

Day Two
1840-1863

being the second book

of

The Vouchsafe Decalogy

*Incipit diem secundus*¹.

1840

With the arrival of the new year all continued Arcadian at Troke Manor despite a few very minor troubles, such as Frank aching for the loins of his wife Jenny called the henpeck, – now *too* accepting of her childlessness, – such as Paul partaking still of his dissolution in London, Martin battling his restlessness, and doctor George, then 49, suffering a melancholy condition which was by some thought to come simply of a middle-age connubial loneliness in need of a mending, but others thought came of a too faint resolution to remain a man who must live[✓] single, but too little inspired by the example set by the family Guardian Samuel, – who at 46, lately much occupied by tending the orchards, seemed barely inconvenienced by keeping all his seed, – whereas the truth was quite different : no more a continuity of his old self, nor either his shadow, nor his heir, nor his usurper, doctor George was simply a man evolved, as destined to become a melancholic as *acomaus*².

In September of this year, in which died Angela, wife of the late Louis, at age 81, of a cardiac *bourasque*³,

with everywhere poppies of all colours, with grapes, apples, peaches,
melocotones or quinces, nectarines, and wardens⁴ soon all ready for the
picking,

a semi-formal meeting of the family was convened in the larger living-room, in which, after brief discussion, – agreeing first among themselves, then finding out an expedient to establish their joint conclusion, then, the grounds discovered, with all

¹ beginning of day two

² bald

³ tempest

⁴ large, hard pear, chiefly used for baking and roasting

objections raised and answered, with all carried on with a fair reassuring quickness, from premises conclusions drawn, – it was proposed, and, upon a sufficient excitement arising, agreed, that with their numbers so grown,

for where number is, there must be order, or else of force there will be confusion,

that not a committee,

said to be an imbecility which maketh many heads necessary where the burden is too great for one,

but rather a family council, an Inner Council, be formed to manage matters pertaining not only to their quest, but to the better running of their home, – which heretofore undertaken by diverse, sometimes unsuitable, persons, would, with proper authority, ensure that essential duties, — instituted for discharge by parts, which in whole be troublesome, — carry more reliably out, – such as management of household dispenses⁵ and purchases, of allowances fairly determined, apportioned, far more promptly disbursed, &c.

In addition, this ruling body,

not yet but soon : no time amiss, no day in the year, no hour in the day, but upon request sufficiently adjuratory⁶ would be got to meet,

would possess complete power and authority,

not only to give, dispose, appoint, assign, declare, and to limit, to visit, repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, and amend any such errors,

⁵ expenses

⁶ earnestly or solemnly entreating

heresies, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities, whatsoever they be, – for these be often, be inevitably committed by most variable means upon divers occasions at divers times in sundry persons of different callings in both sexes, – which in any manner ought to be visited, repressed, redressed, reformed, ordered, corrected, restrained, or amended, but also to repeal, annul, make void, or to suspend, for any time or times, the operation and effect of any of their rules, whether of the whole, a part, or parts, whether of a clause, or a provision...

After further comments were voiced, – for particularly was it asked : were these family laws finally and without appeal thenceforth declared to be established and ascertained forever, at no time thereafter to be questioned or questionable?, answer : of course not : every law, or decree, even rule, — even of which the people knoweth not, or are forbid to examine, — can rarely fail of unjustness, – a vote taken, thus it was that the Inner Council was formed, (which, – because it knew as much how to yield as to enforce its laws determining all matters well and truly, by never handling or treating of any matter after a barbarous and unpleasant fashion, was not resented, its inactions not a subject of ridicule, – for most miserable is that course, contrary to the nature of honesty, to ascribe to inaction cowardice, – neither its exertions at any time of such abhorrence as to be called, save here and again, a cabal of the closet and back-stairs, – was to maintain its uninterrupted yet fair enough management of family matters until its almost unnoticed dissolution 97 years later).

Held at first monthly, – acknowledging there may sometimes be cause very urgent to meet and make important decision, but not liking thereof so well the sudden summons to assemble and deliberate upon mayhap a petty issue still uncooled, — such as a domestic broil, — the Inner Council maketh early order that, baring only real urgency, every meeting before it break up should appoint both the time and the place of their after meeting again, – and later weekly, the Inner Council sederunt⁷, –

⁷ meeting of a body of persons

convened in an informal but private atmosphere, usually in the smaller living-room in the west of the house, wherein family, sometimes other matters, were to be determined, censured, concluded, and confirmed, – as of this date, comprised, with but one exception, the oldest, exclusively male members of the family, – the reason why only men? : because men are men, even Trokes, and why elder? : because youth have great benefit by the gravity, experience, — for as it is experience that maketh the man, the differences of animal structure are almost inexpressibly unimportant, — and wisdom of such elders, – those supposed of fine, expert, and prompt wits : Patriarch Mark now 61, his brother Tristan 59, Alexander 55, Steven 54 husband to the Vouchsafe, Richard 51, doctor George 49, and youngest member at 46 Samuel their Guardian and scribe; the exception from this prepotently⁸ male group was a female outsider, namely the Vouchsafe Janet,

because it is particularly the case with blood males that in age their lips thin, their brows lower, Janet, – still elfin and pretty at 54, – made a delightful contrast to this group of apparently flinty, angry men,

to advise not particularly any action, but in general the scope and end whereunto the family considered it most for their honour, safety, and the contentment of their house, the Inner Council should be rightly bent and directed.

With claret, brandy-wine, and good cigars set upon the large round table by secretary Samuel, the matter first broached, as always thereafter, was the reckoning, which including the birth that month to Rudolph & Hilary of John, and estimative then by whole years, was stated pridingly as being (or as supposed) 808 years, – at this opening announcement coming always smiles, yet in all stomachs a mixture of nervous forewit⁹ and eagerness, – to which, with the passing of each calendar year, 28 Troke years adding : in little under seven years, provided neither should come of a male a welcome birth nor a regretted death, – and provided of course every

⁸ predominantly

⁹ anticipation

compute was correct, (which, alas, as shall be learned, it was not), – the long anticipated blessed event would be upon them, and Trokes in a good way to speed of their desires.

Whilst like any another people, anticipating the general future with both fascination and dread, that very precise future which depended certainty, solely, upon themselves, – stumble, even fall as so often it did, (and will even more so hereafter), – which was awaited with mixed but overall stoical expectation, Trokes were by no means of those of far coarser thread who grasp at futures by the way, – as if they had not enough to do to digest the present, – nor who set up their very rest upon a time to come, – let it assume what guise it will, – as if to escape the present gratifying of their senses by the deep contemplation of insensibility or of celestial continuity, and thus measure life by their death, nor by the frivolous, the false, did they measure the sincere and the real, no, for Trokes were not a people, failing to apply some certain study to fix and restrain them, to run so into such extravagances, and, – not only in their infance but in their progress, – by eternally roving here and there in the vague expanse of the imagination, fill the magazine of memory with invention rather than matter.

So the Inner Council tabled its first, somewhat radical, proposal : whether or not to restrict knowledge of their quest solely to themselves, and by natural attrition bring about its eventual amoval from the minds of the family, for so it was argued : with a family now of 60 resident members, it would be a very great pressure to bear if the existence of their remarkable protoplast¹⁰, and his more remarkable document, – even by an innocent accident of a flappy mouth, – attained, by successive lustres, to *public* knowledge; though the matter could be, indeed on occasion had been, – at a garden-party, wine, a loose lip, – denied or laughed off as merely a harmless old family tradition, the additional presence of a remarkable Vouchsafe, – for even children knew that Mother Janet, — as she was beginning to be called as she journeyed joyously, vigorously, through her middle years, — was a person

¹⁰ supposed original ancestor

indisputably capable of turgy¹¹, indeed sometimes a veritable miracle-worker, – might cause a connexion[✓] to be suspected, for with public curiosity ever on the stretch for information of a scandalous or remarkable nature, the possibility of dire results was great, for was the world not filling ever more rapidly with cranks, mountebanks¹², opportunists, mushroom upstarts, and adventurers?

Regarding their quest, and the awareness thereof throughout the house : at that time the family consisted of three factions, of three sorts or kinds, as Guardian Samuel commenced windily to explain,

— which with your permission will be entreated, the first in the beginning place, the second in the middle seat, and the last in the final room,

the largest : comprising in the main the youngest generation, and the more recent outsider wives : these were either fairly incognisant of the quest, or else treated it as a quaint old observance; next, the group made up of older male and blood-female members of the family : these were certainly aware of some vetust¹³ document, but not of its precise contents, nor how the calculations upon which it was dependent were reckoned, but who were willing enough, if forced to it, to incline their support toward either the first faction, or to the final : the believers, the smallest groupuscule¹⁴ : comprising themselves, the newly formed eight-member Inner Council, as well as their circumspect wives, – known privily as the privy-councillors¹⁵, – who knew, at least as well as such a matter can be known, what constituted the quest enginery; following hereupon further discussion it was finally agreed that secrecy must at least be tightened, then maintained; (but it must be here stated : such secrecy could not be sustained, for if it was one thing to deny the whole world the knowledge of their unique celebrity,

¹¹ white magic

¹² quacks

¹³ ancient

¹⁴ small *clique* or faction

¹⁵ confidential advisors

indeed many Trokes believed themselves of mankind the purple thread of which Epictetus speaks,

it was another entirely, particularly as the blessed event approached, to refuse outright to disclose to this daughter or that son why an elevation of spirits had so overtaken the elders of the house, particularly when a male death, far more than a female, caused a sudden and calamitous fall of same).

As the snow fell, as the winds howled from the cliffs, as the Sun lingered in the fantastically extended twilight¹⁶ of a south of English summer,

ordinary civil twilight, – or the period of time between sunset and when the Sun is more than six degrees below the horizon, – not to be confused with nautical twilight, – which lasts until the Sun is twelve degrees under the horizon, – nor with astronomical twilight, which lasts until the Sun is eighteen degrees below the horizon,

with the reckoning stated, with the minutes read, then with ideas trading, proposals voted upon, so at each meeting did the Inner Council manage the business of the house and family; with the floor then given Samuel for informal account of their securement, after his not brief but positive reportage the floor passed to doctor George to report on family health, in which matters of ventilation, warmth, nutrition, and exercise,

which when balanced all together preserve man from gouts, dropsies, unwieldiness, intemperancy, &c,

were all touched upon, principally of course concerning their males, for these after all were their most valued possessions; observations and opinions,

¹⁶ twilights

believed dangerous only when forced to suffer the repression of what was once called temperantia¹⁷,

were then offered so that it could even further be ensured that in every sound body a healthy mind at suitably rewarding employture¹⁸ resided.

Doctor George then reported on what this or that member, either appearing personally at his surgery, or visited in their chambers, required to upstay¹⁹ his, or her, present want of health, for example : young Ronald, scandiscopist²⁰, youngest son of Hugh, was suffering the bitch-daughter²¹ with disturbing regularity, whereupon Janet, not unaware of the situation, said she would further counsel the boy; concerning Leigh the eldest child of Theodore, who was again furunculous²², yet resistful to all medicines that break the strife between sickness and life, Janet said she would try a new herbal infusion in a poultice; concerning young Paul the slightly younger twin brother of Arthur, who once a ruffatory²³ was now becoming a veritable bully of that sullen temper excited by the patience of its victims : with both Steven and Richard saying here yes, they had noticed this, that it was beginning to smack of abnormality, or something that doth grow to it[✓], Janet replied that as her grandson snatched at authority whence-ever he could find it, with six children in their exclusively male group between the ages nine and ten, even though he was the youngest but one, he was acknown²⁴ because of his strength and size as their leader, and leaders must lead!; it was thereupon decided that henceforth Paul would be given the opportunity to better employ his strength and leadership energies by assuming responsibility for the 21 wood-boxes and 33 coal-scuttles which required to

¹⁷ restraining of emotional excess

¹⁸ employment

¹⁹ sustain

²⁰ chimney sweep

²¹ the night-mare

²² afflicted with boils

²³ rude, boisterous boy

²⁴ acknowledged

be daily filled, and of ensuring every fireplace was cleaned and prepared, complete with a backbron²⁵ and forestick²⁶; with this heretofore the duty of Alexander, – called the gardener, – here he smiled with pleasance²⁷ for he would now have more time to snathe²⁸, finish the winter sation²⁹, the begin work on his long-pondered dendrology³⁰.

Other redels³¹ then addressed, such as : with the paucity of room remaining to Hugh, his wife Gwen, and their growing children, a neighbouring lumber room³² needing to be redecorated and furnished, Steven, – in recent years showing considerable skill in carpentry and cabinet-making, – offered to take on this task himself rather than inbring outsiders which the Inner Council was more and more reluctant to allow else the Inimicus breach their stronghold; although on this latter matter nothing was said because nothing further was known, Janet yet kept a close eye on matters more properly the province of their Guardian, but distance and grain were a problem to her, for so she referred to the limiting of her farthest vision, as grain, for it was a photographic term she found very useful thanks to her son Martin and his darkroom; with the air smoky with cigars, with all matters for the present addressed and resolved, the gavel falling, the Inner Council adjourning, the fumid³³ room was vacated, save for Janet and Samuel, the latter to write up the minutes, (which as the archive will attest, are *olet lucernam*³⁴), the former to open the strip windows³⁵ and allow the noctiflorous³⁶, noctivolent³⁷ garden-plants to demephitise³⁸ the room, for it

²⁵ large log placed at the back of the fireplace

²⁶ large log placed at the front of the fireplace

²⁷ feeling pleased

²⁸ prune trees

²⁹ sowing of seed

³⁰ treatise on trees

³¹ things or subjects taken into council or consideration

³² room for articles not immediately needed

³³ smoky

³⁴ writing that is belaboured or overwrought

³⁵ high and narrow

³⁶ flowering by night

³⁷ smelling strongly in the night

³⁸ purify from foul air

is to be supposed men must at least sometimes be permitted to be men, however discomfoting to women and all the world.

With its classrooms, (tutor Mr Stanhope, – shortly to retire after 25 years of service, – would be replaced by Albert and Henry the sons of Richard & Jennifer, and the nanny of five years Mrs Gaintree, replaced by Troke mothers in 1845), with its doctor and infirmary, with its heated conservatory supplying year-round vegetables, with Tristan and assistant Steven the apiarian³⁹ supplying all the honey required, with the pomologist⁴⁰ Samuel and his plentiful young assistants supplying all needful for their winemaking, even in winter from the fruit-loft⁴¹ all the fruit required, with in back of the stables the white-painted shambles supplying from Troke cattles, sheeps, pigs, and goats, all the meat necessary to feed the 61 Trokes and staff, wherein at that very moment, selected from a flock of plump muttons⁴², a fatling⁴³ was hanging from a cambrel⁴⁴ fresh-butchered by the macellarius⁴⁵, the very versatile, willing, and skilful Hilary wife of Rudolph, who in a wheelbarrow was taking head for the orchard to spread the offal good to the roots of apple-trees.

With Erwin now qualified in law, with Hugo studying architecture, with childless Barry the son of Alexander studying both at the manor and monthly for a week in London, banking, finance, and the principles of trading, with women aplenty to see to all domestic duties from laundry to nursing to panification⁴⁶, with abundant children at their beck and dispose from whom to choose a weekly nuncius⁴⁷, sootiman⁴⁸, jakesman⁴⁹ or jakesmaid⁵⁰, and assistants for the various workshops, –chiefly for the

³⁹ bee-keeper

⁴⁰ cultivator of fruit trees

⁴¹ attic storeroom for fruit

⁴² sheeps

⁴³ fattened for slaughter

⁴⁴ piece of wood used by butchers to hang a carcass

⁴⁵ butcher

⁴⁶ bread-making

⁴⁷ messenger

⁴⁸ chimneysweep

⁴⁹ emptier of privies

⁵⁰ female emptier of privies

benefit of putting Trokes in their tender years upon work so as to discover for what they were fit, or unfit, – with the Guardian Samuel further ensuring safety with of night-loosing of three wolf-hound alans⁵¹, and, at the ringing of a tocsin⁵², with the immediate assembly of a well-trained wappenshawing⁵³ : the Troke family, – resiant⁵⁴ now 70 years in Troke Manor, – was both powerful-in-arms and, – save for the latest books of science, philosophy, – called the art of learning how to die, – medicine, and of course literature, which were regularly sent down their London agent, such as, up to this time,

The Edinburgh Review, The Quarterly Review, Blackwood's Magazine, The Westminster Review, The Spectator, The Athenaeum, Fraser's Magazine, and from America : the Philadelphia Literary Magazine, The Monthly Anthology, which became The North American Review, Yale Review, Dial...

– self-sufficient.

1841

With the birth in October to Jeremy & Rosalind of Edward, the sense of security and general contentment was so pronounced that the family was utterly unprepared for survenue⁵⁵, two in number, both of them deaths, the first : the almost inexplicable suicide in May of childless Frank; calling herself to account for what she thought of as an inexcusable lache⁵⁶, Janet could only reason as follow : taking, – for such to her Vouchsafedom was convenient, – people as books : just as there were those so elementary even a young child could comprehend them, just as there were rare

⁵¹ large hunting dogs

⁵² an alarm, rung by a bell

⁵³ a muster of men under arms

⁵⁴ resident

⁵⁵ sudden or unexpected intervention

⁵⁶ slackness, negligence

others so far more difficult they could scarcely decipher themselves, and just as sometimes it chanced a book was so utterly unreadable as to seem written in Pushtu⁵⁷, (as later the book of the infiltrator Rosemary, and later again of Ursula, called the mad, would prove, even to Vouchsafes of far greater talent), so in very rare instances, if the pages were once relied upon to be comprehensible, they did not always remain so, so in this very wanting analogy was Frank : exactly such a book.

With barely an hour before the special meeting of the Inner Council was set to convoke, Janet was still attempting to make a fuller sense of his death which occurred in the very early morning in the stables wherein he was found, *suspensio per collum*⁵⁸ by a wire from a purlin⁵⁹, with beneath him a fallen enolmon⁶⁰, his polished, merd⁶¹-filled boots but an inch from the stone; disarmed much by her sorrow, poor Janet could barely feel her way through the conflict of images and emotions, seeing here a door, there tears, which may well have belonged to Frank, but could also have been on the cheeks of the sons of Theodore & Clarice, Charles & Leigh aged ten and nine who shared the horror of his discovery; after turning to his too calm wife Jenny, reading no more than guilt, pity, sadness, and more than a smatch⁶² of relief, turning next to the previous night, she saw Jenny blank of face going to her own bedchamber as Frank dernful⁶³ of face, went to his own, a man who clearly, coming into the world to rid away his solitariness, was now, – the best of his days lingered out by reaping to himself only sorrow, – utterly wearied out.

Though Jenny was once in eager direction of all its even least interesting details, due solely to her barren condition seeing now no reason at all to participate in what she thought of as the sticky farce of coitus, – a view with which Frank was not at all of

⁵⁷ language of Afghanistan

⁵⁸ hanging by the neck

⁵⁹ beam supporting a roof

⁶⁰ three-legged stool

⁶¹ ordure

⁶² touch

⁶³ sad

her mind, – she disconsented⁶⁴ to provide for her husband in any way whatsoever; by going back a good few weeks, Janet observed the occasion when with grown ire, not altogether seriously, Frank suggested that if normal healthy union so disgusted her that she must estrange his person from her bed, what might she consider, if only for his own sake, axillism⁶⁵?, or if not genuphallation⁶⁶, perhaps *coitus à mammilla*⁶⁷?, or even plain old triborgasmia⁶⁸?, (but obviously not in these words, some of which are of modern origin), for surely, he continued in amazed outraged tones, she was not asking that he, Frank Winston Everitt Hero Kimbery Troke, return to that practice he long dispensed with the need for, namely manuxoration⁶⁹!?!; returning to the previous night Janet observed the suicide taking a final slow walk through the library, clearly amazed both and horrified that so much knowledge and nonsense, so much wisdom and fancy, – of which he was always more hopeful than he had ever found cause, – could do nothing to alleviate his condition.

Lately experiencing here and there a momentary success in trying to extend her talents to animals, it was by this means that the matter was at last absolutely cleared of Inimicus involvement : despite four years before so frightening Gyp he areared and threw young Christopher, it was thanks to apples crisp, apples curious⁷⁰ good, and affection, which seemed never to surfeit, that Janet gained a wee ingress into its existence, but Gyp when Frank passed was sleeping in his stall, dreaming it may be of whole valleys of clover and *Phleum pratense*⁷¹; turning then to the geese, – for the privilege of governing the top garden forced to submit thrice-yearly to the brief humiliation of forfeiting each ten excellent quills, – who with concerted hooting, with open-winged, biting pursuit, attacking any individual passing through their territory, – even those not in the least minacious⁷², – it was necessary, leaning forward, walking

⁶⁴ refused consent

⁶⁵ insertion of penis in the armpit of a partner

⁶⁶ insertion of penis between the knees of a partner

⁶⁷ insertion of penis between the breasts of a partner

⁶⁸ masturbation of the husband by the wife

⁶⁹ masturbation using the hand

⁷⁰ excellent

⁷¹ timothy; also called herd's grass, cat's-tail grass, and meadow cat's-tail grass

⁷² threatening

backward, imperially pointing, to bluff a way through.

Into these geese tentatively reaching, with but minutes to spare before the meeting was to convene, suddenly gaining brief entry, it was from many anserine⁷³ viewpoints, – as if in that mosaic⁷⁴ sometimes experienced by endurants of migraine, – that she saw Frank, – with clearly in his hand the snare made from a quint⁷⁵, clearly on his face the determination that he would not one day die evicted because he was worn out, decayed, but die before, die now, – first running pursued into the stable to quickly shut the door, then, preparations concluded, coming all the kicking horrid rest, so was Janet able to offer up to the Inner Council her explanation, be this worth what it was, but which most importantly removed all suspicion of foul play; so poor Frank at only 28, dying of suspercollation⁷⁶ at his own hand, with costage to the quest of one and a half years, was buried and appropriately mourned; after the funeral his infecund wife Jenny the henpeck, looked upon by all as in a sense a murderess,

for though mysteries and secrets abounded in Troke Manor, her sterility and frigidity were certainly not two of these,

packing her belongings with dispatch went silently away, (as beforesaid : dying in 1897 at age 79 of a synochal⁷⁷ of the lungs).

When death,

believed the strongest force in existence, the most carnivore,

in the guise of lung fever⁷⁸, next set its teeth into four-year-old James the first

⁷³ of or pertaining to geese

⁷⁴ mosaic

⁷⁵ the E string of a violin

⁷⁶ hanging by the neck

⁷⁷ general inflammation

⁷⁸ pneumonia

surviving son of Rudolph & Hilary, never letting go for a moment until he finally died in June, thereby adding a further disvalue to the quest of six months : again calling her pancritical⁷⁹ self to account, – but only to herself, for if disappointment was shown by those of the Inner Council that the Vouchsafe talents, as miraculous as they were of course, were not but a trifle more so, no blame was attached, (for thus has it been always so, even unto almost present days, that the power of a Vouchsafe, as mighty as it has since become, is still never sufficient, ah!, it is highly to be accounted of, but it is an hard thing to fail to be that which a Vouchsafe should), – in looking to the child via his book Janet found where before were pages filling with all the excitement and banality of which childhood was making, lo!, standing they now blank, Janet could but sigh, let the book return itself to its place, and submit her report to the Inner Council.

It must be stressed that this metaphor : books, as rough, as delicate as it already is, would certainly utterly decohere⁸⁰ if suggestions were made of say erasure, or of ingannation⁸¹ on a forgery-like theme; it is also worth stating again : the talents of a Vouchsafe, even via analogy and metaphor, – not forgetting of course the very greatest indulgence of words, (and now eyes), – can only be explained in the very vaguest of ways, but such, (save to the Inner Council in one brief tantrumous episode by Vouchsafe Sarah in 1874), was never attempted, neither was this asked, for in truth the men were half-adrad⁸² that description might be as everywhere else, destruction, for so it is : language *is* perception; so it was that her so few words and many tears of frustration sufficed the Inner Council for explanation.

1842

As this again proves a year, – none born, none dying, – somewhat barren of any

⁷⁹ subjecting everything to total criticism and asking oneself every question

⁸⁰ fall apart

⁸¹ deception

⁸² afraid

incident worthy of reporting, it might prove opportune, if premature, to inquire how the Troke saga so far fares, for as may by now be noted : over other works of history, of biography, the Troke, – which, as has already been discovered, writhes, heaves, with the unsayable, – hath the vantage four ways, firstly, the chief : because this history is, (or will be), a complete enough account, – despite as much in the matter as in the manner of telling taking a way quite contrary to the common course, – and because dedicated to pure fact, its language need never be ambiguous, nor of course too plain, nor so affected that the capacity of a child, a Troke child, may not serve rightly to conceive its meaning; secondly : whereas in a head well-made and elemented in the best most learned studies, a strong memory is commonly coupled with infirm judgement, in a head perhaps *not* as well-made, yet well-filled with the best most advantageous experiences, its perfect memory, – or its equivalent, – need never be doubted or confuted.

Thirdly : whereas it might already be protested that this saga is so loaded with matter as to be almost unable to support itself with its own strength, this will be easily countered two ways : one : to know things well, one must know the details, – where it was once believed by fools dwelleth the devil, – two : honesty necessitates thoroughness, for the truest historian will have least for his imagination to do if the subject itself supplies all that is necessary; lastly, fourth reason, most importantly : whereas the ordinary historian may be ignorant, beyond even a child, of the details surrounding established events sufficient for telling his work, not only interestingly, but convincingly out,

because after all : as memory is as imperfect as intellect, an imagination strong enough, too strong, can almost beget an event itself, as Gibbon sheweth,

the perfect historian, – particularly with so complete a cache of material to every hand as to seem, — like a traveller in time, — verily an eye-witness, – need not interpret, nor shape, nor alter, what, previous, coevous, and subsequent, other eyes,

other minds and hands, – unless of course they err, – have recorded of matters the most rare, uncommon, and unnatural, nor need he, therefore, in any manner pull after him such words as would not voluntarily follow.

So, is a picture beginning to form of these Trokes, living their lives in the pleasure of toil, the pleasure of pleasure,

as nearly all others in the world live still in the toil of toil, the toil of pleasure,

a people without need of any metaphysical beyond, any divine regulator, free even from perhaps far greater evils : the impositions of custom, – for where no reason there is for custom, custom is no reason, – governmental authority, economic pressures, cultural inhibitions, and social obligations?; certainly matters of a far more sensational, magical, nature have yet to be narrated, but is this tale, so far, measuring up to expectation?, holding its own in these fast-paced times?, and the stamina,

a Latin plural, used now as a singular verb,

and of course the eyes, and the understanding, if not yet the astonishment, are these too holding up?, is that almost a nod?, then content!

But let it not be imagined, even in their Arcadia, that *all* Trokes were content, or happy, for it must be made sparkling clear that not only Trokes but a few outsiders were possessed of a restlessness, hence a rebelliousness, – sometimes, true, on the slightest pretext, – against any in-house injustice,

whether it be of a person or people, – which smaller minds discuss, – or of an event or events, – which average minds discuss, – or of an idea or ideas, which greater minds discuss,

for an example : one outsider, – let Words not name her, for though she was not, — at that early time, — too much teased with fine distinctions, possibilities of misconception, or the perils of afterthought, for she was then but one of those millions of people who, always either hoping or remembering, but never presenting to themselves, could find nothing to do, on even a not all that rainy afternoon, but to do nothing but sigh and long for immortality, – eventually came round so capitally she was heard to one day remark at a garden-party :

— ...the bible, – about which the world endlessly thinks, talks, argues, advances, denies, asserts, judges, punishes, and wars, without in the least suffering at any time any hampering by the smallest fact, – after subtracting the miraculous, the impossible, and matter too, too silly, nothing actually remains.

This was the very same new wife who a year before, at lunch, upon hearing a blood, – fearless, words name him : doctor George, – laughingly say :

— Religion?, me, we?, – which de Montherlant called the venereal disease of mankind?, – such, my dear, is nought but an artifice to bring the world by wholesale to renounce all reason and sense : clearly nothing more than a malfunctioning brain,

she leaping as if scalded up out of her elbow-chair, speechless, – but alas, with a great noise made with that end of her many believed talked far more sensibly, clearly showing, as if as nothing else, that she was outraged, mortified to her very bowels!, – tumultuously fled in indignity from the room to hide in her quarters, where, at first vowing to come not again out till that night week, at second resolved to wait for the larger gathering for dinner, at which, enlisting surely a legion of outsider comrades, she would voice her swift-seasoning ire.

The outcome : ah!, the poor fool girl!, she spoke out, everyone listened, blasphemy

was one of her indictments,

but by attacking not a person but a belief, not a being but an idea, not a fact but a fancy, blasphemy is a crime the prayerless Troke cannot commit,

but at last saying all her thoughts, not many, not deeply fetched, with her napkin almost garrotted, she became silent, she sat down; now it was not by the howling freezing northerly winds of the theological or fictitious, nor by the sticky tropical southerly winds of the metaphysical or abstract, but simply by those winds, cooling, gentle, enveloping, of the scientific or positive, that she was soon so overwhelmed, withered,

for it was certainly to their credit, – if often a great deal more to their inconvenience, – that Trokes could never quite comprehend how any man or woman, unless conspiring in a consensual paranoia, could want anything from the world but the whole truth,

she began soon enough to, firstly : realise what a different and novel, – if believed then utterly incorrect, – world was one in which the supposed truth of a proposition depended not upon its perfect accordance with scripture, but, – following investigation of causes, principles, energies, powers, and the effects thereof upon all things visible and invisible, – upon attestations of sufficient evidence!, then to lastly : believe that philosophy has no end in view save truth, whilst faith,

which commands man to not see what he do see, to not understand what he do understand, and, else he fry, to find what he do not discover,

looks for nothing but obedience and piety, it were well to take as a criterion of truth that whatever a theologian, – reasoning about phenomena far removed from a healthy brain, from the perceptions of the seeing eye, – regards as true, is false.

1843

In March, – following Jeremy & Rosalind becoming proud parents to Cissie, – to the surprise of all, – because it was thought common knowledge, — alas for husband Hugh, — that his wife, — wonderfully active for so very stout a party, — had happily exchanged libido for motherhood, – a fourth child by 35-year-old Gwen was conceived, which interestingly : when Janet turned to as it were the addenda⁸³ in the Gwen book she saw the birth there written with the ink so to speak still wet; in April the dark horse Paul, – his savings and investments all pissed against the wall, – married, – as if at last beginning to draw himself down to a straiter life, – his long-time cohort Alesia, who, utterly unmet by the family, was known to possess a tocher⁸⁴; now a Troke wife, let a brief account be given of her, or at least of her beginnings : her mother Elizabeth, – marrying at 16 a man named Myall Maeght, a sufferer of temporal lobe epilepsy : a religious loon, son of a basketwoman, an applewoman, – pushed down an iron stairs in the eighth month of pregnancy, broken variously, for four hours staring up at the few of the sextillion⁸⁵ stars of the universe which could occasionally be seen through the freezing fog, – which seemed all to her to say : *fear me, if you dare*, – yet both surviving, in white bandage in a white bed waking to the breaking of her water, delivering quickly of Alesia, saying then with lucidity : that whereas life does not require long survival after reproducing, yet long enough to nurture and raise, she was sorry but for this latter she could not stay, thereupon closing her eyes and dying, this daughter was raised in an orphanage.

At a June meeting of the Inner Council, Patriarch Mark 64, – who as the blessed event drew inexorably, tantalisingly closer, lately suffering night-sweats that his own large death could dispatch their millenary⁸⁶ quest years arseward⁸⁷, – properly launched an attack upon those still loose from a wife : the bachelors, (a battle which

⁸³ textual matter tipped, pasted, into a publication, usually at the time of binding

⁸⁴ small middle-class dowry

⁸⁵ 1 followed by 21 zeros

⁸⁶ 1000 year

⁸⁷ backward

was to endure 77 years); showing a very rare *faute*⁸⁸ of *mansuetude*⁸⁹, he proposed that something be done about those males in the family still *agamist*⁹⁰, referring of course not so much to the two examples present, Samuel 49, and doctor George 52, for their cases may well be exceptionable, but rather to his very own son Hugo still at his studies perhaps but now four-and-twenty, to Martin at 31 son of Steven & Vouchsafe Janet, and to Erwin son of the late Frederick & Josephine, now 29, *and also your sons*, said he to Richard, *Albert and Henry, respectively 24 and 22 are they not?*; when it was pointed out that his own marriage did not occur until his twenty-seventh year, that Tristan to his immediate right was not wed till he was 28, – these they considered good sensible ages, – Mark nodded, but cited the examples of Richard who married at 18, Steven at 19, and even Alexander, sitting across the table from him, wed at the age of 21.

Ever the one to *assobre*⁹¹ *male eyleth*⁹², Janet saying she would inquire into the intendments of these five apparently thoughtless men, the answers she received from all were similar : it was generally felt there was time enough for such travails, particularly as in the world outside it was generally held as a truth only liars gainsaid : like faithless age imparting wisdom unto faithful youth : he who never felt them would never believe that marriage hath, than joys, many more displeasures and very sore griefs knit and adjoined to it; later this year much to the surprise of husband Theodore, then first hearing of it, Janet announced that to his wife Clarice a *bigate*⁹³ would occur in the following year.

In June, when the Inner Council acknowledged, firstly : that their calculations on a weekly basis were not for accuracy of easy making, secondly : that the defect of any necessary antecedent calculation must needs cause a nullity of all those which depend thereupon, and thirdly : that the date of the *blesséd* event should be stated

⁸⁸ lack

⁸⁹ mildness, meekness of character or temperament

⁹⁰ unmarried

⁹¹ render calm

⁹² troubles

⁹³ birth

with a far greater accuracy than whole years : it was voted that the mathematically minded, already remarkable yngynore⁹⁴, and possible genius, – though this might only be simply a greater aptitude for patience, – Henry, then but 21, be included in their present convocations; with Richard his father recusing himself, yet the vote unanimous to forthwith include this uncommon young man in their deliberations,

for, save for Richard, they each gave him their vote, each apiece, for all of them one, even unto eight votes, – how many voters, so many votes, – the vote of Chairman Mark amongst them, the vote of Janet also,

so was Henry sought and summoned.

As the matter had been acroamatical⁹⁵ beforehand he was not altogether, as so often, unfindable : within an hour, everyone conscripted, he had been located part way up the chimney dedicated to the kitchen ovens, with his telescope proving to himself that what he had told Christopher 12 son of Hugh & Gwen, was true, stargazing was not possible in daylight; aye, he was up a chimney, for taking walks and thought like everyone else, Henry merely ended up in stranger places,

(scarcely surprising to one who cometh from a long line of sufferers from a condition lately called *low latent inhibition*⁹⁶, which with some believing, when coupled to a high IQ, maketh for genius, if they had said, maketh for *troubles*, or *passibilities*⁹⁷, then they had hit the mark somewhat nearer).

Upon his nervous, hastily bathed appearance before the Inner Council, with the problem carefully explained to him,

⁹⁴ maker of engines

⁹⁵ divulged in private

⁹⁶ the unconscious incapacity to ignore stimuli that experience has shown are irrelevant to needs

⁹⁷ liabilities to suffering

for as with their crafts, Trokes maketh not a *fetish* of laboursome hand-work if a machine may do as well,

Henry simply nodded, for he almost shameth to confess anything too hard or too dangerous; the expressed need for this rather special clock greatly accelerated the hands and tachyphrenic⁹⁸ mind of Henry who, – quietly following the viduifical⁹⁹ progress of their quest with interest, – had already given the matter much thought; from plans carefully drawn he soon began building his remarkable timepiece, (the which, due to betrayal into various interruptions and problems, though 20 years in the coming, – the delay to excuse he provided weekly accurate calculations worked out on paper, – allowed the horologist¹⁰⁰ to build a machine which was to attain an accuracy unto better even than a minute, and for one century and a half very near, – with elapses of course for reconstruction and recalibration, – would quietly, reliably tick away the varying time remaining; whereas it might be expected that so complex an apparatus would be liable to eventual derangements, no, this clock still runs as well as it ever did, – as may be seen if requested, – but, depended upon no longer, has been superseded by a far more reliable computing machine, accurate unto a microsecond¹⁰¹).

Over the next few days, knowing full well his timepiece would be an involved lengthy project, yet eager to acquire the accuratest genealogy possible, assiduous young Henry, proud to be a part of so momentous an enterprise, spoke consultively, but circumspectly, with all surviving mothers and fathers so as to confirm the time of the birth-cry, which doctor George informed him,

despite it long ago said that life beginneth when an infant first stirreth in the womb,

⁹⁸ abnormally fast in mental activity

⁹⁹ widow-making

¹⁰⁰ one skilled with clocks and watches

¹⁰¹ millionth of a second

was commonly accepted even by calcars¹⁰²,

those who develop no theory, make no attempt to critically evaluate same in relation to other theories, and, even in selectively considering evidence, contribute nothing to human knowledge,

as the moment human life *properly* commenced, whereupon Henry carefully neatly entered these figures in that publisher's dummy¹⁰³ of Royal Folio¹⁰⁴, called the Troke book of genealogy, begun by Vouchsafe Gwendoline in 1754.

When failing on occasion to acquire a figure sufficiently accurate, he consulting Janet, she looking back, even though she could see in the respective books the head appear from the birth canal, the toothless mouth open to wail, alas she could not cite the time of birth, a matter which was to long perplex her, (as similarly her successor), for in her library time sometimes flew when only a few words could be wrested, and sometimes almost halted as whole volumes were studied; but despite this, – as well the fact of course that of their sole male relation in Wales, Francis, aged then 31, — about whom they were kept informed by the circumspect inquiries of their London agent, — they knew only the whole day, not the time of his birth, not even the rough hour, – Henry nevertheless came up with a tolerably accurate target date, provided of course none more were to birth or die; when at the next Inner Council meeting this date, – or rather two dates, between which layeth their liberation, – was announced, then whispered about like an invocation, nervous smiles crept over exciting features, till a sudden shrill leugh¹⁰⁵,

because seeming of an hysteriac, words need mark not his hand,

briefly convulsed them all, after which a long silence followed wherein eyes could

¹⁰² astrologers

¹⁰³ an advanced copy of a book, usually of blank pages to show size, shape, &c

¹⁰⁴ of page size twenty inches by twelve and a half

¹⁰⁵ laugh

barely meet eyes; in December Gwen gave birth to her last child and third boy : Wallace.

1844

To Theodore & Clarice in July came a son, by name Victor, (destined not only to launch Troke males upon a permanent mammary-fixation, but to become a well-meaning but still fracod¹⁰⁶ master of winemaking who at the cost of his health, – one day his life, – would drink in proportion as his thirst was great), to Jeremy & Rosalind in August was born Bessie, (like her sister Cissie, one day to prove a long-serving and invaluable housekeeper, maidservant, cook, gardener, &c, in a word : servant).

1845

During wintertide, – which in England generally extends from November to May, – there was an unusual amount of coryza¹⁰⁷, – particularly amongst the outsiders, – a need by feavers[✓] for much doctor's stuff¹⁰⁸, everywhere much sternutation¹⁰⁹; after the coming to Jeremy & Rosalind in March of a son they named Andrew, bringing the blessed event to a little over three years distance, experiencing a strong feeling of foreboding, Janet urged Samuel to be particularly vigilant in his duties as family protector, doctor George similarly; with menstruous¹¹⁰ examinations thereupon inaugurated of every important family member : every male, and of every wife still young enough to bear, – with others of the family given a conciliatory examination at intervals of *tribus mensibus*¹¹¹, – this proved very providential, for here was an

¹⁰⁶ wicked

¹⁰⁷ running at the nose with cold in the head

¹⁰⁸ medicine

¹⁰⁹ sneezing

¹¹⁰ monthly

¹¹¹ three months

ailment detected, there a morbidity nipped before it could embloom, and a distant mortality or two perhaps prorogued¹¹².

The winter continued so bitter that for months coughs and sneezes continued to echo through a house which wanted not so much for warmth, – although such large old houses are the devil to warm, – as adequate isolation from those infect, but with spring then summer eventually arriving, sniffles departing from all but the decrepite¹¹³, in August Erwin at 31 announced his handfasting¹¹⁴ to a 29-year-old schoolteacher from a neighbouring village named Ingrid Thule who, after delighting first at the sight of the pretty nursery in which five children under three were in the good care of mothers Rosalind and Clarice, then at the classroom in which six boys and one girl were under the fine instruction of Albert, – for no outside creaunser¹¹⁵ remained at Troke Manor, – offering her humble services, which would come into effect in the following May at her taking of the Troke name : 13-year-old Lavina, – restless, lonely daughter of Hugh & Gwen, sole female student, – thought of a mastress¹¹⁶ was news of a very temperative¹¹⁷ sort.

1846

With Erwin & Ingrid wed in May, with the Inner Council smiling in forescence¹¹⁸ of sons, – the which, were it not for the presence of Janet, — who would have anyway smiled, for such was her open, earthly nature, — some rough barrack-room words may have sounded, with both accompanying hand and body gestures, together with those salebrous¹¹⁹ laughs whereof a man, — just a little more often, but less loudly,

¹¹² postponed

¹¹³ very old

¹¹⁴ betrothal

¹¹⁵ tutor

¹¹⁶ mistress

¹¹⁷ having a moderating influence

¹¹⁸ anticipation

¹¹⁹ rough or rugged

than a woman, — is so capable when in the secure brave keeping of his own sex, — with the reckoning thought to be 940 years, the case was as young Henry described it : as if 31 men, walking abreast, taking strides of 30 yards, covered daily ground normally requiring the walking of a month : by consuming a month each day, this required only two years to glean 60, then the blessed event would be full upon them.

Daily in her adytum, in a warm toison¹²⁰ shawl before the bright fireplace, her eyes closed, her hands occasionally twitching, fearful of finding somewhere in the near future as if an obituary¹²¹, carefully turning from one book to the next, Janet travelled through all her records, then beyond, to where outside dangers lay, for in a Vouchsafe library there is no *index expurgatorius*¹²², nor an *index librorum prohibitorum*¹²³,

the Catholic of which, until the year 1822, kept under its ban every book which dared to contest the sublime truth that the Sun goes around the Earth,

nor books sent away for rebinding, for they were but mental manuscripts, bound, unbound by a thought; the while, Janet ached for that talent which she knew the next Vouchsafe would in better part possess, which was of reading books as if in the interlinear, or in other and more words : with as if the text in a second language in alternate lines.

Black sheeps Paul, called the wastrel, now 30, by near all the family forgot, — despite Janet regularly straining herself toward him, but, because of the too great distance : to no avail, — his wayward habits mostwhat curbed, — his misspense¹²⁴ : bestowing

¹²⁰ lamb's wool

¹²¹ obituary

¹²² list of books allowed in expurgated form

¹²³ list of prohibited books

¹²⁴ improper spending

all his silver and gold upon gamblers¹²⁵, gay¹²⁶ women, pleasers¹²⁷, and flatterers, his drinking and gambling, – was certainly not forgot by the Inner Council who received regular news from their London agents and advocate : disposing of the paltry last of his few securities, he had lately married the woman with whom he had lived for nearly 10 years, Alesia, who had not only a bastard son, – got upon her by a man of name Hercules Von Quast, an effeminate man-milliner once of very brief notoriety in France because within a single four-and-twenty hours he had been a lover, husband, cuckold, murderer, hence widower, and fugitive, – but also two daughters got upon her by her Paul, before he was husbanded.

Gaming with care, with restraint, far more fortunately than hitherto, eating unto plumpness, laying a deposit upon a small but fine little house in Bayswater, Paul and theirs, she and hers, thereinto removed; (despite of no relevance : the unrelated bastard son, who due to a brief but unsuccessful fistic¹²⁸ career, – in which his fair wits were hammered flat by *dementia pugilistica*, – died in a poorhouse in New York at age 37 : briefly of the two female blood-Trokes : entering each upon an adult life with a great deal of innocent carnal bravado, they married foolishly, took a lover, and so commenced properly to suffer, one in America by marrying a leucaethiop¹²⁹ dying childless in Mexico in 1891, the other, following a dead-born bell-bastard¹³⁰, joining the Salvation Army when it formed in 1877, and after half a lifetime of sacrifice, – little realising that even a Utopia must contain offscum¹³¹, – ended her terrestrial sojourn at age 81 in 1926.

Of the mother, Alesia : raised of a good foster-family, of once a promising disposition, of amiability both in body and mind, liberally endowed by the bounty of Nature, the which these good qualifications to improve and refine receiving a full

¹²⁵ gamblers

¹²⁶ loose; dissipated; lewd

¹²⁷ buffoons

¹²⁸ pertaining to boxing

¹²⁹ albino Negro

¹³⁰ bastard child of a bastard mother

¹³¹ dregs

fullish education, but by reason of, as briefly as possible : the subsequent disasters of infatuation, elopement, virgin widowhood, divorce, mistressdom, bastardry, – here Paul entered her life, – double motherhood, marriage, widowhood, gulosity¹³², *psychose passionnelle*¹³³, two more bastard children, – their fates : no matter, – drunkenness, – to the end of her days a vague but graphic remembrance of somehow bailiffs, — or such officers as squeeze a living out of tears, — shouting, angry faces, struggle, beating, imprisonment, – then, with nothing of her original so promising self remaining, save an abiding belief that whom god giveth coin giveth all perfection else, coming the final shame : Christianity,

said by Burnet to be the most perfect and proper way that ever was for advancing the good of mankind,

she died, in 1885, at age 70, of the consequences of alcoholic paranoia).

As soon as the weather was propitiate Janet, now aged 60, relocating her study and counselling to the lovely garden, there her family coming with this malady and that question, her advices if not always followed were always sound, or nearly always; meanwhile Guardian Samuel purchased new dogs of a German breed called Doberman, which were indeed durable, well-mouthed, cold-nosed, round-footed, open-bulked, with fine sterns and small tails, solid too, *finster*¹³⁴, savage of countenance, and yet to the family, particularly to children, loving, gentle, and patient; the few beggars, tramps, tinkers, and gipsies,

to whom Trokes always gave something, even to eat if need required, even a coat or a breech when need was sore for good old clothing,

who dared for more than the generosity of a bender¹³⁵, or who expressed greater

¹³² gluttony

¹³³ erotomania

¹³⁴ dark

¹³⁵ sixpence

than ordinary dissatisfaction to be only, – excusing here the formation of participle passive from noun, – sixpence instead of shilling, or who otherwise tried to deceive the daytime gatekeeper, – often 60-year-old Imelda, presbyopic¹³⁶ wife of Alexander, who much enjoyed, (as futurely Bessie), this quiet solitary position, – found that the sudden caperlash¹³⁷ of the chaynid¹³⁸ dog warranted if not quite a violent catharma¹³⁹ then a solert¹⁴⁰ culvertage¹⁴¹, and the very fleetest movement eastward of calves got to grass¹⁴²; aye, neighbours, even the few acquaintances who condescended on foot to visit the manor,

wherefrom, even at the border, to the full length of its stout chain, might out bound upon him by huge careering leaps a horrid infuriated ruffian of a dog as big as an English cow, as active as a leopard, as fierce as a hyena, but more powerful by much, and quite as indisposed to hear reason as to forgo the delighted surprise of an early supper,

were tempted to condescend no more.

With the child of Ingrid, according to doctor George, destined for birth on or about the twelfth of March ensuing, Henry estimated, to a tolerance of three days more or less, that with the child a girl, then the blessed event would fall on May the second of 1848, whereas if the child were male, within a similar tolerance, then April the sixteenth, or two weeks earlier, would be the blessed day, and here from the Inner Council a loud cheer went up; thereafter, (and for the next two years), almost every snuffle and mishap, – of male origin of course, – was accorded such a fuss of notice, – for even a long male face brought such a flood of concern that some of the seven boys under 16 contrived to gain extra attention with these ploys, – the three girls

¹³⁶ form of long-sightedness incident to age

¹³⁷ abusive language

¹³⁸ chained

¹³⁹ discharge from the bowels

¹⁴⁰ clever, wise

¹⁴¹ cowardice

¹⁴² spindle-shanks

under 16 thought this all a scandalous turnagain¹⁴³ of favouritism; whilst effort was made to withhold the details, it was soon knowledge of the commonest sort that in April or May two years hence, being all well, something so momentous, so wonderful was going to occur that the seven children aged seven and less were not alone in suspecting that this event would prove more important than a birth, and so much more marvellous than a birthday, they could hardly bear to wait; with autumn moving into a mild winter, came a crisp Christmas,

the festival which brought the hypocrisy of humility into the world,

which this for the most part ethnick¹⁴⁴ family treated as simply another day, but whereof a few outsiders celebrated by singing carols despite their silly words, by exchanging presents, and by indulging in epulosity¹⁴⁵.

1847

Patriarch Mark, now a grizzled 68, his podagra¹⁴⁶ done up in an huge fasciation¹⁴⁷ soon soiled and holed by his pacing with the aid of a heavy yew walking-stick, hobbled noisily, incessantly about the house, with at his unisonous¹⁴⁸ side, particularly on the stairs, limped coadjuvant¹⁴⁹ Erwin the one-leggéd, to whom he had acquired an attachment for a reason the most obvious imaginable : their unisonant¹⁵⁰ limp, for their natures were otherwise oil and water; with the child of Ingrid proving but a girl, whom they named Elise, this dampened the hopes of the Inner Council very little, most not at all, in fact, some the reverse, for their

¹⁴³ reversal

¹⁴⁴ heathen

¹⁴⁵ feasting to excess

¹⁴⁶ gout in the feet

¹⁴⁷ bandage

¹⁴⁸ in unison

¹⁴⁹ assisting, helpful

¹⁵⁰ accordance of sound

preparations for the blessed event, – most be it said of a mental sort, for how physically prepare for the utterly unknown, – were yet far from complete; as summer blossomed the invidious¹⁵¹ decision was clearly pronounced to all the six male children aged between six and 17 : to ensure tycolosis¹⁵², tree-climbing, horse-riding, &c, together with all those games such as *lug-and-bite*¹⁵³, *honey-pot*¹⁵⁴, and particularly *mumbletypeg*¹⁵⁵ which the boys so loved to play, – involving as they always must a modicum of danger, else why bother!, – were henceforth so seriously defended¹⁵⁶ that if any go about at any time to do it', unable to show commission sufficient for their warrant, aye, if any male child dare err for want of observing as he should, he would suffer high penalty as well as a very teaching clouting to better sort him out.

With adults so set upon safety exercising their authority by ordering children go by walking instead of running, the boys, – with danger and daring calling never before so loudly to companion them, – undergoing a very martyring time, made great heavy of this period : watching girls run about, climb trees, ride their horses, which they did far more energetically, loudly, and often merely to tease; when it one day became the collective umbrage¹⁵⁷ of the male children that the advent of a male death only and nothing beside would release them from their terrible strictures, for a few days groups of children, through the banisters, with a hopeful malevolence, eyed their aged Patriarch, on the arm of his nervous cousin Erwin, far too carefully descend the staircase.

When August came hot and bright, a bee-sting suffered by John eldest surviving son

¹⁵¹ likely to arouse ill-will

¹⁵² accident prevention

¹⁵³ in which a boy flings an apple and all race to it with the winner trying to eat it as fast as he can as his ears are pulled till he can stand it no more and throws down the apple

¹⁵⁴ in which a child is swung by its arms with its hands clasped below the knees and thus rolled into a ball are carried to market as if honey

¹⁵⁵ in which a jackknife must be tossed from a number of positions so that it always lands upright with the blade in the ground, the loser having to draw a peg from the ground with his teeth

¹⁵⁶ forbidden

¹⁵⁷ suspicion

of Rudolph & Hilary,

a hurt which he extravagantly exaggerated for the better notice of sympathy, materialised a crowd of hysterical women and helpless men, and later in the month, a dog questing¹⁵⁸ at a rabbit assembled in an instant a phalanx of almost berserker warriors[✓], why even an innocent cough turned 20 concerned heads, or at least until it was found to come from a mere girl, for, if not love, Troke tecnolatry¹⁵⁹ was at this time very gender-specific; throughout all this time Herbert the son of Vouchsafe Janet had something he wished to confess to his mother, but as a gentle forgiving man unaware of the precise circumstances involved in the housewide intrigue, or rather knowing vaguely as it were what the machine was supposed to produce, but not how it performed, he could not recognise that one of its smaller wheels was not supposed to be broken like it was.

Came September, and the blackberry-summer¹⁶⁰, then a cool October with its blustery chill last week, ah! never days went so slow, indeed they seemed to pass often twice, so tardily did they traipse by; as a child awaiting a birthday, or a wooster¹⁶¹ a leman¹⁶², certain members of the house going to bed early slept long, others tried other means to hasten time which, – despite the wholly misunderstood concepts under which it is governed, – will not be rushed, save when it is ready, and man not; whilst Trokes, generally, believed very firmly that if life was lived vividly, intensely, sincerely, need of a far longer, even another life, was quite unnecessary, it was nevertheless deep in a few blood members, a very few, not to too dearly, generally, cherish life,

¹⁵⁸ barking

¹⁵⁹ worship or idolisation of children

¹⁶⁰ fine weather at end of September and the beginning October, when blackberries ripen

¹⁶¹ lover

¹⁶² sweetheart, gallant, mistress

which they believed, perhaps rightly, was not really after all so much more glorious than nothing,

nor even their own species : clever *homo pollex*¹⁶³, bloodthirsty *homo religiosus*, nor even themselves as individually unique members of a singular family, for the reason for living seemed simply the getting ready to stay dead; came a glorious St Martins summer¹⁶⁴, then another new year, which one or two of those in the know actually believed would be their last upon an Earth as they knew it.

1848

With everyone, – not physically, and not alone mentally, say therefore spiritually, – exhausted by vividly experiencing, suffering so long all-on-end¹⁶⁵ the promise borne of every intermedial day and hour : came at last late April when the Troke quest entered the arena of plus or minus its three days tolerance; came the twenty-ninth, then the thirtieth, then the first of May, then upon arnemorwe¹⁶⁶ of the second, near everyone was convinced, *O diem praeclarum!*¹⁶⁷, this was the day!, but it was not, nor was the next, nor the next, and on *dies novissimorum novissimus*¹⁶⁸, which was the fifth of May, young Henry, – for the hundredth time furiously looking for a miscomputation in his figures, – even went so far as to reread the Lemuel Document simply to reassure himself that the word chiliad, which means 1000, was not in reality a misreading of the word myriad, which means 10,000.

Because the almost dementia of attendance¹⁶⁹ at this disappointing outcome was so

¹⁶³ mammal with a thumb

¹⁶⁴ period of fine weather about St Martin's Day, November 11

¹⁶⁵ eager, impatient

¹⁶⁶ early in the morning

¹⁶⁷ O splendid day!

¹⁶⁸ the very last day

¹⁶⁹ expectation

discrepant¹⁷⁰ to his very personal hopes,

because it is said also that genius gives no charter for the indulgence of error,

Mark, – the more guilty for well-knowing that in a family never strong in mathematics, — no substitute for understanding, — Henry was particularly mighty in this field, aye, sufficient even unto understanding, — no doubt, if to a certain extent this statement is true, then it is so not absolutely, — one of the most difficult books that has ever been written, *Mecanique Celeste* by mathematician Laplace, –doubting briefly the fealty of his first cousin once-removed, pointing at the papers and, – for the want of great love between them thinking he might be boldest, – asking Henry if he was really *negotiis pares*¹⁷¹, – for which comment Janet gave Mark such a look she looked him out of a countenance which at best rest revealed one or perhaps two small marks of greatness, – after yet again checking his sums, finding no fault to it, so passed a day in which nothing transpired of a miraculous nature save that Mark ceased his angry pacing, and with his complaints,

supposed to arise from vitiated bile, which he believed disappointment was not only ill-calculated to nectarise¹⁷², but served rather to add velocity to the little sand remaining in his hour-glass of time,

took to his bed with so deep a melancholy it rendered him incommunicable, save only to ask that it be carved on his gravestone that the blessed event, by going always so away backward, eluded him in all eight levels of duration : immediate, very short, short, neutral, long, very long, terribly long, and forever.

So it came to pass that Janet was at last approached by her fulvid-faced¹⁷³ son Herbert who, by now painfully aware of the disappoint suffered by everyone in the

¹⁷⁰ different, disagreeing, unlike

¹⁷¹ equal to the business

¹⁷² sweeten

¹⁷³ reddish-yellow

house, needing badly to unbreast, or disembosom¹⁷⁴, said that in a way unknown to him the apalid¹⁷⁵ condition of 63 family members might very well be laid to his charge; after a long pause shyly asking if by any chance Janet was aware that,

here he so stammered and reddened that Dr Burgess would have been delighted to example him in his 1839 *The Physiology or Mechanism of Blushing*,

that his twin sons Arthur & Paul were not his own but come of a liaison his wife Aloise had undertaken with her old lover as an endearing goodbye, but for which she had always been heartily resipiscent¹⁷⁶, and here shrugging with no small sorrow, his eyes bright with unfallen tears, he bravely said that they were still fine sons, whether his own or not, were they not?, whereupon his mother smiled, patted his hand, kissed him, told him they were indeed fine sons.

As soon as she was alone she looked to the book of Aloise, into that past she had foolishly disavowed, thought too jejune¹⁷⁷, too unimportant, and there she found him, the true father, an obolary¹⁷⁸ poet,

or rather a cold verse-mechanist, a nice balancer of curious words, of fair compacted phrases,

a handsome Frenchman, of name Pierre Ewelle; to the hastily assembled Inner Council, – but absent of Mark then lying almost comatose in his bed, – explaining her news, – which coming as a great blow indeed caused the men, letting out long groans, to liquate in their seats, – Janet then added that it would have been far more inexpiable¹⁷⁹ had her poor son known beforehand what significance his information

¹⁷⁴ to unburden oneself of a secret

¹⁷⁵ depressed, discouraged

¹⁷⁶ repentant for misconduct

¹⁷⁷ poor, uninteresting

¹⁷⁸ extremely poor

¹⁷⁹ unatonable, irreconcilable

was to have; twins Arthur & Paul, then aged 16, quite untold, became technically, very secretly, outsiders, but with no wite¹⁸⁰ attaching, nor loss of love or privilege, for Trokes were not so cruel as the law alloweth of a bastard,

for one who is not only begotten, but born out of lawful matrimony, is legally entitled to rights as only himself shall acquire, for as he is the son of nobody, without ancestor from whom inheritable blood can be derived, if he gain a surname by reputation, he receiveth none by inheritance;

with the 33 errant years of these by-blows¹⁸¹,

living monuments of incontinence!, thought the rancorous Mark,

struck from the family tree, the calculations corrected, so yet again a full year separated Trokes all from salvation.

When, in August, one day after the return of Hugo from his completed architectural studies, his father Mark died at 68 after a very short but painful tarriance, – thereby sending the quest more than two and a half years rereward, – a daunted¹⁸², lurid¹⁸³ air suffused the house, lasting for months, with everywhere those long faces often found upon a defeated nation; this gloom was then further deepened by the death of Emma, the daughter of Frederick & Josephine, who upon the morning she awoke to turn the very sharp corner of her fortieth year, looking long at herself in a body-glass¹⁸⁴ realising that with every one of her few looks now faded away, the miracle of ever finding a husband to calm the ache in at least her heart was now all past,

¹⁸⁰ blame

¹⁸¹ bastards

¹⁸² discouraged

¹⁸³ gloomy

¹⁸⁴ large mirror in which the whole body can be seen

for Emma was alas one of those women who give love and such things a ridiculous importance,

she drank but half a glass of milk into which she emptied a small bottle of very soluble hydrocyanic acid¹⁸⁵; with time neither for regret, nor even for a more last thought, she dropped utterly dead, never to scent, touch, taste, see, hear, or in any other way experience existence of the least sort any more forever, here both in time, and thereafter in eternity.

Samuel Miller in his sermon *Guilt, Folly, and Sources of Suicide*, published in 1805, states :

When... one destroys his life, he not only deprives society of an important member, and withholds from it the benefits which he might have bestowed, by continuing to live; but he also inflicts a positive injury, by displaying a mischievous example, and by recommending, as far as the influence of his conduct reaches, the same practice to others.

the which, like nearly all sermons, is manifest blazing nonsense,

for as a medicine to temporarily immunise survivors against same, an occasional suicide is necessary,

but true it is : despite whatever is believed, no man or woman has ever opportunity to derive any real, personal good from death self-administered.

To Catrin, also a spinstress, this calamity of her self-murdered sister so shocked her, so horrified her, then, after the funeral, the noble courage of the act so sweetly touched her, she vowed, – whereas she continued to secretly hope a man would cross her path, she now as secretly hoped he would not, – when her own time came

¹⁸⁵ prussic acid

to do exactly the same; always believing that the English nation, – at this time considered the strongest, the cunningest, the willingest the Earth ever had, – even if the very beau-ideal of a people, were yet the most likely to fire revolvers, in a tortile¹⁸⁶ fashion, with their right hand, at themselves, Catrin also believed that if suicide,

or death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim, which he or she knows will produce this result, as Durkheim saith,

wrongs the species, it does not the self.

Sad case, Catrin : in 1830, at age 20, with all the experience of life that a virgin purest can accrue, – which, even when supplied by only the eyes and ears, need not in the liberated Troke household be small, – one night at dinner, – waiting all ongoing conversations to halt together to thus produce a whole silence, – standing up, she said that as human union was to her view a full private concern between only the two parties, and with which law, society, particularly family, need have nothing at all to do,

for of all actions of a man's life, his marriage does least concern other people, as Selden saith,

she henceforth made this claim as part of her birthright : absolute right to sexual experience, to which, many applauding, none said nay; but at age 30, she had been waiting ten years for Cupid, with his piercing fiery arrow honey-dip't, to wound her so deep as no cure but one throughout the circumference of this lower sphere could be found; the sole compliment of any the least suggestive nature so far passed to her had been at the 1840 garden-party by an elderly sot who leaning over to her at dinner, patting her hand, said quietly that myrrh and spikenard more pleasant to his nostrils could not be than her armpits; to lonely Catrin, of imperfect beauty, but of

¹⁸⁶ twisted

spotless chastity,

year by year for ten years despairing of ever learning what could put her in the way how she could set about working it so that a man, whose outpart, crying out for to have right done to it, would bring forth such fiery drivings in her own inpart, which, thrusting forward for consummation, would trounce even the Sun for vehemency, for to those who with impatience wait till perfection of ripeness their lives be grown, lust too may be called love,

something at last happened.

To the wine-cellar sent to bring up more claret to the dinner-table, an obliging guest, – whom she believed intended upon her all sorts of kinds of lewd things, or at very least to steal a chaste kiss, – kindly accompanying her with a lantern, – she utterly uncaring that her first union,— coming as it would under the influence of the most violent, most insane, therefore clearly the most delusive, most transient of passions, — rather than a wallow and welter of days, would be but a brief standing, in a cold gloomed dank, of mere minutes, – the handsome youth, of handsome name : Sebastian Ducarel, – firmly disengaging from his uvula her tongue, from his neck her arms, from his waist one leg, holding her trembling pale at the length of his strong arms, – in mitigation gently explained that, though a base part of him, – as she had no doubt discovered, – would rather admit of a dissolution of his elementary being, than delay a minute more, alas his god insisted the far more that such business could not be allowed to go forward without proper formality, without they first ask permissions, suffer interrogations, make announcements, in short : without they partake, in a holy place before a holy man, of a ceremony made law which insisted before a host of witnesses that they swear fidelity, – with either but not another, with each but none other, – until death do one of them part; he then smiling, turning, without lantern going away as if to directly effect same, Ducarel via the kitchen fled the house, never to be seen again.

Now, at age 38, with only two garden-parties more,

because objecting so strongly to the right to motherhood when coupled to the obligation to become the servant of a man, determined to act no worse than say that foliovore¹⁸⁷ *Phascolarctos cinereus*¹⁸⁸, – indeed, like near all males of that kingdom called animal, – which do only what they are made : copulate, inseminate, and flee,

she wanted direly also of a child.

(Come the sunny midday of her own fortieth year of virginity and loneliness, two years later, Catrin made this final entry in her diary :

Whereas he slay, whereas he slay many, whereas he slay himself, he is a brave man or woman, a good man or woman, in contrast to men and women who slay not, because their cowardice prevents them...;

after spending the morning poring over the richly detailed anatomical plates in *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* by Vesalius in both the 1543 and 1555 editions, vexed,

but only slightly, for so long as a tree endure, a high place, a river, &c, liberty is always at hand,

at finding no poison enough deadly in the house, – for precautions had long been taken, – going to her rooms without saying goodbye to anyone, least of all to herself,

for she, – with ingress, progress, regress, egress, all so very much pointlessly alike, believing it better never to have been born, or best next of all : to die quickly, – she herself she would miss the least,

¹⁸⁷ animal living entirely on a diet of leaves

¹⁸⁸ Australian arboreal marsupial : the koala

arrayed in the gossamer spoil of the silkworm, laying upon her bed, with, at her side, around a small hand-mirror, in eradiating¹⁸⁹ battallia¹⁹⁰ a starburst of all her scissor, – lately sharpened by Henry, – she considered them one by one.

One pair bore a ball point¹⁹¹, another, because child-owned her favourite pair, bore for safety both blunt points, another of 6-inch blades seemed better to facilitate the operation of a decapitation, which left two pairs only, both double sharp points¹⁹², one of which was oh a very elegant item,

once belonging to Mademoiselle Choin, a great, ugly, brown, thick-set girl, maid to Princesse de Conti in the 1690s,

beautifully etched, heavily plated in gold, but the other, made by the cutler¹⁹³ Samuel, – through-hardened¹⁹⁴, buffed only but not plated, – was of most excellent run¹⁹⁵.

With a heavy book of anatomy open upon her stomach and upraised knees,

this the first of *The Anatomy And Physiology Of The Human Body*, 1826, in three volumes, written and illustrated by John and Charles Bell,

feeling first for her left carotid artery, – which carries blood to the brain, – assuring herself by touch and by mirror of its strong-pulsing identity, slowly guiding the points until all was well aligned, she carefully deeply snipped, oh!, how it stung!, how hot

¹⁸⁹ shooting forth, as rays of light

¹⁹⁰ order of battle

¹⁹¹ ball forged on the tip of the B blade, or bottom blade in which one or more fingers are placed, to ensure that the point will not puncture the cut material

¹⁹² with both blades ground to a sharp point to provide accuracy of cutting

¹⁹³ one who makes knives and other cutting instruments

¹⁹⁴ process of hardening throughout the metal, as opposed to case-hardening which hardens only the surface

¹⁹⁵ making an even and clean cut, without hesitation or roughness, for the full length of the blades

was her blood, how hissing as it spurting pulsed all over her nightgown, even onto the nice,

taken neither to mean pleasant to contemplate, nor fastidious, but in the sense that this word does not, cannot, express a quality of the object : a quality of the subject,

book, which after unthinkingly marking the place with a dog-ear,

a deplorable habit very soon to cure,

she thoughtfully closing heaved aside, then, turning her head, with great presence of mind and no small skill, she again felt, in the bloodied mirror looked, for the jugular artery, – which carries blood to the heart, – and again snipped similarly, then, with sticky hands pushing all the scissor away, – calmly, blood jetting east and west, – almost smiling, she composed herself, for she knew she had not long to wait, not far to go : aye, there is in suicide,

a self-motivated act which no one else can make one perform,

an intention of a kindness to oneself.

As she quickly passed with her ears roaring toward a warm unconsciousness[✓],

with forty percent of her blood departed, – three and a half pints, 20 trillion erythrocytes¹⁹⁶, 200 billion leukocytes¹⁹⁷, – her organs struggling, failing,

thinking her last thoughts, – in number, three : firstly : mankind had never yet sincerely reconciled itself to accepting death as a fit event, secondly : like Emma,

¹⁹⁶ red blood cells

¹⁹⁷ white blood cells

she would inflict no real or lasting harm upon their society by leaving it, as Hume saith, but simply cease to do good, and lastly, barely : a thought of the warm calm sea of a long ago summer childhood, how her late father Frederick had supported her until she learned to fleet¹⁹⁸ dorsicumbent¹⁹⁹, – Catrin, fading, fading, just before yielding the first of her last few breaths, she thought she heard a merle²⁰⁰, or was it a scream?)

It was many months after the disappointment following this so-called first failure of the blessed event, then the death of Patriarch Mark, then the suicide of Catrin, – who died without ever learning what was a man unrelated,

and what was carnality, what childbirth, and thereby what is lost and what escapes, what remains, what is added, what is expanded, what contracted, what is united, what separated, what is continued, what cut off, what propels, what hinders, what predominates, what yields, what hath a superintendency over all other...

– before equilibrium was re-established in the house, during which time, with tempers markedly shortened, some suffered ignavy²⁰¹, some febricula²⁰² complete with morbid decumbiture²⁰³; the winter, though late in coming, was harsh, and it lingered, with repeated cycles of snow-breaks²⁰⁴ and regelations²⁰⁵; in the early morning garden, – what in Norfolk used to be called a cobweb morning, – when leelane²⁰⁶ and cogitabund²⁰⁷ figures came suddenly each upon other, they turned

¹⁹⁸ float

¹⁹⁹ lying on the back

²⁰⁰ blackbird

²⁰¹ sluggishness, sloth

²⁰² slight fever of no specified type, lasting a short time

²⁰³ the act of going to bed when ill

²⁰⁴ thaws

²⁰⁵ a fusing solid again after a temporary thaw

²⁰⁶ alone

²⁰⁷ deep in thought

almost enmious²⁰⁸ away, the better, with their private despondency and disappointment over they knew not what, to return to, and be alone in, the misted inane²⁰⁹, for oh so mighty a gloom was theirs, it was contagiously felt by almost every member of the family; later it was said that this persistive overgloom caused Louise the wife of the late Claude at 82, to resign her life, which as a consequence caused her dear friend Antonia, spinster daughter of Louis at 65, to also die seemingly for no medical reason, and this, so hard to prove, could well be true.

If it be of small wonder why, – with failure of the blessed event throwing spirits into their lowest dejection, – a sort of *weltschmerz*²¹⁰ did not claim far more adherents in the family than it briefly did, this in part is accountable to the essentially indomitable Troke spirit, – not easily hurt perhaps, nor quick to mend, – particularly evident when malefactors were accused by the more elderly solifidia²¹¹ of wilful incivism²¹², whereupon many quickly commenced regathering their honest mettle; true, maintaining faith in so recondite a matter as their promised deliverance has shown to prove rather expenseful to health and strength, – for suspense too long prolonged gnaws and cankers into the frame, – but it was in part due both to their impatience and to the disappointment that their quest was yet again aniented²¹³, (which it would do well to understand would continue to be the case for a century and a half more), that so many Trokes,

during the whole course of their existence, rarely a people, with so few of their days entirely unhappy, to waste their time in vacancy and dullness,

found purpose and meaning in crafts that require rather the finger than the arm, and to the autosoterics²¹⁴ always attendant upon the palm of pains, for by as if giving

²⁰⁸ hostile

²⁰⁹ limitless void

²¹⁰ world weariness; sentimental pessimism

²¹¹ those who believes that faith alone is sufficient for salvation

²¹² bad citizenship

²¹³ frustrated; brought to nothing

²¹⁴ obtaining of salvation through oneself

their hands and minds every freedom, this very much prevented a general subhealth from eating too deeply into the Troke core.

It is true there were occasions when even the most passionate counsel of an unheartened spirit failed an individual to refocillate²¹⁵, times too when such a heap of heaviness entered the hearts of nearly all the family that none were able to quickly pull up their courage, but it could not be said, (or not until the time of their partial neolocality²¹⁶ in the 1930s, when the content of consciousness was thought no longer the most valid data for investigation), that a Troke did not know how to rise above wanfortune²¹⁷ and so prevent him or herself from becoming seriously amiss²¹⁸, for it will never be said that Trokes were unworthy of their gift of suffering; it should also be here stated that neither did Trokes adopt the philosophy of Diogenes²¹⁹, which is said to be based upon four concepts : indifference to hardship and suffering, open, blunt speech, self-sufficiency and rejection of the responsibilities of society, and shamelessness concerning any activity.

It be of small wonder too that Trokes never became cynics, for whereas according to Fowler cynicism has for its aim self-justification, for its province morals, for its method exposure of nakedness, and for its audience the respectable : according to society,

that canting, lie-loving, fact-hating, scribbling, chattering, wealth-hunting, pleasure-hunting, celebrity-hunting, neophilistic²²⁰ mob, nine-tenths of which move only by force, gold, and appetite,

a cynic is simply a disappointed realist, or what an idealist calls a realist, and cynicism simply reality with the volume adjusted, but if according to Bierce a cynic is

²¹⁵ to warm into life again; revive

²¹⁶ moving away from family of both wife and husband

²¹⁷ misfortune

²¹⁸ impaired in health

²¹⁹ cynicism

²²⁰ loving of novelty and trends

that blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be, then, yes, Trokes were cynics indeed.

It was of marked if small comfort that the blessed event did not commit that perhaps central, most foolish error of every theology : *specificity*, for by knowing precisely how, even when, but not what, – and, surely far too amazingly!, never wondering, – and with the even further not too small comfort that their struggle toward the blessed event, – concerning which Trokes were perhaps somewhat over-apt to give themselves the very hopefulest prospects, – even in so spacious yet ever-shrinking a timeframe, was long-iterative²²¹, this too prevented a far more concrete despair from befalling, and thereby reducing the hardy family to that condition, so common in all strata of society, which could be called gloom-enamour,

for hopefulness allows of a far more gratifying disappointment, as saith Kierkegaard.

When spirits were a little recovered, to better avocate²²² their thoughts from their troubles, some of the older women proposed a utis²²³ be organised which, – beginning with a light lunch, games, dancing, and ending with a grand dinner-party, – was always a very well-planned affair, with meetings over dress, *décor*, menu, wines, games, teams, and prizes; but on this occasion, with so many finding excuses to decline, notices were posted stating that by order of the Inner Council attendance was compulsory, and for inattendance a mulct²²⁴ was exigible²²⁵, as well the shame of ostracism, and a reduction of allowance, and the removal of certain cherished privileges, exemplified in Phoebe 73, youngest daughter of the late Jean and Louise, who was no longer excused from the devoir²²⁶ of gathering mushrooms simply because she despised this fungus.

221 repeatable

222 call off

223 period of festivity

224 fine imposed for an offence

225 liable to be exacted

226 duty

Despite these thought Draconian measures, because indulgence was not only encouraged but expected, the party was very numerously attended, and the excellent Troke wines, – renowned for quenching brain sooner than thirst, – by almost insisting hearts overflow of their hurts and hates, caused here and there small groups of women to indulge in unashamed ploration²²⁷, whereas the males,

they whom, nearest pinched, could not silence their tongues,

suffered a harder time, for in attempting to profane, swear, curse, and d—n away the disappointment which misgave them so ill, words proved so far too short and few as to force one or two upon the far more healthful purges of obscenity, lewdness, and such filthy vulgarity as maketh even excrements to blush; those of the family least taken with despondency at events, in short that handful to which *noli esse pusillanimis*²²⁸ was impossible, strolled about encouraging here an elder male to more ragefully diatribe, there a matron to be even more begrutten²²⁹, (and all this, note, long before the benefits very small of *Primal Therapy*²³⁰ were known!); come the exhausted dawn many Trokes were almost again of old, some of them even eyeing the clock with a certain bashful hopefulness.

As therapeutic as this occasion was, a far more enduring wellbeing was maintained by those parties which came about spontaneously simply as respirations²³¹, when in the library someone, *modo vir, modo foemina*²³²,

casting away say a letter from London bookseller J. Coxhead of Holborn, or Payne & Foss of Pall Mall, regretting that their enquiries, because taken from so old a catalogue, – their latest enclosed, – were fruitless,

²²⁷ weeping

²²⁸ to be feeble-hearted and timorous

²²⁹ swollen of face from weeping

²³⁰ trauma-based psychotherapy created by Arthur Janov

²³¹ reliefs from toil

²³² sometimes a man, sometimes a woman

feeling of the moment all too covetous, too bookful²³³, or else in the lamp-lit workshop, feeling too cribbed²³⁴, or else in the garden too guilty at feeling so much a libertine²³⁵,

for to strenuous minds there is an inquietude in overquietness,

simply dashing down pen, froe²³⁶, or romaunt²³⁷, marching into the house, announcing to any as were nigh, *is it not time for some playpleasure*²³⁸?; as word quickly spread, as the kitchens immediately abustled, simple but elegant dresses were selected, instruments from the music room, wines from the cellar; these prolusions²³⁹, because obventional²⁴⁰, did so mightly work in putting themselves forth, both in heart and life, that following consopiation²⁴¹ at dawn or after, by waking so pleasantly overcloyed²⁴², the family experienced so hearty a reviction²⁴³ that it is of no wonder Trokes remained nervy²⁴⁴ well into their later years.

²³³ full of notions gleaned from books; crowded with undigested knowledge

²³⁴ shut up in a narrow habitation

²³⁵ one at liberty

²³⁶ tool for cleaving staves

²³⁷ romance; tale of chivalry and adventure

²³⁸ idle amusement

²³⁹ entertainments

²⁴⁰ happening not constantly nor regularly, but uncertainly

²⁴¹ act of laying to sleep

²⁴² filled beyond satiety

²⁴³ return to life

²⁴⁴ strong and vigorous