole will.

Rosalind would have admitted to anyone, if she were not dreaming, that however strange it all seemed, never had she seen or even heard of a family gathering so serenely untroubled, and with yonder the sharply trimmed maze, the impeccable parkland, the faintly plangent³¹⁸ sea afar, and on all sides the Sun darting the day, never had she experienced such a display of, well, the beautiful, for even despite the numbers and the hubbub, such was the sense of tranquillity, she suspected Trokes wanted nothing to make them the happiest people in the world but the knowledge that they were so; out of shyness not helping herself, offered and accepting a liver-wing³¹⁹, thrice offered a merrythought³²⁰, which she twice won, then a delicious but totally unrecognisable sallet³²¹ to accompany the grouse, as she nibbled, nervously smiling, from one and all receiving open looks of that dilection³²² devoid of all guile, she little knew they all were assessing her for meetness³²³ of inclusion in their family : whether she was sufficiently onerary³²⁴.

Trokes generally thought her withal sweet and sightly, with some quietly remarking that her face, astonishment aside, breedeth regard, and when examined part by part, though not found all good, altogether did very well, others, knowing who she was, thought she and Jeremy would make excellent music together; without finding even a trace of fastuosity³²⁵, nor so far as she could discern of onology³²⁶, nor most particularly that unsettling admurmeration³²⁷ with accompanying skimes³²⁸ whereunto, at those dreadful teas her mother was always dragging her to, – ugh!,

³¹⁸ the sound of waves breaking or beating on the shore

³¹⁹ right wing of chicken, over the liver

³²⁰ wish-bone

³²¹ salad

³²² kindness

³²³ suitability

³²⁴ fitted for carrying burdens

³²⁵ haughtiness; ostentation

³²⁶ foolish talk

³²⁷ act of whispering

³²⁸ furtive looks at a person whilst pretending otherwise

the disdainful, caustic reserve!, – Rosalind had grown so used, but which were blessed short because it was at home mother kept her little bottles of *Godfrey's Cordia*³²⁹, to which, – just as a babe when recipient of *Street's Infant's Quietness*³³⁰, – she was selfishly, even hopelessly, habituated.

But what most of all impressed young Rosalind was the unbridled articulate use of words never before heard, both long and short, both old and new, which everyone even the children seemed to understand without any difficulty whatsoever, and yet when she was asked in the simplest of words for her opinion, – say of a tiny glass of nettle and lime-leaf wine,

which when tasten[✓] truly transported her not inexperienced 10,000 tastebuds,

or upon any other matter safely within her severely limited experience, – her simple honest opinion was not only heard, considered, but passed from voice to voice in the manner of a madrigal, for even simplicity could be made an interesting item of trade; two hours later, with lunch still not over but the table still laden, and everyone continuing sobrius³³¹, Janet invited Rosalind to see the conservatory, by which she was enravished³³², then the house itself, with its nurseries, classrooms, the diminutive but vacant infirmary, &c.

But it was in the huge library where, her preconceit³³³ at last fully gowtone³³⁴, Rosalind burst into such rending and guilty tears,

as great in number as swift in course, as deep in bottom as extended in largeness,

³²⁹ opiated sedative

³³⁰ opiated sedative

³³¹ sober

³³² transported with delight

³³³ notion previously formed

³³⁴ guttered

that Jeremy vesuviated³³⁵ from hiding to give her all the comfort, all the love,

defined by many an honest cynic in the following way : that brief period between the very moment the belief is taken wonderful aboard that henceforth all sufferings, all pleasures, would be sharably the same sufferings, the very same pleasurings, and that not always sudden but often almost imperceptibly arriving moment when it becomes a clarity of the very clearest that each suffering, each pleasure, was henceforth to be suffered contemplated alone,

she should ever need; despite the severest protests from her father, – from whom she thereafter estranged herself until he came around, as she soon put it, to a more illightened³³⁶, far less afflictive way of thinking, – Rosalind, remaining at the manor, her internals growing soon to full ripe, married Jeremy in August.

Another to appeal to the talents of Janet at this time was her youngest son Martin, – save for doctor George 47 and Guardian Samuel 44 their oldest bachelor, – who opened by explaining that by now 26, if he thought a wife might offer him some relief from the restlessness which in moments of voidest leisure he of late seemed markedly to suffer : in all honesty, – but to the jeopardy of his credence afraid to publicly relate, – by balancing the dignity of onehood with the same of binity, he simply could not yet believe there existed anywhere in the world a woman who, interposing between himself and all the buffets of existence, could renew his courage, allow him to cut asunder his difficulties, and thus happify his life; to reasoning such as this Janet made very short shrift, telling the man to casten his eyes athort³³⁷ their world, see how magnific was existence!, for how could anyone unless they were mad, or sick, or the ingratest person in the world, be jaded by such extraordinary claritude³³⁸ and good fortune!; such was her tone, such were her eyes and hands, – and possibly in her passion, seeing as he was her son, her even touching his mind, (for although this skill was beyond the capabilities of the fifth

³³⁵ burst forth

³³⁶ enlightened

³³⁷ across

³³⁸ splendour

Vouchsafe, it sometimes happened that in an outburst of tveague³³⁹, particularly during coitus, Janet could actually make her mental presence felt), – Martin suddenly humbled hung down his head, aye, he bowed his brow groundward,

for as saith Gregory I, *perit omne quod agitur, si non humilitate custodiatur*³⁴⁰,

exactly as 20 years before at occasionally pissing his hose.

Hereupon further confessing he simply could not bring himself to believe that a woman, no matter how perfect, was capable of easing his so consuming aitch³⁴¹, his mother taking up his hand, sensing his need as an almost palpable thing, like a great weight pressing upon him, foreseeing no prospect of immediate relief of this pressure, finding in her son Martin no such fund of self-deluding resources, admiring his want of weakness, his refusal to succumb, she lamented her own inability to loan it or otherwise be of aid, were it only proving to him that she partly, and this as a woman, understood; aye, it was the weight of his own humanity which crushed him, for true it is that this poisure³⁴² crushes all mankind, from the busy, the great, and the pompous, to the retired, the soft, and the easy, and yet, hey!, each shores up his or her life as well as they can possibly with children or work or study or travel, or if failing in the so often bleak task of pursuing the emancipation of the self, then with the celebratory sale of health to sickness, honour to wickedness, or in the exchange of pride for pigrity³⁴³, or humility for covetousness, or else, finally, in the simple hope that existence is not as foolish or evil as this comes to³⁴⁴; so this patron at least went away less satisfied than he came, (but Martin would one day happily marry, become the family Patriarch, take up an obsessional interest in photography, and begin to keep a scrupulous photographic record of the family, as would thereafter a most excellent woman called Bessie).

³³⁹ passion

³⁴⁰ whatsoever is done doth vanish to infamy if it be not upholden by humility

³⁴¹ ache

³⁴² weight

³⁴³ slothfulness

³⁴⁴ it seems

1839

With the death in January of this almost eventless year at 61 of Josephine wife of the late Frederick, – who as stated : wanting of a full measure of life force simply let herself go at her first tussle with death, for as she said without flosculation³⁴⁵, with voice melodiously tuned to her subject, in a style insinuating and winning, with gesture free, and full of dignity : it was vain to repine at fortune recalling what she formerly had but lent, or rather, had told her merely to hold a while, – the reckoning from 26 males and their accumulate 744 years, all being well, was only ten years : ten years to the realisation of the Troke quest!; (but to those few of the family who were aware how precisely the male years summed, thus how nearly approaching was the blessed event, they little knew that until news of a revelatory nature came to light in 1847, all anticipation was to prove disastrously premature).

Now, whilst this saga, – not drear or course, nor commonplace, – may have proved as yet not nearly enough fantastic, not as amazing, nor as wondrous, as to already warrant reciprocity, it is dearly to be hoped that the blame cannot be laid simply to the manner of its telling, particularly to its style, its eloquence, – which ridiculators in this age have claimed, at its highest pitch, — by addressing itself entirely to the fancy or the affections, and thereby captivating the hearer, — by subduing the understanding, leaves little room for reason or reflection, which surely does not obtain in the present case, – but when beset by the difficulties of telling a story against the very grain of a language to tell it, and when, to tell the tale whole, is to achieve one's goal, one must accept, even instigate, an enormity, even a crime, even against all mankind, as part of the deal, as saith Bernard.

But enough for today, the day has been a long, and though there is far to go, the end, truly, is not so very afar,

ah, the end : not to come as many believe : a winter say as winterest long as needs to everything, everything freeze, or a summer so sunned as burneth till

³⁴⁵ embellishment or ornament in speech

nothing leaves to burn, or a darkness as long as was never after seen, or an air poisoning, a sea inexorably highing, a bug zombie fatal, or else something else, far more fleet : one long day of ionized burning, or an error simply human of calculations, a messing with antimatter, or with Higgs, or an escape of something nano, or a quantum accident, or whatever, instantly launching a rot of undoing : as fleet as light a nothingness across the whole vast of existence, ravenously advancing, derezzing everything : empires, galaxies...,

Words, really!,...

... a wall, a wave, unstopably of..., who cares, for none will remain to care that anciently, when from nothing was a something mistakenly come, then error upon error contriving, from a latest blunder, the last, called man, suddenly goeth forever outward a devouring nothing, aye, the end, but all wrongly believe, for the end will come far otherwise, for beginning...

Words!, be still!, always daring, but growing lately ever more uppity, to take steps without the warranting authority of any another, without concern for the consequences that a premature *denouement*³⁴⁶ may render the agreement void!; whilst it is true : Words, – over which time only hath an entire dominion, – hath an entire dominion over this world, and true also : impossible to stop what stops at nothing, – for hopeless would be this task, – it is pleaded, warningly!, do not again exceed the bounds to which it was firmly agreed to be confined : honour, please!, the agreement made, firmly and unbreakably : a halt to all quibble and bicker, to battles heretofore truceless, to all threats, all promises, which it is true formerly were always so joyed to make and break, else the gift of voice, even, one might say, of existence, be taken away!

Now, as the day has been long, perhaps a hot bath?, – remembered as often a lovely thing, – or rather a shower?, before dinner.

³⁴⁶ final unravelling of the complications of a plot

*Explicit diem primus*³⁴⁷.

³⁴⁷ End of day one