

1710-1767

In July 1710, following the birth of her posthumous¹ child Thomas, placing Anthony in the safekeeping of a nearly *bália*² steady and gentle in her indoles³, Gwendoline took up employment with a recently widowed merchant, – a respected, wealthy, fair man with the odd caconymic⁴,

of which there will be a strange, even significant, few, in this saga,

Martin Fargencarne, – as housekeeper, and nurse to his heartbroke daughter of ten years; following the slow retreat of grief to the father, the arrival of first a delicate then soon a robust health to the pretty Lilly, a quiet grith⁵ descending upon the handsome harbour-front house : the appropriate period of mourning passing, Martin one day asking his daughter if she would in any way object to his finding for himself a new wife, hence for herself a new mother, the daughter pouting, pondering, then smiling, replied : No, papa.

So it was that when Martin let it be quietly known amongst his merchant colleagues, – or such as were not too much attendant upon lower affairs, – that he was looking to remarry, a number of prospects were suggested to him, some of whom were even so to speak interviewed, but because they all lacked if not breeding nor spirituality nor equanimity, nor even substance, they wanted alas all for what Martin thought of as vigour,

not vigour alone of course, for this was a time when mere vigour was considered a vulgar thing,

¹ born after the death of the father

² wet-nurse

³ inherent disposition

⁴ having objectionable, ill-sounding name

⁵ peace

for his wife had been a flower far too fragile; returning daily home from his office, it was with an ever-growing concern not only that his years would pass in continuing solitude, but that his daughter would remain wanting of a hand, if not more gentle, then a touch more instructive and authoritative than was traditionally permitted of a servant, even of their priceless housekeeper Troke.

But it came to pass one peep-o'-day⁶ that seeing his housekeeper as if with eyes from which, – strange expression, – all scales had fallen, Martin paled at his long blindness, for Gwendoline Troke was truly a beautiful creature, and though only 18, widowed mother of two fine sons, was competent, tireless, literate, and a wonderful companion to his newly happy daughter; after a whole year of saying scarcely more than good morning and thank you, summoning her, he stating his case very simply, after only a breath was accepted; so with 51-year-old Martin wedding 19-year-old Gwendoline, within a year came a daughter Florence, then in two years more a son, Eluned, named after his grandfather, followed by another son, Jevon, named after his uncle; (because these three children, bearing not an ounce of Troke blood, cannot be counted into the quest reckoning, this only need be stated in brief : Florence, marrying at age 25, tragically died in first childbed a year later, Eluned at age 22 died of wounds received as an observer of the *Porteous Riots* in Edinburgh in 1736, and Jevon, faring hardly better, died in the 1740 epidemic of smallpox); meanwhile her own two sons of blood from Harold Troke, Anthony and Thomas, proving assiduous in their studies, what with the sea air, and some manual labour about the old house and resplendent garden, grew up to be bright, hardy young men.

Because it is at these two brothers that the Troke tree unevenly divaricates⁷, and the so-called Welsh limb of the family begins, – whereas the main, far more windling⁸, coming of the younger brother Anthony, is the branch of which this history fully treats, – the fate of this second son, and his descendants, will be here, in whole, but

⁶ daybreak, dawn

⁷ parts into two branches

⁸ blown by the wind

briefly, addressed; in 1730, with all the sapience of his twenty years and a half, Thomas married one Jane Ossian 19 who two years later rewarded their conjugal efforts, – which had alas become a dog's rig⁹, – with what, in the light alone of the quest, would be considered but some slight thing little worth : a daughter, Caroline, who, despite fitweed¹⁰, was soon to prove so given to fits, by chewing her tongue to final ribbons, could never speak clearly nor chew her food without throwing her head about, yet despite growing up so strange and solitary, she lived alone but not unhappily, in a cottage, on the cleven¹¹, till her death, *semper virgo*¹², at age 82.

Richard the second child born to Thomas & Jane went to sea, and in 1755 in Boston, America, married a well-educated, convent-bred girl of 18 summers named Justine Deveraux, the eldest daughter of a family intirely[✓], – but, amazingly, without her knowing it, – in the business of herdom¹³; to this at first happy pair came 11 children in ten years, but whose names need not clutter this saga, for with only five born alive, only three, all males, survived their first year of life : the first was William, who as a young man visiting Quebec, unwittingly coming amongst a group of flobberes¹⁴ of confidence did rather badly for himself, but upon releasement from quier ken¹⁵ almost *carceribus confractus*¹⁶,

for the grounding assumption of imprisonment, of enforced immobility, as then as now, is to remove one's humanity,

was met at the gates by one Esma, – a sympathetic woman not altogether unconnected with his descense¹⁷ from grace, – with whom he immediately set up house with her own two *filius nullius*¹⁸; whilst spurious issue came to their unmarried

⁹ sexual intercourse to exhaustion, followed by back-to-back indifference

¹⁰ plant *Eryngium foetidum*, supposedly a remedy for fits

¹¹ cliffs

¹² always a virgin

¹³ whoredom

¹⁴ tricksters

¹⁵ prison in the pedlar's French

¹⁶ broken with imprisonment

¹⁷ act of going down

¹⁸ illegitimate children

union, which suffice to say one day fared all poor, one morning after fighting bitterly, first with anger,

which, enemy to discourse, sober counsels, and fair conversation, sets a house on fire, for it is a fever in the heart, a fever in the head, a fire in the face, a sword in the hand, and a fury all over, as Jeremy Taylor saith,

then, – because words were so poor a vehicle for hatred, – with the knives with which they were eating their dinner of two couples of ducks; gashed soon and tearful they raced to a gaipand¹⁹ pastor to insist, making lawful that which is lawless, he turn their union licit in the eyes of his god; came then their last children, legitimates Beatrice in 1796, and Barryton in 1797, so that in all, bastard with mulier²⁰, eight children dwelled in that old waterfront shop, from which fish, – emitting unpleasing tokens of mortality, – meal, and other poor items were sold.

When in 1799 William ailing of a cut finger died of poisoned blood, all but the children of true Troke descent proving a heavy burden to widow Esma, a sore mischief, – and by one and one destined to come to childless ends as was predicted of them by every neighbour, – Beatrice and Barryton, *jure sanguinis*²¹ sole legal offspring, despite much the rude sport of their misgotten siblings, were officious²², generally cleanly, well-behaved, and gave of the impression that perhaps they were after all better than they should be; but one day they were caught abed by a bastard brother named Uriah, who said he would tell, unless, – here he pondered, this shifty-eyed boistous²³ all of 12 years age, – yes, unless she share herself with him; in the weeks and months to come, when Uriah, – an urchin of roguish tricks, cunning ways, – growing ever more cocky, bringing first one, then another, then a many of his englamed²⁴ fellows to share his carcerant²⁵ bounty, and in time they too theirs, so

¹⁹ gaping

²⁰ legitimate child

²¹ by right of blood

²² courteous

²³ boisterous fellow

²⁴ slimy

²⁵ incarcerated

did the musty dwelling atop the fish store, accessed by a shackly²⁶ back staircase, become, – though the whole area was a sink of sluttery, – a nugging-house²⁷ of much business, in which Penny-a-Hoist Betty, as she became known, received.

When, despite almost every precaution, – save that alone assured universally of unfailing success, – the poor girl conceived, Barryton and Uriah with their pockets ajingle seeking a termination to her condition, so it was, atop a marble slab in the fish-market past of midnight, that an old drunken rudas²⁸, half-blinded by a megrim²⁹, – which, despite sleeping with a potato beneath her pillow, usually effective, failed to ease, – if successfully probing her with an ivory knitting-needle, alas rased³⁰ her also, so that Beatrice went bleeding home to die at the feet of her suddenly remote, unfeeling mother, (who died the following year, strangely enough of an autoerotic fatality³¹ : autoerotic asphyxia, or cerebral hypoxia³²); Barryton thereat fled to sea, whereat in Constantinople, at age 28, with a full consciousness of his being, a full great fear in his eyes, died of scurvy, and so to total perishment came this short line.

This history must wend back, not to the second male child of Richard & Justine Deveraux, by name Chad, – for he alas died childless of the smallpox at age 21, – nor to the third and last son Torquil, – for he alas died of a fight at the childless age of 19, – but back further yet, until this tale is delivered, via dead father Richard, unto brother to Richard, Quentin who at 22 met a meretricious³³ woman with a character not markedly commonplace, 25-year-old Eliza Mulchaey, the childless widow of a husband long fawte³⁴ asea; they courted long did Quentin and Eliza, – for if she displayed feelings, even the most avowable, with great reserve, she was in character, alas, a lass a touch chill, – until at last in 1757, right after a visit to a

²⁶ rickety

²⁷ brothel

²⁸ coarse unmannerly old woman

²⁹ violent, intermittent pain on one side of the head

³⁰ tore

³¹ death caused by pursuit of sexual self-gratification

³² diminished availability of oxygen to the brain

³³ superficially attractive

³⁴ lost

notary to formalise the dotation³⁵, quietly wedding, thereupon proceeding to the little cottage where Eliza lived, sitting themselves down in the living-room, taking shy Quentin by the hand, Eliza made it dilucid³⁶ to her handsome new wedfellow³⁷ that conjugal relations, – which admittedly were blessed, ordained even by heaven itself, and even known here and there to be almost enjoyable, – owing to an unspecified womanly trouble to which she was long, but not hopelessly, in thrillage³⁸, must, else fatality result, be only of monthly incidence, and the fifteenth she thought a good day to commence, did not he?, for it was nicely midway into a month.

After recovering from his aghastment at what he had heard, realising that the day was the seventeenth, Quentin went first to a tavern, then, newly braved, resentfully tumescent, to the local porneia³⁹, wherein unluckily contracting from a blowsabella⁴⁰ Venus a dose, was compinged⁴¹ to his bed first with mercury,

rather than the easier to apply, more effective, bichloride of mercury, still a few years from discoverment,

then with hydrargyris⁴²; by now greatly enlightened as to the ways of a world, – whose territories, so far as he was concerned, continue to happily joy under any government until suddenly cummith[✓] a woman, – he morosely sipped the aquose⁴³ soup prepared by his wife, but wherein was contained an oriental poison of subtle malignity, (for Trokes were ever poisonable), so that as his pox passed back into health Quentin day by day inclined more and more toward death.

But one day came his remarkable rescue in the shope[✓] of a no more long-

³⁵ act of giving a marriage portion to a woman

³⁶ clear

³⁷ spouse

³⁸ thralldom

³⁹ brothel

⁴⁰ rough, red-faced wench

⁴¹ confined

⁴² mercury poisoning

⁴³ watery

shipwrecked tarpaulin⁴⁴, with an anchor beard⁴⁵ and a queue⁴⁶, a specksioneer⁴⁷
half-mended of the sea, save its safe coasts,

who strangely enough, but without ever knowing of it, suffered from
acyanoblepsy⁴⁸,

named Hanoch; as word quickly spread that young Mulchaey was returned from the
dead, he, looking him up his wife, finding instead in his bed a stranger man in
marasmus⁴⁹, under the good hands of this visitor, Quentin was soon mere, then
much recovered of his poisoned condition, whereupon these firm friends went in
search of their vanished Eliza, but finding her not, touring the taverns soon spoke of
her illest; with the return of Hanoch supplying the means to annul⁵⁰ his marriage,
Quentin again courted, one Polly Quism, daughter of a ship-chandler, who, despite
the corrupt⁵¹ smell of brass about her, – which to her beau hinted at decay and yet
radiancy, – was a tightly waisted, buxom, overall very eyeable⁵² young woman who
boasted many suitors, each of whom soon made it clear to her, despite her
cachinnation⁵³, that they deeply resented the sudden trusion⁵⁴ of the pale, deserted,
bigamous, once poxed, and, because imperfectly poisoned, now flavescent⁵⁵
cuckold, – for it was now well known that fled Eliza, — a woman who, going through
the form of passion, yet presenting it so empty of all exaltation, seemed, by repeated
use, as if sexually cancelled, — who clearly possessed less wits than ambition, had
more than a few local lovers, – but Polly merely laughed for she was full-taken with
the now renowned Quentin, who to her mind was in his way handsome, dosome⁵⁶,

⁴⁴ sailor

⁴⁵ short pointed beard on the edge of the chin, with a fringe running up to the lower lip

⁴⁶ twisted pigtail with a ribbon

⁴⁷ chief harpooner of a whaler

⁴⁸ inability to see the colour blue

⁴⁹ progressive emaciation

⁵⁰ annul

⁵¹ corrupt

⁵² sightly

⁵³ laughing loudly and roughly

⁵⁴ intrusion

⁵⁵ tending to a yellow tint

⁵⁶ prosperous

and learned too, for he carried always in his pocket a volume of Marlowe or Rabelais.

In 1759 Quentin at 24 married pretty Polly who at 20, neither wealthy nor poor, with her desires settled and proportioned to their objects, could sing, could play simply upon the spinet if asked, could read, provided she was permitted to move her lips, – which, by the correspondence of their motions with those of the eyes, so profoundly animate, gladden, soften, or trouble a face, – and use a ruler,

for Polly was not of those to whom reading was a fully internalised process, a matter of invisible, inaudible communication between the eyes and the brain;

to the news that one suitor, – with naught to recommend him but a character unblemished, a silky moustaches under his nose, and the purest, the most disinterested⁵⁷, affection, – in a gesture turned a shade too serious for his liking,

too late realising that the act of giving away oneself to purchase pity, cannot commence till one is forever beyond hearing and feeling,

had taken his life, that another had fled to Africa straight,

or rather : had followed a great-circle course, which, on a globe, is the shortest distance between two points,

that yet another was vengefully set upon a life of divinity, Polly and Quentin remained firmly indifferent; came soon a child, Helen, another, Rebecca, another, Caren, – meaning beloved, pure, – then lastly a son, John, but then in 1765, yearned but to 30, Quentin died of his stomach so weakened by poison; alas Helen, – neither recalling, nor taught the motion of swimming, – drowned dead at age five, Rebecca perished of a simple fever⁵⁸ at age nine, and Caren, who was tall, pretty, bright, but

⁵⁷ free from selfish motive

⁵⁸ slight fever

barren, as if solely made to maintain the reputation of irony, lived to be 79, and Polly herself died of her heart at age 61 not long after outliving her fourth husband.

Sole son John, short man⁵⁹, – by some, as one the least men that was ever seen, called a minim⁵⁹, – one day at age 20 in 1784, after an argument with his *vitricus*⁶⁰, impetuously offering himself to a travelling carnival as a disour⁶¹, – and by his not too saddened mother never again heard of nor seen, – travelling far and wide,

even across the entire continent of America, 3200 miles wide, 1800 deep,

at age 25 came at last to England, where after a period of restlessness put himself and his saved money into a travelling fair; but when with his lungs inflamed by a savage north-country winter, his flesh loaded with a dispersed disordered humor, taken suddenly very poorly, carried from out his tent, else he surely die, to the nearest farmhouse by his fellow show-people, there was he tended by a family, particularly the daughter, – Leonora Tranch, sweet 19, only four feet two inches tall, – whose care beneath John came around just as summer arrived.

When in new but still delicate health John to the land turned his still heavy arms and broad back, so it was that one day whilst harvesting late turnips, these two little people, taken by a sudden vustin-fume⁶², right there in the very sods, with only disturbed worms as witness, made with their loins more vertiginous⁶³ and glorious the day, but at their panting muddled state blushing so furious after, knowing no more how to carry themselves, they fleeing from each, quickly revested⁶⁴, and for the most rest⁵⁹ of the day laboured addorsed⁶⁵ at opposite ends of the sillion⁶⁶, for they knew that but a glimpse would be enough; in the days following, when they silently

⁵⁹ dwarf

⁶⁰ mother's husband

⁶¹ professional storyteller; jester

⁶² violent passion

⁶³ whirling, spinning, dizzy, causing of vertigo

⁶⁴ reclothed

⁶⁵ with backs facing each another

⁶⁶ narrow strip of land in open field as divider for separate cultivation

agreed to *permutata vicissitudine*⁶⁷ initiate this quickly heating eyeglance, they brought an old canvas and a nesh⁶⁸ new blanket whereon in the hedge to incumb⁶⁹, then afterward side by side laughingly laying a while, then dressing, resumed their harvesting; because Leonora became bounteous as a consequence, when came around again the winter, – this would be 1790, – minikin⁷⁰ wed manikin⁷¹, in a Norman church, in Writtle, near Chelmsford, in Essex.

Come winter, fearing for his chest insisting her husband remain in the farmhouse, each morning sitting him before the fire, with wood stacked to the rafters, with sheepskin rugs snugly about him, he there restless all day read, sipping at steaming herbal draughts brought to him by his loving wife; on the long winter nights, as the bitter wind howled, or the rain toom⁷² without, as late-passing neighbours commented one to another that the Tranch cottage seemed to glow, as if with immarcessible⁷³ love, John told his family many a remarkable tale, (for Trokes were ever storytellers), all of them true; of this happy family of nine, – glancing often at the little belly which daily swelled, – seven of them somehow knew, – yet not a one was in the least prevoyant⁷⁴, – when to crowd the close kitchen and so allow the lovers express, release, their passion before the fire, whereafter an hour, forespent⁷⁵, Leonora went to relay with high-red⁷⁶ face and glowing overall that they were again acquieted; yet for all the attention he received John grew asthenic⁷⁷, at first slowly, but then, – though nothing was omitted which might conduce to his recovery, – with a plummet became contabescent⁷⁸, until, because of delay he could no more be mended by a summoned physic, despite every electuary⁷⁹, died at age 26.

⁶⁷ turn and turn about

⁶⁸ soft

⁶⁹ lie upon

⁷⁰ little woman

⁷¹ little man

⁷² teemed

⁷³ unfading

⁷⁴ having foresight

⁷⁵ wasted, tired

⁷⁶ of a strong red colour

⁷⁷ weak, debilitated

⁷⁸ wasted

⁷⁹ mixture of medicinal drugs with honey or syrup

Son of John & Leonora, Adam, was soon a stocky, somewhat brooding lad who had a strange way with animals,

for he could inveigle⁸⁰ a sole storm-frighted sheeps back through a hole in the hedge with only his whistle, could determine with his nose which plant was accountable for say yellows⁸¹, could take into his hand a sod and know its boons and deficiencies,

and yet more strange : when the Moon was full he was five evenings vanished, returning at dawn cruentate⁸² and silent, none knowing how or why; when one night his little mother secretly following him learned his strange but innocent secret, in returning happy home she fell into a stagnate ditch and drowned at age 39; upon learning of this, then learning the why, her inconsolable son Adam fled to a far town, Chester, where at age 19, employed by a corn merchant, soon from missing sacks detecting fraudulency and theft, notifying the chief clerk, given coin to keep silent, but saying he could not, giving back the coin accompanied by a warning, that night on his way home was set upon by people of the meanest rack, a hired company of blackguards without shirts or any thing whole about them, such as never knew what it was to provide a rag for their brats but by begging or violence.

Though done half to death he was found in time by a dog, then its man, who strong for a life taking pence out of kettles and pots : a tinker, carried the boy bloodied and broken to the nearest house, which fortunated to be that very of the mill-owner; received with horror, a doctor, – his first year of medical tuition paid in corpses, yet a man of whom the Sun gives light to success, yet the earth covers failure, – doing to him what immediate leechdoms he might, following blister on breast, no food but slops, despite this poor treatment Adam coming to himself, telling his simple tale, so were arrestments made; when much recovered rewarded for his fidelity, soon

⁸⁰ cajole

⁸¹ jaundice affecting horses, cattles and sheeps

⁸² covered with blood

admired far and wide as an honest, upright, in a sense a dangerous man, Adam one day found himself particularly taken by 30-year-old Christina Malmort, unpretty spinster daughter of a spintext⁸³, who, because purblind, could not see that Adam too was unhandsome,

or, by defining this couple positively, rather than negatively : Adam and Christina made a splendidly unattractive couple,

and so in due time they wed, he her to his wife, she him to her husband.

Due to her erotophobia⁸⁴ there came but one child, a son in 1812, Francis, who, following a slight fever,

alas because not given time enough by a physic to recover enough strength and health, unable to support, to encounter the violence, the danger of the potions, thereby succumbing to the imposture of the decoctions rather than to the fever they were supposed to address,

died at age 37; but before he was enfranchised from the miseries of life, – and hurrying now for this line too shall soon extinguish, – he in Wales married in 1842 one Mary Fartax, who, – fearing that a love grown violent does either die or tire, by loving him little, therefore loved him long, – in seven years of vigorous marriage produced one living son, the wistly⁸⁵ guarded Raymond born in October 1849; he marrying one Amelia Blank at age 36 in 1885 this Raymond produced three sons, but one only living, this in June 1889, Thomas, who in 1912 at age 23 marrying Gwenllian, produced in turn one surviving son named Dennis in September 1915, who died unchilded and unmarried at Tobruk in January 1941, and so expireth this line.

⁸³ long-winded preacher

⁸⁴ fear of sexual love

⁸⁵ closely

This history must again turn itself about, past Dennis,

whose wound was minor, but like his *atavia*⁸⁶ Leonora fell and drowned in a sike⁸⁷, but which was also ordure- and corpse-filled,

past his father Thomas,

who died on the very first day of the *Somme*, in which, for the caprice of two men, thousands of men were destroyed in a few hours,

past *his* father Raymond,

who in a cold March, – even as his only son four-year-old Thomas remained seated but screaming atop its back, – was gored fatally by his own prize-winning bull,

past *his* father Francis,

who died for so small reason at 37 before he could realise a feared dream of an anile⁸⁸ old age in the workhouse,

past *his* father Adam,

who at 25 was subsequently fatally awroken⁸⁹ by the never-apprehended chief clerk,

past *his* diminutive father John,

who at 26 drowned in his own lungs,

⁸⁶ great-great-great-grandmother

⁸⁷ small ditch or stream

⁸⁸ weak from old age

⁸⁹ avenged

past *his* father Quentin,

who at 30, outside a church, taken by a fever of the brain, – (as with breakdown, shattered nerves, broken health, nervous collapse, exhaustion, prostration, neurasthenia, &c : another of those capacious categories in the taxonomies of mental and physical suffering which blurs the boundaries between body and mind), – speaking in a strange tongue, by the hour of twelve in the night was dead,

thus side-stepping to *his* brother Richard,

who died at 37 of a septic finger,

thus this history returns upon *their* father Thomas, who alas died in his sleep, of his heart, in 1769, at age 59; so has been treated the lesser, – called the Welsh, – branch of the Troke family, which, – never exceeding seven living males in number, – all save for Thomas, – at whom the family was dilacerated⁹⁰, – remained totally unaware of the existence not only of their more numerous, (and soon wealthy), kin, but of the family quest.

In 1717 her second much-beloved husband Martin Fargencarne died of a sudden encephaloma⁹¹, making Gwendoline, mother now of five living children, a double widow at only 24, yet furthest from exsuccous⁹²; before moving up the primary fork of this so far writhled⁹³ tree via Anthony, her first and favourite son, this saga shall linger a while to heap a little praise,

said to be seven parts false, three useless,

⁹⁰ forced into two

⁹¹ tumour of the brain

⁹² destitute of juice

⁹³ shrivelled

upon this remarkable woman : as it will soon be learnt how instrumental was Gwendoline in ensuring that the Troke tree, so seemingly self-pruning, put out far more healthy and abundant limbs which in time would bear a most glorious fruit, it must not seem impertinent to this chronicle to pursue in a little detail her very interesting life, which is certainly warranting of inclusion in this saga when it is again stated that when she turned of 25, – at the very moment that Jane, the second Vouchsafe, — who alas never knew she was such, — died in solitary confused penury in Cardiff, – she became the third Vouchsafe,

this would have been at 22:19 on Friday the twentieth of May 1718, and Jane Reading Troke, born Young, lived 60 years, nine months, 14 days, reigning as the second Vouchsafe for 28 years, seven months, one day;

suddenly awoken with strange yet indefinable sensations for which neither words nor Words have no representatives true or false, Gwendoline would have called out to her children, even to her housekeeper, for comfort, for reassurance, or at least for company, but little by little realising that a bright light is not always necessary, a taper is all one requires to live in strangeness, if it faithfully burn, she lay there attempting to conjure that further light which words sometimes feebly cast in so aphotic⁹⁴ a world, but alas : in most matters pertaining to her Vouchsafedom, Gwendoline was to remain, all her life, utterly dyslogic⁹⁵.

In the year following her second widowhood, marrying again, doctor James Billian it was who gave Gwendoline the last product of all her couplings, a boy he insisted be named Charles after his father,

a man he scarce realised he had long despised,

but alas this child taking sickness, with diarrhoea the presenting feature, thereof

⁹⁴ lightless

⁹⁵ unable to express ideas in speech

soon died; now aiblins⁹⁶ it was her too healthy, – to his way of thinking far too calm, – attitude to this death, – which Gwendoline thought of as a calamity not quite of the very first water, for after all she had before experience of such grief in the death not alone of two husbands but of her daughter Gwyneth, – which caused a coldness to wholly descend upon the somewhat bilious James, for he never thereafter forgave his wife for not weeping and wailing as did he; whereas it is to his credit that he was a man ungiven to the traditional silent manliness of grief, it is as well to his discredit that he was a man who, if others had not a river of tears always at commandment, took a dry face for sign of a heart so congealed, so hardened in the black dungeon of sin, as to cast sorrow into a dead sleep, and put grief to silence.

Though Gwendoline was much comforted by producing five children, – or rather six if one is to count her *filiastra*⁹⁷ Lilly then 17, 18 coming, – she wanted for three reasons further children : the one : for to people the quest, secondly : selfishly, naturally, for herself, and lastly also leastly : to repair her present disalliance with her husband, who, not even a year married but from that tragic day and forward sleeping in his own room, and when it was necessary, to his own hand validated his paltry carnal appetite; witterly⁹⁸ her trains⁹⁹ were many to persuade James that with five children hale, a death was merely mischancy¹⁰⁰, but alas, hearkening ill through the miasma of his contemptful gloom, her sensible words not tempting him to like them, he soon would not abide her near him if she spoke; one eve, adding strong spirit to his supper ale, succumbing to her gentle advances, despite her careful calculations his seed taking not to her, Gwendoline thereafter bore, in company with his silence, his new contempt for her salt¹⁰¹ shamelessness, which he little knew reduced her to listening night after night at his bedchamber door for the very occasional soft tumultuary gasp, then for a snore, so that by obtaining his seeded linen handkerchief she might apply it deep to herself; as naught either came of this, Gwendoline

⁹⁶ perhaps

⁹⁷ step-daughter

⁹⁸ truly

⁹⁹ wiles

¹⁰⁰ unlucky

¹⁰¹ wanton

quieting, losing the fresh flush of her womanliness, her body thickening a trifle, with Lilly marrying, so was the year 1728.

Anthony Troke meanwhile, a strapping, well-educated man of 20, one day meeting in a carriage a gentleman, – by name Lorcan Baden, – who,

as sole son of a great landed proprietor, uniting with a strong body an ungovernable temper, believing himself entitled to exhibit, without cultivation, all the tyrannical caprice to which the rich and great are due, was also a political weathercock : turning where'er bloweth the wind of change,

newly come away from France and his ex-mistress,

ex because : unable any more to go through it all with spirit, finding indeed he could not bear it, the waiting, the suspicions, the jealousies, the weight of all the unsaidness, the expense, the regret that he began always his letters with *O Dea certé!*¹⁰², that uninvited he had sworn fool his love, and thus, by coming so easily into her power, she jilted him,

on his way to London,

to lodge an action in the Court of Common Pleas for criminal conversation between his wife and his brother Reubel, (an action which, continuing many bitter years, eventually lawed them both into gaol as debtors),

offered Anthony the position, – provided rather than break he bow him, rather than mar he mend him, – of doctor¹⁰³ to his son, his alas sole surviving son, the other,

sent hustling away for culture : at twelve years of age for his grammar learning sent into France, for his carriage into Italy, for his philosophy to Cambridge, for

¹⁰² O Goddess! for no less you seem

¹⁰³ teacher

his law to Gray's Inn, and for the government of himself to court,

lately a suicide; upon the further provision that, – this was a time when scholar and beggar were terms very nearly synonymous, – Anthony must sophronize¹⁰⁴ his son, make overall of him a man, not a scholar, Anthony accepting, as soon as packed, and by his mother blessed,

not that this made him so, but merely declared him to be so,

he accompanied the man by conveyance¹⁰⁵ to London, where it was, (and is), said that if not misled by the mischievous, misinformed by fools, or plundered by knaves, talents of every kind can find their fullest scope, their highest encouragement, and even talents of no kind soon enough permit a man to possess as accomplished a way of talking nonsense as any man of quality.

Though it is not for the benefit of this history to notice, – for there are peradventure sometimes such things and many more, which, whilst very noticeable, will remain unnoticed, – sharing their carriage were two other passengers : first, Ulick Damlye, a very neat young gentleman, who, also intent for London,

a place which a man well knoweth hath been seldom thought the school of innocence, particularly for a youth who, livelily bursting new into the great world, will immediately partake of its pleasures, – the need for which fills a youth full of fire, wildfire too much of it, not to be approved of, – not with joy, but with unbounded rage,

was too clearly possessed of a need to command such purchases of pleasure as utter disaccustomedness heartily recommends to one so lately come into an unexpected and, because misdeparted¹⁰⁶, very handsome inheritance, – which

¹⁰⁴ imbue with sound moral principles or self-control

¹⁰⁵ carriage

¹⁰⁶ distributed or divided wrongly

Damlye thanked his death for, not his father, – so newly standing him in free condition of license not only to ignore the advises of his betters,

that by reading like Cicero, travelling like Solon, meditating like Pythagoras, conversing like Plato, and writing like Tacitus, – who, it is true, whilst grave, concise, and pithily eloquent, was also harsh, unpleasant, and thorny, – he would one day amount to something,

was determined first to spend, to lose time, to court peril, in short : to debauch a while, *then* to travel, to the Rhine perhaps, or to the passes of the Pyrenees, or to the mazes of romantic Auvergne, or farther to the western Alps of Savoy, &c, for if farther still, then from providential contingencies would need to come good chance that, on a future review of the tour in all its courses, some adequate motive suggest itself; (but alas,

partly through a false sense of justice making him liable to the demands of gamesters, partly through a false sense of honour making his life liable to the demands of duellists, and partly because he was so very a pervertible youth,

the boy squandered and fooled away his all in a very short time, and as an exercent¹⁰⁷ became a greengrocer).

Secondly present in the carriage was a shrunken old Hebrew, Shaul Shmukler, who,

in humility, in agreeableness of manner, clearly admitting to be noways comprehended within the scheme or protection of the providence of gentry,

speaking only once, in an oily voice, that as if slithered along the ground, – to complain : that though he believed the journey might digest it, he had eaten against his stomach, – and thereafter silent, which was unfortunate, for among his own merchant fellows Shmukler was considered a man of the noblest speculations, the

¹⁰⁷ one who exercises or follows a profession

divinest truths, the most exquisite fancies, the most meritorious actions, and the most complacential humours, despite in appearance as if a character out of Smollett, or out of Richardson, or out of Fielding, – said to be founder of the modern novel, – for in his whole figure,

composed of fire, water, and earth, for the Hebrews account air no element, but rather the *glue* of the elements,

in his whole cloth, – once of quality, but now faded and threadbare, – he seemed an emblem of winter, famine, avarice, the negation of everything of which a man hath knowledge.

But not far on the way, at a *yam*¹⁰⁸, in dreadful rain, whilst helping unasked the *limphalt*¹⁰⁹, – actually *hiphalt*¹¹⁰, – *yamstick*¹¹¹, in the light only of a *panselene*¹¹², to hold the changing horses, Anthony was kicked by an animal, – an otherwise gentle giant of 18 grey handfulls¹¹³, – frightened by a *levin*¹¹⁴; now at that precise moment nearly 20 miles away, Gwendoline at her sewing becoming *cinerescent*¹¹⁵ and *plangorous*¹¹⁶, *rashing*¹¹⁷ into his surgery, gasped to her husband, to whom she so rarely spoke, that feeling like a smite a disquietous foreboding, she feared her son Anthony was badly hurt!, to which Dr James Billian, utterly unmoved by this air-built¹¹⁸ assertion, shrugging his narrow shoulders, with words of remonstrance rudely dismissing his tearful wife, with visible displeasance turned back to his examination of a chancre on the neck of the wife of a *bocher*¹¹⁹.

¹⁰⁸ rest-house on a post route

¹⁰⁹ lame

¹¹⁰ lame in the hip

¹¹¹ driver of a post-horse

¹¹² full Moon

¹¹³ handbreadth; measure of four inches

¹¹⁴ flash of lightning

¹¹⁵ ash-coloured

¹¹⁶ loudly lamenting

¹¹⁷ rushing

¹¹⁸ fanciful

¹¹⁹ butcher

This Mrs Dethwick soon bruited her story about a town which did secretly favour and nourish such bruits, when the premonition proved true, this respected, if occasionally hysteric, clatterfart¹²⁰ noised next her opinion that the doctor was clearly so insensitive, so callous, so even godless a brute, – with a heart of so hard iron, a forehead of brass, and a tongue of adamant, in short : one of those, — strangers to tranquillity, to right reason, to a calm motion of spirits without transport or dejection, — who only tough their way through problems, – poor Gwendoline had purchased her ladyhood¹²¹ very dear; as a consequence his practice suffered, then his health, until in almost perfect outrage, found himself nursed by his patient wife who despite her best could do naught but watch him stubbornly, silently die at age 56; as Gwendoline ministered to her beloved but still fusionless¹²² son brought lately home from London, – whereunto he had been first hastened in search of that doctor who or miracle which, waking him from his sleple¹²³, would return to him the governance of his fine wits, – her three children aged between 13 and 19, none of whom was sprong, or springed, from the original goneous¹²⁴, sat all sad, silent, and hopeful.

Now thrice widowed, yet at 35 supposedly in only her second of four climacterics¹²⁵,

too neatly determined by multiplying the apparently mystical number *septem*¹²⁶ by the odd numbers three, five, seven, and nine : all the veriest brimborion¹²⁷,

Gwendoline was now certainly at a very low point in her life, for, despite her insensible son, her aking[✓] womb, her lonely loins, her heart so consumed by carnic loneliness as to so very raven her vitals she would clapse¹²⁸ herself around and sit waggyng¹²⁹ for hours, she would also feel at times such strangeness, see such

¹²⁰ tell-tale

¹²¹ state or condition of being a lady

¹²² senseless

¹²³ gentle sleep

¹²⁴ male begetter

¹²⁵ critical periods in human life

¹²⁶ seven

¹²⁷ something useless or nonsensical

¹²⁸ clasp

¹²⁹ rocking

visions as are rarely visited upon those members of a species as are considered sane; four years passed in this low manner, during which her step-children married and moved away; but worst of all : third Vouchsafe Gwendoline was haunted day and night by the fear that should Anthony die, with full responsibility falling to her eldest son Thomas, – now two years married but still childless, and who, though he insincerely claimed otherwise, was unbelieving in all matters pertaining to the pneumatophony¹³⁰ experienced by his great-great-great-grandfather Lemuel, – it was a terrifying possibility that the Troke quest would soon come to naught; refusing to avail herself of servants save for a housekeeper, – of name Female Infant Jones, – Gwendoline daily tended her invalid son, who she lovingly wush¹³¹, debard¹³², fed rich broths, and to his forehead applied poultices and cloths containing simples, which are medicinal herbs; watching him grow slowly ever more thin and gaunt, yet remaining he handsome, in the long lonely evenings, often weeping at his supine side, (exactly as would poor John at the side of his wife the final Vouchsafe), observing that his spirit, or rather his power, his life force, was fading, yet refusing to believe that he would linger forever thus, by fancying he was not the deaf mute auditor he seemed, Gwendoline spoke of her life, of their quest.

Came then that fresh bright spring day in May 1728 when Anthony awoke : by the window, in Vouchsafe prescience for some long staring seconds looking over her shoulder back, coming his weak voice calling faintly for water, ah, had she not been so eager to obey she might have allowed herself to be taken by a joyous syncope¹³³; day by day Anthony strengthening, within a month, taking a first few steps about his room, in two months more, wandering slowly about the house, trying his history to repeal¹³⁴, thus he proved that the past can indeed be past and forgotten; though Gwendoline spoke long of his childhood, placing in his hands his old toys and books, whereat he frowned, for alas he minded¹³⁵ nothing of the world, save its language;

¹³⁰ speech by ghosts or other disembodied spirit

¹³¹ washed

¹³² deprive of beard

¹³³ fainting fit

¹³⁴ recall

¹³⁵ remembered

rejoicing at the providence of Gwendoline, whom they knew to be a wise one, the town, reinvoking its sympathy at the many miscomfortunes¹³⁶ she had already suffered, extending unwearied kindness unto her, offered all their generosity should any needs arise; believing the intervention of a young lady, even love, might convince her son that the world of sleep, which had for so long held him captive, need not so resemble in its physical restrictions the sanctuary of the house he now unrelenting occupied, Gwendoline one day asked of an acquaintance, the wife of a respected prosperous captain of a large merchant vessel, Cloris Clerx by name, – the wife, not the vessel, – if a consort could be somehow found for her son who, now nearly five-and-twenty, was loth[✓] to beleave one foot the house, and the good woman agreed.

Hereupon setting about to derain¹³⁷ a list of prospective young ladies of the town and countryside, long was this file at first, to be sure, but it soon became very short after irreptitious¹³⁸ inquiries revealed much scandalous conduct, then dishearteningly short following interviews and assessment by Vouchsafe intuition; in due course, as her son in his room struggled with books which formerly he had found lacking in real scholarship, the two ladies in the room beneath coming up with a final name, it was agreed : whereas the family originally came from foreignly parts, they were so long established in the town as to be surely by now as English as could be, and well-to-do besides, possessing property in Devon,

called by Diodorus Siculus in the third century : Damnonia,

and Dover; when Mrs Gerund was approached, showing delighted with their suggestion, she agreeing at once to allowing her youngest daughter visit the invalid, so it was, in company with Mrs Clerx and Mrs Gerund, that Anthony Troke met the strangely aloof 18-year-old Hortense, a specious¹³⁹ young lady, if not for her occasional inertness barely half worthy of praise, then certainly very well worthy the

¹³⁶ misfortunes

¹³⁷ draw up

¹³⁸ surreptitious

¹³⁹ beautiful

looking on; at first all was nervousness, blushes, cups of tea, averted eyes, awkward conversation, but at subsequent meetings a mild animation was observed scarcely to be withheld, soon laughter quite unaffected, – thought sure forerunner of approaching love, – and come the fifth visit Hortense had managed to coax pale Anthony into the daylight, into the resplendent garth¹⁴⁰ at the rear of the house, where sitting beneath an elm tree, watching the bees dance from flower to flower, by that day sennight¹⁴¹, – so boldly relaxing the restraint upon their excitement which society imposed, – they were holding hands; peering down at them from the high oriel¹⁴² window Mrs Gerund and Gwendoline together weeping, smiling, turned then away with sighs and murmurs of almost perfect satisfaction.

Now Mrs Gerund had a brother, his name Edmund Preterite, an immensely wealthy widower of middle years who dwelt in a *château* well outside that capital of the universe : Paris, where he had exiled himself for reasons which, if they have no bearing upon this history, can be assured were almost certainly noble enough,

actually : partly to compensate his failed efforts at economic and class reform amongst his own English peasantry, – as futile as the same attempted upon the soul by ecclesiastical and sacerdotal institutions, whom he despised, – partly to make as complete an escape as was possible from a suddenly horrid even dangerous life of suffering those mischiefs often, – suppose always, – attendant upon the perpetuable intriguery of politics, in which, by carrying tongues in purses, there seemed no other name for happiness than mammonism¹⁴³;

so it was in that fifth year of his exile in 1733,

by which time he had shown himself more wise than those who go on until the wheel turns against them, that it is not always in every instance true that, – unlike those which are called the natural passions, – the love of wealth, the

¹⁴⁰ enclosed garden

¹⁴¹ week

¹⁴² small projecting window on a bracket

¹⁴³ devotion to gain

passion for money, – founded, not in sense, which knows nothing of constancy, but in imagination, which is not faithful, – admits of no satiety,

on his yearly visit with his sister, he met Gwendoline; though they had both abandoned hope of ever finding, if not everlasting, then plurennial¹⁴⁴ connubial happiness, each by the other was so smitten Edmund invited Gwendoline, her son, and his dear friend Hortense, to visit his estate, to the which they all accepted almost without hesitance.

A month later, after completing his business in London,

called once Troynouant, called once Luddys Town,

Edmund and his servants accompanied his three guests to his *château*, – inherited not through the legitimacy of lineal devolution, but rather through the marriage of a widowed sister, for he began his career humbly enough as a junior diplomat, – which was not only more than a trifle high-flown in ornament, but indeed enormous, (much larger even than Troke Manor, aye, but gone now); the *château*,

fully conforming to the leisure-class standard of virtue : archaism and waste,

employing a staff of almost 200 servants,

nearly every one believed of nimbleness without hurry, dispatch without noise, and of unlimited obedience to all orders, but in nature : rascals!, for in their contracts servants part with liberty, not with their nature,

housed priceless collections, rare treasures, and even a very fine library, (all remaining in Troke possession); with its plaited¹⁴⁵ gardens, spring-fed fountains, and

¹⁴⁴ lasting many years

¹⁴⁵ intricate

numerous ostentations of frantling¹⁴⁶ peacocks, Gwendoline, recovering soon from her overwhelmingness, finding the place delightful, indeed fairy-tale-like, in due time Anthony marrying Hortense, in that same year Gwendoline at 40 undertook her tetragamy¹⁴⁷ to Edmund who was 44, whereupon the four newlyweds commenced properly to reside in the enormous house; thus, visited with celebrity in 1500, Trokes were now, in 1733, blessed with the additional lustre to personal merit which, supposedly, a fortune commonly lends; despite almost bestial efforts Gwendoline & Edmund could produce no child, but Anthony & Hortense produced what was to prove their sole child, a son, which on the shy suggestion of its grandmother they named Lemuel, in honour of the original stirps¹⁴⁸; so the years sweetly passed.

Whereas her infant Vouchsafe skills could not of course extend to knowing so bold a fact, Gwendoline was nevertheless correct in suspecting that if the two man-children she had recently heard, – this from an agent commissioned for just such intelligence, – her son Thomas had got on the body of his wife Jane, should prove but brash¹⁴⁹, then it would be within her grandson alone that the Troke future lay; as a consequence Lemuel became a somewhat overly cozened boy, such that by age 14, in 1748, denied what he thought of as his rightful freedom to come and go as it liked him, he was openly displaying his hostility by daily mounting his blazed¹⁵⁰ horse, and, – in a misty dimming¹⁵¹, wherethrough a man might not see the breadth of a stang¹⁵² of land from him, – escaped at a gallop into the far countryside; the next year, – believing he only is worthy of adventure, of deserving his suffering, who will go any whither to search it out, – it was into the city of Paris itself childe¹⁵³ Lemuel ventured, for even though he knew, – even at the remotest circle of the vortex of dissipation, – adventures indecorous, sordid, even dangerous, awaited him,

¹⁴⁶ performing mating calls

¹⁴⁷ fourth marriage

¹⁴⁸ the man who founds a family

¹⁴⁹ wind-scattered boughs or branches

¹⁵⁰ having a white mark on the forehead

¹⁵¹ dawn

¹⁵² perch; five and a half yards

¹⁵³ young man of noble birth

(which, without need of taking that narrow road of women to make his way, such indeed arrived in sober earnest to him : he was caught in a snare, which, ruinous as it had like to have been, had in it allurements scarce possible to be withstood at his time of life),

it was only by resorting to this very necessary act of defiance that he could put himself into sufficient action as to quickly unboy himself, clear the snowed-up tracts of his life-road, and thus rid his mother of her too lingering horapthia¹⁵⁴.

These absconding disappearances, – never of greater duration than two long days and a night, – greatly distressed Gwendoline of course, for whereas she knew herself the Vouchsafe, (indeed she innocently thought herself the first), realising her skills were far too infant to permit her to feel assured of the continued wellbeing of her grandson, she sought to[✓] a tutor to whom the divagatious¹⁵⁵ boy would be far more attent¹⁵⁶ and ruly¹⁵⁷ than to those currently employed; after much hiring, vexation, and dismissal, – because after all things often go on rather by lottery than election, – a tutor was at last possibly found in one Franz Edel, a brilliant young German scholar who, finishing his theological researches in England, was briefly sojourning in France before returning to his homeland; satisfied that Edel was a man of marked knowledge, of advanced teaching methods, (as Michael Overslaugh would prove to be in 1770, but who would far overdreep¹⁵⁸ even Edel), she requesting the young scholar give a year of his life to instruct[✓] her son Lemuel, he, before deciding, insisting he at length interview the young man, – thereby finding an undisciplined yet withal very sprightly mind, – Edel agreeing, he immediately set about teaching Lemuel the quadrivium, or what was once called the four-fold way to knowledge,

comprising the four branches of mathematics : arithmetic, or number in itself, or

¹⁵⁴ neurotic preoccupation with youth

¹⁵⁵ wandering, straying

¹⁵⁶ attentive

¹⁵⁷ obedient

¹⁵⁸ overshadow

the absolute discrete, music, or number applied, or the relative discrete, geometry, or number stationary, or the stable continuous, and astronomy, or number in motion, or the moving continuous,

concerning which the boy was of course far from unacquainted.

True, Lemuel proved at first a rather poor pupil, for his hot blood caused him to be severely wanting in that moderation of impatience and imagination sufficient for true scholarship, yet Lemuel was not at all averse from the company of the profulgent¹⁵⁹ Edel when thanks to the evening claret he became far less pedant, and most especially when it was discovered that his luggage, recently arrived from England, contained a collection of the most modern firearms; when Lemuel was informed that he would be permitted to view, even to handle these items when his studies had grown sufficiently plausible, with this quickly achieved, tutor Edel proposing to Gwendoline that lessons in their use would further incentive diligence, this was agreed to provided of course the very greatest care were taken; so it was, via proficiency in death-dealing engines,

(which, as a means to learning, – which is said, in the calling forth and strengthening of Nature's vigour, the nerves of reason, by the mere employ, brace, – modern educators might well benefit to cast their frustrate minds),

that Lemuel was bribed into the joys of knowledge : that unending adventure at the very edge of uncertainty; as a consequence of becoming a fair marksman, his intellect, from the first soil of extreme rudeness, heading sure to the last neatness of most cunning, soon swelling full, his fine mind at last emerged as the trivium¹⁶⁰, likewise made fascinating, was added to the curriculum.

It need not be said of course that the warison¹⁶¹ his grandmother possessed, – small

¹⁵⁹ brilliant

¹⁶⁰ three-fold way to eloquence : grammar, rhetoric, and logic

¹⁶¹ wealth

but moderately far from insufficient, – as well her rank of doctor's widow, already elevating Trokes to middle-class, as well elevated Lemuel handsomely into that domain never before occupied by a Troke, that of gemman¹⁶², – than which,

given by merit not by prince, is the act of time not favour,

there can, for the lowly, be station no more exalted, – when was added the marriage to Edmund and his far greater fortune, Trokes were henceforth firmly of the rank gentry; furthermore : recalling what his grandmother told him of her growing up amidst sheeps, her period as a housemaid : how each evening with her son, his father Anthony, they polished shoes not their own, Lemuel permitted himself to assume no false airs, – neither in the presence of his personal hyne¹⁶³, or the grooms, nor even with his whipcat¹⁶⁴, – much retaining the decent loving character of his born-to father Anthony; in tribute to Franz Edel it must be said : without his restraining influence, rather than moderately adventuresome, deeply inquiring of mind, Lemuel might well have become recheless¹⁶⁵, perhaps soon dead.

Came the day when by *mutuus concensus*¹⁶⁶ the much-delayed tutor Edel departed well-rewarded for Leipzig, wherefrom he was to then journey into mountainous seclusion to waste his fine intellect,

with which he was born, then by three essentials improved : reading,
meditation, solitude,

for which his god would show no interest, for by forbidding to science and genius any going beyond the missal,

else science seduce man with say prolongation of life, retardation of age,

¹⁶² gentleman

¹⁶³ servant

¹⁶⁴ tailor

¹⁶⁵ reckless

¹⁶⁶ mutual consent

alleviation of pain, repair of natural defects, binding and inciting of affections, illuminating and exalting of intellectual faculties, transmuting substances, strengthening and multiplying motions, making impressions and alterations in the air, bringing down and procuring celestial influences, divining things futural, bringing distant things near, making smallest things visible, revealing things secret, &c,

his god desired naught but he cloister all his thoughts within dogmas;

ah!, the cult of Christianity, – a cult is a group of individuals who, sharing a common, outlandish belief, are not willing to subject it to rational discourse, – has even yet to produce a single astronomer or geometer¹⁶⁷.

As Edel explained : by going into a religion¹⁶⁸, into a strict Cistercian order, he would at last be able to fully immerse himself in the better pursuit of theologies, which,

(as futurely Trokes described it : the study of a nothing founded on a nothing resting on no principles, which, proceeding by no authorities, possessing no data, demonstrating nothing, and admitting of no conclusions, was no more than one vast machinery for the destruction of the human intellect),

was the one only perfect means, – without assistance of the faggot, – to wash a mind, via askesis¹⁶⁹, from the filth of its sins, – pride,

said to ascend most high, but turneth soon to a smoke,

wrath, envy, covetousness, sloth, gluttony, and lechery, – to slaken fleshly desires, – he adding, of course, that appetites and the passions are not to be abolished by mere mortification of the body, but by universal benevolence, the return of good for

¹⁶⁷ geometrician; mathematician

¹⁶⁸ taking monastic vows

¹⁶⁹ strict self-discipline or self-control

evil, by humility, by abstinence from evil thought, – and to despise all earthly things, so that with unwearied effort a man may seeking find a most glorious clearness; as he further explained to Gwendoline and Lemuel,

two atheists listening with self-satisfied patience to a madman,

he would spend six months first as a postulant, then two years as a novitiate taking simple vows, then after three years more coming solemn vows, with the forfeiture of all his worldly possessions,

including in a sense, in many senses : his very life,

hopefully peace would come to his troubled soul, always a seedfield filled with tares and thorns.

Despite all attempts by his family, particularly his grandmother Gwendoline, to contrary his decision, Lemuel at nearly 20 insisted, – the better to further his studies, – on removing to Paris,

centre not only of culture and intellect but of crime, disease, and poorety, wherein at this time, it might be interesting to note, there were eight nearly nine times as many rats as people, yet a toman¹⁷⁰ of ratoners¹⁷¹ lived well enough,

where meeting with many people of his own class if not of his own mind, after taking up for a time with fashion, *salons*, scandal, and gaming, it was soon clear to him that his new friends, or rather, – because friendship,

supposedly of four kinds : natural, social, hospitable, and venereal,

was not something a Troke ever much took up, – acquaintances, were a people so

¹⁷⁰ 10,000

¹⁷¹ rat-catchers

very poor of mind as occupied themselves with little more than saying all of them nothing about little, and everything about nothing of note; there too, – more properly discovering *concupiscencia carnis*¹⁷², – he met many young ladies, of whom some were cold, some hot, some content to stay warm, and some merely manipulative hussies, yet all of whom, as he later realised,

pursuing their fates without cultivating the mind, or exercising the discoverent powers of reason, or acquiring a taste for letters,

by speaking without sense, sentiment, or discretion, dressing in robes of silk and gauze, frilled, flounced, and furbelowed, in false locks, false jewels, paints, patches, and perfumes, were surely the vilest pieces of which sophistication was capable.

Via her father, an old Count, – continental equivalent of an English earl, – soon discovered penniless, making one evening the acquaintance at a *salon* of a seeming sweet young lady named Jeanette LeClerc, that same evening received into her *boudoir*, despite Lemuel pleading vainly for her honour, that his vigorous lovemaking would sadly interfere with the intactness of her maidenhead, yet because she was so youthfully edacious¹⁷³ soon in the sweating harvest of most busy business, following the which, in a swoon of exhaustion masquerading as satisfaction,

for, unfortunately for one or two of mankind, such by rare nature their construction, but for most of mankind fortunately : Nature has wisely contrived that languor eventually annexe to enjoyments, lest, so utterly taken up, all further pursuits, even of eating and evacuating, be stopt to death,

he agreeing, – at venture, as men throw dice, almost without thought, for thought would have added such an afterclause of exceptions as would have exploded his former allowance, – to her breathless suggestion that they marry, upon his morning awakenment, – Jeanette coolly escaping his hands slipping away to the tiny closet

¹⁷² lust of the flesh

¹⁷³ voracious, devouring

where she performed her ablutions, titivations¹⁷⁴, and other little feminine offices, – he realised, every subsequent second keenlier, that his promise had been effected far too hastily, (and Lemuel would not be the last Troke to be idioted by the giving of his word).

Rather than renege on his word, – for a man could never be a gentleman and a breakvow¹⁷⁵ both : he must hold his foyd¹⁷⁶ closer to his heart than his very life, – without returning first home where he knew his grandmother would sense his insipience¹⁷⁷, with the aid of an advocate of no small scheming, Lemuel and Jeanette quietly married; with his wife so soon visibly nascent¹⁷⁸, with her oestrus newly vanished, so it was that Lemuel came to so lament his rashness he wrote a tear-stained letter to his dear grandmama, confessing all, including his need for forgiveness, contrition, instruction, and punishment; Gwendoline immediately travelling up to Paris to meet this new wife, so it was with one look, then with one ear, – as well of course her Vouchsafe intuitions detecting supersemination¹⁷⁹, – she confirmed that this union, particularly in the light of the Troke quest, was an act the most utterly follisome, for as discreet inquiries soon confirmed, this young lady, – if she could be called such, and because she cannot : this *déclassée*¹⁸⁰, – was not only eight years older than Lemuel, but in the not far past no stranger to certain establishments in a very dismal quarter of the city which specialised in supplying, to those so inclined, works of pictorial art depicting women in union with men double shung¹⁸¹, *consolateurs*¹⁸², even animals!

Now so happened it that one sunny day earlier in this year, seated at her desk, Gwendoline added together the ages of all the living Troke males : her sons Anthony

¹⁷⁴ small alterations that add to one's attractions;

¹⁷⁵ one who breaks a promise

¹⁷⁶ pledge

¹⁷⁷ foolishness

¹⁷⁸ coming to, approaching, birth

¹⁷⁹ the sowing of seed where seed has already been sown

¹⁸⁰ female who has lost social standing

¹⁸¹ excessively equipped sexually

¹⁸² dildos

46 and Thomas 44, her distant grandsons newly married Richard 21, Quentin 19, and finally her favourite Lemuel who was soon to be 20; she then calculated : with merely two sons surviving to her three grandsons, then to each of these six great-grandsons two sons born, and then to each of these twelve great-great-grandsons two further sons born, it was fully possible, even with the death of her own sons Richard and Quentin, that Lemuel, – if he should live to be 68 in 1802, together with his 44 male relations, – might well witness the *blesséd event*, (the subject of which, or the dismayingly little that is known, – for it was never much discussed by the family, – will soon be broached in hopefully less unsatisfying detail), of which the Lemuel Document, by following *verbatim, literatim, et punctatim*¹⁸³, foretold would eventuate, – provided it come to pass before the millennium, – when a chiliad, – pronounced as if with a k, meaning 1000, or reign of 1000 years, – male years was cumulatively attained : thus the sum and substance of the Troke quest is at last revealed!

Asking Lemuel accompany her on a walk along the bank of the Seine, which bordered their property, third Vouchsafe Gwendoline again making mention of the Lemuel Document : careful to interpret it correctly, – and no Troke ever read the same with a sealed mind, – in that all females, both wives and daughters, were excluded, – (thus giving to future spinsters a slightly perverse, but warm sense of preeminence over all, in being left out), – expulst in the reckoning, and only legitimate males included, then as firmament¹⁸⁴ making reference to her own carefully managed book of Troke genealogy, (the very same now residing in the scrine¹⁸⁵, or as Trokes refer to it, the *archive*), Gwendoline thus delivered her summing¹⁸⁶ : although the greater part of their time was spun out than was still to come, all their years came to less than a mere sixth of the whole, which was 151; after a pause for digestion of these numbers, then with a paper from her glove sharing her prognosticate mathematics, – to which her son paid homage of a good sharp eye, – she sensing, (quite rightly), that his child would not only be a daughter,

¹⁸³ word for word, letter for letter, and point for point

¹⁸⁴ that which confirms

¹⁸⁵ place where writings or curiosities are repositied

¹⁸⁶ arithmetic

(which the unstable mother would insist be baptised *Femme Dieu!*), but bear not a pennyweight¹⁸⁷ of Troke blood, Gwendoline said,

— Suppose, and mind this very narrowly : what if the forthcoming child is indeed male, proletaneous¹⁸⁸, all productive males, yet your son no son?, why thereby would be committed errors both in means and ends too dreadful to contemplate!;

it was upon this very sobering terminal that the full weight of his responsibility became truly clear to the newly uncomfortable heir, that his marriage was indeed an *etourderie*¹⁸⁹, and he no more than a fool who had still to escape his neoteny¹⁹⁰; so : with the aid of her powerful husband, much golden coin, the artifice of a defeasance¹⁹¹ procured, thus was this calamity averted.

Shortly thereafter Gwendoline, aged now 62, with her now far wiser grandson, – in whom the need to do now only rightly, which her speech called forth, had now obtained the preponderance, – accompanied by two loyal stout¹⁹² servants, travelled in their *chariot*¹⁹³ through the rural backwaters of north-eastern France in search of that womanly trueship¹⁹⁴ which would ensure the production of sons in increaseful plenty; humiliated by that shortfall in his nature which not only *sensus communis*¹⁹⁵ but even his Palladian¹⁹⁶ upbringing had failed to make up, Lemuel soon so warmed to this procreative hunt, he gave himself wholly to his sage grandmother, for in matters concerning the glorious Troke future he this realised : as aches of heart must now be wholly servient to the duties of the loins, it would be of no very great

¹⁸⁷ twentieth of an ounce

¹⁸⁸ productive of numerous offspring

¹⁸⁹ thoughtless action

¹⁹⁰ arrested development at an immature stage

¹⁹¹ annulment of a contract or deed

¹⁹² robust

¹⁹³ four-wheeled, sprung coupe or cut-down coach for two people, drawn by two horses, with a high box seat and liveried footmen on the dummy board

¹⁹⁴ faithfulness

¹⁹⁵ common sense

¹⁹⁶ pertaining to learning and wisdom

moment, provided sons were born, if love played a very secondary rôle; as they passed through town and village Gwendoline and Lemuel, – openly yet unhurriedly appraising this damsel and that from their carriage-widows, – came upon many examples of apparently fecund femininity,

yes, some of whom carried jugs of water or pails of milk, some trusses of hay, some simply themselves, some were slender, some brawny from so much use of the pump-break¹⁹⁷, of the flail, some were too high-fed¹⁹⁸, some were buxom, and some bonny, some were cold and would uncome¹⁹⁹ and, therefore, less fecund, would leave a sensitive man unstanched²⁰⁰, some were too raclaim²⁰¹, some dastards²⁰², some far too dicacious²⁰³, some blaffoorde²⁰⁴, and some even in silk would never be aught but a kempsters²⁰⁵ all their life-days, some were too dolent²⁰⁶, some would forever gly²⁰⁷, some would quickly become vuddicks²⁰⁸, or measled²⁰⁹, or baggaged²¹⁰ and soon brain-wood²¹¹, and some would remain, as Jeanette, always only plain right-naught-worth²¹², some would be too soon given to falsdom²¹³, some would be raveners²¹⁴, and leave a man noughty²¹⁵, and some would a man beshradde²¹⁶, if not with quaint²¹⁷, then with

-
- 197 arm or handle of a pump
 198 pampered; fed luxuriously
 199 not come; not achieve orgasm
 200 unsatisfied
 201 tame
 202 simpletons
 203 talkative
 204 stammerers
 205 females who cleans wool
 206 sorrowful
 207 squint
 208 coarse, fat women
 209 diseased
 210 bewitched
 211 quite mad
 212 worthless
 213 falsehood
 214 plunderers
 215 possessed of nothing
 216 cut into shreds
 217 female pudendum

tongue, some would prove soon bellical²¹⁸, some, awaiting a victim, were but rope-ripe²¹⁹ interfectors²²⁰, some....

Grandmother and grandson often left their carriage to wander through markets and fairs, sometimes simply through village streets in search of that which life did not offer for sale like a trussed chicken by a poulterer, or a bobbin²²¹ by a billman²²², but was free for the catching by goodly looks and smile, by goodly words and honest eyes, or failing these : by goodly gold, whereafter they would each night retire to the best taverns or inns the pastoral countryside could offer; one day in the third week of their adventure they rose early, conferred, and decided to look more closely at a most incony²²³, nay, beautiful young woman,

of that beauty which, because the result of Nature not artifice, is as often found in a cottage, as missed in a palace,

who daily brought milk, cream, and chevret²²⁴ to their inn, for even when accompanying her muddle and inanities with a blushing to her ensiform cartilage²²⁵, even to the hands, she showed all her white teeth in a guileless smile.

After silently appraising the yonderly²²⁶, curtsyng, yet orgulous²²⁷ girl, – aye, from her wild glossy hair, her dark hot eyes, to her strong bast²²⁸-shod feet, noting with right sovereign pleasure her high colour, full bosom, firm hips, tanned strong hands, sinewy arms, – in a very few words Gwendoline unearthed from the girl that Odette had she to name[✓], her age 19, that she was rustically impious, illiterate, of most

²¹⁸ warlike

²¹⁹ ripe for hanging

²²⁰ those who kill

²²¹ small faggot

²²² man who cuts faggots

²²³ pretty

²²⁴ variety of French cheese made from goat's milk

²²⁵ sword-shaped process at the base of the sternum

²²⁶ shy

²²⁷ proud

²²⁸ shoes made from the tough inner fibrous bark of various trees

chaste operation, and as quiet as if she could not count to three; sitting the girl down, in the soberest but most pleasant of French terms Veronica said that she was in need of a waiting-maid²²⁹, and if the girl should agree to take up this simple but rewarding position then a handsome compliment of gold would pass to her family,

actually her widower father : a needy, deep dissimuler, one of those to whom even the most distant acquaintance with intellect, reasoning, particularly with books, was heavily to be censured,

for the bonification²³⁰ of both himself and his farm, of which pigs,

of which his filthy own were so rightly called,

was its main staple; though the proud peasant-girl, dumbstruck with wanbelief²³¹, was offered time to contemplate this offer, she immediately accepted.

After passing through Paris to outfit Odette, – indeed with her blushing new appearance so becoming her, she was the next year shown off at concerts, balls, even the opera, – they returned to the *château* in early autumn, where, in her innocence asking often, with a slowly sweetening voice, when she would begin those duties for which she still believed herself hired, Gwendoline making suitable excusements, Odette continued to eat with the family; from a new governess learning to read, write, how to live amongst her betters rather than supportively behind or below, so in time losing what rustic veneries²³² it might be patronising to admit she could well miss²³³, she was given a maid all of her own, who, coming from a similar background, really, they were at times such chatterboxes!; during her initiation into the world of grandeur and supposed refinement, Lemuel, his eyes very bright, patiently shyly courted Odette, whom he little knew would modestly have

²²⁹ female servant who attends a lady

²³⁰ betterment

²³¹ disbelief

²³² charms

²³³ do without

reciprocated any advances he might like to make,

even such commonly unacceptable freedoms as the customs of her own proud people found inoffensive,

if only he had openly displayed them; though he and his grandmother had earlier agreed, loins must precede love, Lemuel could not but believe that love was still well possible, and so it proved.

In 1756 came the quiet marriage of Lemuel, and thereby, Gwendoline believed, the destining of Odette to becoming one day the fourth Vouchsafe, – for Hortense, wife of her son Anthony, at 42, was surely far less deligible²³⁴, and Jane in Wales wife to her son Thomas, at 45 a case similarly discountable, and yet with Justine 19, in Boston the year before marrying her grandson Richard, here was a case unknown, (futurely : Polly, wifed in 1759 to grandson Quentin, yet he dying in 1765, leaving briefly a widow, she remarrying the year after, thus rendering her, surely, — yet the Troke Document saying nothing of such a matters, — diseligible), – quickly enough came what Vouchsafe Gwendoline considered most auspicious beginnings : pregnancy, then twin sons, Louis and Marcel, who proved robust of voice despite an abundance of milk; with the family comprising now seven males, – including their two Walshe²³⁵ relations, – with the tally of years now 161, until the next birth, if no male should die, then *communibus annis*²³⁶ the cumulative total would yearly advance in steps of seven.

With a further pregnancy too tarrying, Gwendoline giving instructions to the cooks to prepare a variety of foods, including fish and avocado,

fancied then, even still, to be aphrodisiacal, when, truth to say, these neither excite nor damp venery,

²³⁴ worthy of being chosen

²³⁵ Welshman

²³⁶ in ordinary years

the while urging Lemuel on to ever greater fecundity, with much subterfuge leaving windocks²³⁷ ajar, fangling²³⁸ to allow the fire neglect to a scant, a failing one, so that the cold would drive Lemuel & Odette early to a warmed bed, but with the passing of each month, with sad but rustic forthrightness Odette confessing her menstruance, – said to be the weeping of a disappointed uterus, – Gwendoline thereupon resorted to a ploy, which had it become known would have brought a blush of shame even to the most earthy members of her modest *salon*.

She secretly commissioned an altogether gifted artist, but short-lived because tubercular, to render,

from real models, a good memory, a very realistic imagination, a very obliging maid, and from mirrors,

a series of large immaculately detailed ink and watercolour sketches of downright scortatory²³⁹ nature, over which, when bound into a volume, by seeming chance discused²⁴⁰ in the Preterite library, she and Odette were to much giggling heat; (inasmuch as this history makes very little claim to what is illiquid²⁴¹, – for it is not asked, as by Coleridge, — that poet who could soar but not fly, — for *that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith*, – this item too, offering full inspection, is in the close keep of the archive); when even this ploy proved impotent of conception, certain potions were obtained : from those supposedly capable in the arts of witchcraft and wizardry, from those renowned in siderism²⁴², from those professing a knowledge of medicinal and efficacious roots, barks, herbs, flowers, fruits, seeds, metals, stones, salts, and other minerals, such as those predominantly under the dominion of Venus,

²³⁷ windows

²³⁸ contriving

²³⁹ pertaining to fornication or lewdness

²⁴⁰ discovered

²⁴¹ not established by documentary or other evidence

²⁴² doctrine that stars influence destinies

alkanet or enchusa, archangel, ground-ivy or alehoof or *hay-maidens*, black and common alder, arrach both wild and stinking...

these were covertly administered to wine and food, – Gwendoline even partaking of them herself, much to the delight, if consequent powfag²⁴³, of both herself and her not at all unvigorous husband, – but nothing availed the young couple, save a very certain heaviness in hands and eyes at breakfast, followed by a disbelieving retiring to their bedchamber at sometimes the very oddest hours, where breaking many lances, followed long, languorous, sometimes sore, but refreshing slumbers, as deep as if in the shade of a great flowering oak.

When Lemuel one day in more gestures than words voiced his talm²⁴⁴, almost mistempered²⁴⁵ perplexity at undevelopments, the fear crept nearer to Gwendoline that if Odette were in fault then the problem was not impossible of overcoming, whereas if the seed of Lemuel were somehow deficient, – despite a number of doctors, some of whom, the better to caldese²⁴⁶, employing uroscopy²⁴⁷ with its nineteen different possibilities, confidently professing the contrary, – then no solution but patience and hope would avail; after brooding long over the steps necessary in finding another wife, – and a harrowing thought this was, for she loved Odette like a daughter, – Gwendoline one day, but with the very greatest delicacy, proposing this as a possibility to her grandson, he standing, unmoving, unspeaking, was at first mortified, naturally enough, but as they shared the same fixation, Lemuel, his eyes closed, his voice monotone, advancing the suggestion that it might be better if he first liaise with another woman, and so first prove, or not, his own fertility, so was this agreed to.

With her acumen much burgeoned by need, commencing to organise and tenant an

²⁴³ work to the point of exhaustion

²⁴⁴ exhausted

²⁴⁵ angry

²⁴⁶ cheat or deceive, chiefly by fortune-telling

²⁴⁷ judgement of disease by inspection of urine

exclusive brodel²⁴⁸ which would have but one patron, such proved an undertaking complex in its organising, rife with obstacles : apart from overcoming the difficulties of finding in utmost secrecy premises, one of the willing participants, following careful medical examinations by a trusted doctor, was discovered a cyesiognosis²⁴⁹, whilst another, a sweet enough lass, confessed herself to be surely a spado²⁵⁰, but eventually with three girls chosen, – and if none of them had ever been bronstrops²⁵¹, they were perhaps approaching what would one day prove to be the very brink of putery²⁵², – the handsome secluded house, situated on the quietest edge of a not too nearby village, was placed under the management of an inflexible, visible²⁵³ invert²⁵⁴ named Christian Cluse.

(According to his *Memnon* of 1868, – whether their preference was fellatio, buggery, or simply frottage²⁵⁵, – Karl Heinrich, attempting to categorise similisexualists²⁵⁶, would have labelled Christian a *zwischen-urning*²⁵⁷; his other classifications were, Words?

yes, that which modesty rejects the name, and whom Nature, – seeing symptom of grave lesions of the procreative sense, – abominating all paraphilia²⁵⁸, Words, but with reluctance, with almost disgust, issue with dispatch : dioning²⁵⁹, urning²⁶⁰, dioningin²⁶¹, urningin²⁶², uranodioning²⁶³,

248 brothel

249 diagnosis of pregnancy

250 person incapable of procreation

251 prostitutes

252 prostitution

253 all-seeing

254 homosexual

255 rubbing, especially for sexual gratification

256 homosexuals

257 homosexual male who cares for adolescents

258 abnormal sexual activity

259 heterosexual, or normal male

260 homosexual, or abnormal male

261 heterosexual, or normal female

262 homosexual, or abnormal female

263 bisexual male

mannling²⁶⁴, weibling²⁶⁵, uraniaster²⁶⁶, virilisirt²⁶⁷, &c,....)

After introduction to the three ladies under his charge, regarding them stonily out of his flint-blue eyes until they wilted, smiting the table with a large fist, Christian let it be known to his three charges that from his very simple rules he would bear no leastest wandering, else severe punishment be sudden in visiting, adding then that as well as their generous monthly salary, payable at the conclusion, and the satisfaction of their every renable²⁶⁸ wish except carnal freedom, an ample remuneration would be presented to whoever conceived, and a fortune not niggard to she who brought to full living term a healthy child; when all was in readiness, wife Odette was given to understand, – to better promote their combined uberty²⁶⁹, – that Lemuel would spend the day alone walking or riding in the invigorating fresh air whilst she rested, then at evening they would together dine, then, for the next twenty out of twenty-eight days, go separately to their beds, all to which Odette reluctantly acquiesced; daily attending the house containing of his harem, despite the nature of the business carried out, whilst resting between rounds, Lemuel introduced a mild taste for literature to the three girls, two of whom knew their letters, by reading to them selections from Pascal and Milton.

When in time one of the three *protégés*, formerly a hoity-toity²⁷⁰, became feracious²⁷¹, proud was Lemuel and relieved Gwendoline that her grandson had proved his semenality²⁷², and when Virginie Garfouillat, this was her name, was sent away to a *sage-femme*²⁷³ in a seaboard village in Brittany to ensure conception became nativity, Lemuel returned loyalty to his wife, who despite receiving him

²⁶⁴ homosexual man attracted to effeminate men

²⁶⁵ homosexual man attracted to manly men

²⁶⁶ heterosexual male, who, for lack of women, or under the influence of special circumstances, consorts with persons of his own sex

²⁶⁷ homosexual male, who, putting restraint upon his inborn impulse, has forced himself to cohabit with women, or perhaps contracted a marriage

²⁶⁸ reasonable

²⁶⁹ fruitfulness

²⁷⁰ giddy, thoughtless, romping girl

²⁷¹ fruitful

²⁷² nature or power of producing seed

²⁷³ midwife

almost daily, yet no further conception eventuating, Gwendoline pondered a stratagem which, if she was most loath to be a part, she knew she could effect without Odette ever becoming the wiser : annulment of the marriage of her grandson, so that, quietly wedding Virginie, thus would the forthcoming child, hopefully male, become legitimised; at this propose²⁷⁴ at first appalled, but after taking thought that he must either swallow or strangle, with a determined nod accepting, so was the simple machinery set in motion, and with dispatch, for Virginie was now in her eighth month of travel²⁷⁵.

Following the gold-bought annulment, on the pretence of visiting a new doctor journeying to Brittany, in a small church Lemuel very formally wed Virginie; with this latest Troke, a boy, – as Gwendoline far more hoped than suspicioned, (for accurately discerning the sex of an unborn child was a skill as yet unpossessed by a Vouchsafe), – named Claude, placed in the local safekeeping of a respected circumspect nourice²⁷⁶, with Virginie returned to her two compatriots at the ficaro²⁷⁷, with the twin sons flourishing, like their half-brother a few miles away, Odette, far from a simpleton, yet suspecting nothing, continued to receive her now ersatz husband as he far less his concubines.

Some space, certainly, has been allotted to this event, but even more must be invested yet, – for this is surely the rather grand story of someone, — a Vouchsafe certainly, but yet a woman not even descendant of the family, — convinced that the Troke quest was a matter of greatest seriousness, – for hereupon events occurred with their usual recourse to irony,

which, as saith Fowler, with exclusiveness its motive, statement of facts its province, mystification its method, and an inner circle its audience, may be better defined as nought more than hypocrisy with style,

²⁷⁴ proposal

²⁷⁵ confinement

²⁷⁶ nurse

²⁷⁷ bordello

for fate saw to it that his former, his real wife, his true love, Odette, coming again into child, Gwendoline wrote to her ever more reluctant contact in the church, – lately loth to have her in his presence, or to have any of her profane papers pass under his hands, – that he must now disannul²⁷⁸ the third marriage of her grandson to allow him remarry his second wife; hereupon Lemuel informing his grandmother that another of the female coterie, by nempnen²⁷⁹ Paulette Poire, had also conceived, with the neitherness of time between those two pregnancies but a little more than a month, – as well because the second uterogestation of Odette was not an altogether healthy affair, – this made matters very delicate; then, amazingly!, within a week new mother and legal wife Virginie discovering she had again conceived, so it was that of these three future mothers it was not at once apparent who might in best health come first to full term; with Lemuel and Gwendoline trepidant at the knowledge that a mere six or so weeks separated the three confinements, the proud but tired Lemuel suggested they bide, hereat he much took to busy himself in the library, awaiting developments.

To linger less on this period : in her seventh month Odette alas miscarrying of a daughter, to his legal wife Virginie coming a second son, who was called Jean, so was the reckoning in that year of 1759 : nine males and 181 accumulative years; with the coming prematurely of a daughter to the second concubine Paulette, (who though born ere she was all made, smaller than others that go all their time, lived happily for only five years), the bordello was disbanded, the third girl, despite her game but infructuous²⁸⁰ efforts, amply compensated, and the bordeller²⁸¹ Christian was gifted the fine house in which he dwelt, with various lovers, for the durance²⁸² of his life; thence fromward Lemuel stayed particularly close by his Odette, for as he blushing confessed to his grandmother, in bidding to his legal wife a farewell sweet, succumbing to one last embrace, well, he had just heard that Virginie was again with child; so it was that in 1760 another son was born, the third to Virginie, the fifth and

²⁷⁸ annul

²⁷⁹ name

²⁸⁰ unfruitful

²⁸¹ keeper of a brothel

²⁸² duration

last to Lemuel, which Gwendoline asked be named Harold after her childhood husband of so long ago.

Despite lately a trifle unwell, 66-year-old Gwendoline journeying to Paris to arrange a final cassation²⁸³, the bishop, an ailing gut²⁸⁴, old but newly pious, at first refused, but upon the understanding that she never again come into his presence, nor ever write to him, neither through an intermediary, with a five-fold offering of *louis d'ors* sufficient to lubricate²⁸⁵ a few of the smaller wheels of ecclesiastical polity, so were matters rounded;

he was later this year, – despite his talents for audacity, adroitness, and intrigue, strengthened all with dignities, as well in moneys, — for of an over-having disposition, as well for his personal use, he received a fourth part of the whole yearly rents and revenues of his church, — receiving a major portion of that dividend which was the large remainder of every month's mean expense, – by a court ecclesiastical, –comprising those who themselves were suspected of errors, heresies, schisms, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities, – charged and convicted of simony²⁸⁶, and in the year following, greatly afearing of his ruined soul, he died in his monastery bed, – clasping to his breast his sole possession : a bible, – such a death as it was.

Despite the cancer now dwelling in her breast, Vouchsafe Gwendoline was relatively content with developments : with five new Troke males, together with a fortune, – for in the 27 years of her marriage, the already considerable Preterite wealth,

built of a sudden from modest by his father from the superlucration²⁸⁷ following a perfectly timed escape from the collapse of the so-called *Mississippi Scheme* of 1719,

²⁸³ annulment

²⁸⁴ a very fat man

²⁸⁵ lubricate

²⁸⁶ the buying and selling of church offices or privileges

²⁸⁷ excessive profit

increasing quadruply, – such would most handsomely provide for the surely tryingness of the Troke future; with the reckoning at the close of 1768 : 13 males and 256 years, – which was but a quarter of the journey achieved in half of the time, – the future certainly seemed very promising; (but when in the following year the reckoning suddenly fell to 12 members and 210 years, then in the year again following to 11 members and 185 years, or one sixth of the journey, it became very clear to Lemuel that Trokes were now fully embarked upon their slow, difficult, soon facenfull²⁸⁸, trace²⁸⁹ toward the blessed perclose²⁹⁰ of their quest).

²⁸⁸ treacherous

²⁸⁹ advance and retreat

²⁹⁰ conclusion