

AN ACQUAINTANCE WITH CHARLES READE,

WITH LETTERS HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED.

IN writing of Charles Reade, the summer of 1859 comes to mind as a period crowded with uncommon opportunities. To a young American who is to see England for the first time, the land of our old home is in itself excitement and inspiration; but to have acquaintance with living England then was a privilege such as persons born in another age might justly envy.

The roll of illustrious men and women who were then at the height of their power is easily recalled by lovers of English literature; and Hawthorne also was in England. The greatness of the past was in harmony with the marvel of the present. It was the land of Shakspeare indeed; but if it proved to be Tennyson, and not Shakspeare, who read his poems to us, if we sat under the cedar of Lebanon while he questioned—

“Oh, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious
East, . . .
Dark cedar!”

rather than walked under the mulberry at Cambridge, listening to the voice of Milton, one seemed hardly less a miracle than the other; surely the marvel was equal to young and reverent eyes. It was only a part of this enchantment when Charles Reade took rooms for us at Oxford, during a few days of the long vacation, close by Magdalen College, where he was then Bursar. Summer days at Oxford, in rain and sun (it was chiefly rain!) and almost perfect solitude, walking through cloisters and parks, gardens and libraries and museums, seeing everything through the partial eyes and scholarly initiation of our friend, that might indeed be called “seeing Oxford.” Lest his visitors should be lost in the mazes of the Old World, the following had been sent in a note to them:

“PROGRAMME.

- “1st. Ask for the Angel and Star 'Bus.
- “2d. Tell it to take you to Mr. Whiting's, 79 High street.
- “3d. Deposit your heavy luggage there.
- “4th. Come on to Magdalen College.
- “On entering the college you will find yourselves in a cloister. Turn to the left. After about eighty yards you will come to a small opening. Pass through it, and you will see a long line of buildings before you, at some distance. Cross the grass slantindicular, bearing to the right a little, and you will hit on

STAIRCASE, No. 2.

Up this staircase two flights you will find a door with
DR. READE
written over it.

THAT'S ME!”

This was not, however, our first acquaintance with Charles Reade. He was not a man to receive strangers, or friends of correspondence merely, into his retirement, and bear with equanimity a purposeless infringement on his time; but he was full of ardor and a kind of chivalrous devotion to his real friends, which made no sacrifice seem too great in their behalf. This loyalty of nature, which was a strong characteristic, was early discerned in his business correspondence. Among the many letters to his American publishers, between the publication of his first tale, “Peg Woffington,” in 1855, and our visit to Oxford in 1859, I find this trait continually appearing.

The American editions of “Peg Woffington,” “Christie Johnstone,” and “Clouds and Sunshine,” all bear the date of 1855, and the earliest letters in my possession from Charles Reade appear to have been written after that time, and during the preparation of “It is Never too Late to Mend,” which was reprinted in America in 1856. It will be remembered that the title of this romance, as originally announced, was “Susan Merton,” but was changed by the author while the work was in press to the name it now bears.

The following note is sufficiently characteristic to be printed in full:

“193 PICCADILLY, Sept. 26.

“DEAR SIR: I saw Bentley, Jun., to-day, and had a friendly talk with him about our business. He maintained publisher's right to dispose of the early sheets; but acknowledged his firm had but a small pecuniary interest. I told him I had concluded with Messrs. Ticknor, and could not draw back.

“He said he must talk with his father, and meantime begged me to go no farther with Messrs. Ticknor. I replied that it was not possible to go farther, for that I was completely committed to them.

“There the matter rests at present, but my impression is that Bentley will not give us much trouble. I am not so sure about Messrs. Appleton. If you write to Ticknor & Field [*sic*], beg them not to worry themselves any more about

this. *They have done all they can do.* They have proposed terms which I distinctly accept, and the matter now rests with me. Their interest is mine, and my sense of justice is on the side of the firm who have *made* me in the States. To conclude, tell them there will be no difficulty after 'Susan Merton,' and in her case the difficulties *must* be overcome, if any.

"I am yours sincerely,
"READE."

One month later, to the same person, probably the celebrated London publisher, Trübner, he wrote as follows:

" . . . I propose to Messrs. Ticknor & Field, then, to allow me so much upon each copy sold of 'S. M. ;' in short, to treat me in *some measure* as an American writer.

"I propose this at once, because it is the only basis of business that can be permanent with me, and as we must look beyond 'Susan Merton' some day, we had better do it now.

"An arrangement of this sort is the fairest, and stimulates the writer to do his *very best* in every case; and we all need every stimulus of this sort, so easy is it to write, and so cruelly hard is it to write well.

"I wait, then, the firm's answer to my proposal, and protect their interest in the meantime.

"Tell those gentlemen I am *charmed* with the copies; both works are well printed, and bound and lettered to perfection. The type of 'Christie Johnstone,' in particular, is supreme, sharp, clean, and open.

"Need I add that I am much gratified and *cheered* by the good opinion my brothers and sisters over the water appear to have of me?"

These letters seem to be among the first of an interesting series respecting the details of the publication of his books in America; but as there is no year given in any one of the letters, and often no date, the precise time of writing must in some cases be only a matter of conjecture.

Charles Reade's anxiety concerning the minutest questions of printing and illustration was not easily allayed, but when the result was at all satisfactory he was quick and hearty in his words of commendation.

It would seem that the following passage must have been written at the same period of nervous excitement with the foregoing, just after his first short stories were printed, and before the appearance of his three-volume venture of "Susan Merton," or "Never too Late to Mend." He writes to his Boston publishers from the Garrick Club:

"Will you be so kind as to collect for me

all the honest critiques that shall be printed about the work in your country, favorable or adverse, and send them over to me?"

"I am afraid I have tried your patience hard with the three-volume novel, but you must consider that while you have been kept waiting the work has been growing in importance; and believe me, that great successes are not to be achieved without time and labor.

"It would never have done for me to produce three mediocre volumes. As it is, I think I can promise you a success in the U. S.

"In this country it is very doubtful. I shock their prejudices so, poor dear old souls."

And in still another letter on the same subject he says:

"The MS. has been returned to me, and even now I have not yet begun to print, being very anxious to secure you an ample start. At the same time I must tell you I am a little uneasy at not hearing from you upon any matter of detail connected with the work.

"There was time, I think, if you acted on my last advice, for me to correct the first half-dozen sheets of your copy.

"No copy of 'Clouds and Sunshine' has reached me. It is a matter deeply to be regretted that I cannot see your copy all in print before it goes to the public. I defy any man to polish and correct MS. as well as he can print. I have done the best for you I can, but I hope you will send me an interleaved copy as soon after issue as possible, and no pains shall be spared to bring the American edition to perfection."

However interesting such letters may be as portraying the character of the writer, they possess at this time a wider value. To the authors and publishers of books they give a picture of the difficulties which were just then beginning to assume grave proportions respecting the reprinting of English books and the remuneration of English authors. Long before this time Charles Dickens had brought all the brilliant powers of his genius to bear in behalf of righteous dealing between the nations; but, foiled in the attempt, he had returned to England silenced and forever discouraged. Nevertheless, there was still courtesy among publishers, and a prior right to reprint was sufficient to prevent thieving and to allow the English author to receive a good sum for his work from the honest publisher.

Still acting upon this ground, Messrs. Ticknor & Fields paid Charles Reade a fair price for his work, but not such a price as the work deserved, could they have been themselves assured against loss.

The great popularity of his books excited anew the rapacity of publishers, and, in spite

of all possible care and foresight, there was trouble and loss of money. All restrictions against reprinting were finally broken down, so that from that time and until the possible future of a righteous law no English or American author can ever again receive the money due to him from the public. When Walter Scott was dying from overwork, it was calculated that if he could receive one cent from each of his American readers he could at least pay his debts and close his eyes in peace. From that sad hour until this moment the peoples of England and America have continued to steal the labor of men, the value of which to the world is greater than all the gold that has ever been coined.

The following letters, therefore, sufficiently explain themselves:

“GARRICK CLUB.

“DEAR SIR: . . . Trübner tells me these shipments of MS. have cost you nearly £20. I confess this terrifies me. Surely such expense is not necessary. The whole MS., ‘Susan Merton,’ remains in my hands. No part of it will go to an English publisher until you are in a condition to print.

“Why throw your dollars into the Atlantic? It really is not worth while sending these books by post.

“However, one comfort: this will never occur again. *Should the work succeed*, the publishing of the next will be entirely in my hands, and you may come out a month before I am advertised in London, if you like; and should it fail, I shall write no more stories, since everything else is so much easier to write.

“I assure you the labor I have bestowed on this story seems to me disproportioned to the result I have obtained.

“You inquire after ‘Live and Let Live.’ I can only tell you that — purchased this story of me two years ago, that he has had it by him ever since, and that with it lying in his drawer he brings out, from time to time, some of the feeblest trash that ever dribbled from a human pen in the way of narrative. I wish I could tell you why he does those two things, either of them, but it is impossible. We can fathom a wise man, but fools are inscrutable. But be assured that if ‘Live and Let Live’ were a very important story, I would, to meet your wishes, send to the old nunny and buy it back again; but it is not worth this — at least I think not.

“I have read a very amusing critique in the ‘North American Review.’ It seems you have annoyed Messrs. Crosby and something

or other, by publishing Mr. Reade. May I venture to hope from the pique so clumsily concealed that the volumes are selling? . . .

“I met, the other day, a charming countryman of yours, Mr. N. Hawthorne. I had too little opportunity of conversing with him, but the impression is delightful. Item: He has an eye like a violet with a soul in it.

“He mentioned your name to me. Said you had told him to make my acquaintance. I am much obliged to you if you did.

“I beg you will correspond with me fully upon any matter that interests you.

“And am

“Yours sincerely,
“CHARLES READE.”

“You asked me to recommend you books. I recommend you to read the biography (I don’t know the exact title) of Hedley Vicars, a very religious young captain, who fell before Sebastopol. It will not interest Boston so much as it does London, but still a Public is a public, and there is in this book a *feature* — the Public goes for a *strong feature*. Here you have a fighting saint — a religious red-coat — a man who cuts down a Russian with the gospel of mercy in his mouth. This card has never failed from Cromwell downward. Cut out *one-third* judiciously. Publish the rest, and I will pay all you lose by it. It is not well written — not one book in a hundred is — but there is a touch of sincerity and warmth.”

When the reader calls to mind that these are but a selection from the letters of Reade at this period, it is wonderful the amount of writing and anxious thought he bestowed, not only upon his stories, but also upon their safe and lawful reproduction.

“6 BOLTON ROW, MAYFAIR.

“GENTLEMEN: I have to inform you that upon calculating my MS., ‘Susan Merton,’ as it stands (unfinished), I find there are more than 3 vols. octavo written. I have therefore nothing to do but to reduce it by excision.

“I will forward you next week instructions for cutting your copy. The severest cuts will be made in the prison business, vol. 2, which is very wordy in parts.

“I have more MS. copied for you, and will send some next week; but first should like to cut wherever I can.

“Heart-breaking work this, I assure you.

“I am

Yours very sincerely,
“CHARLES READE.”

"GARRICK CLUB, KING STREET,
"COVENT GARDEN, LONDON,

"July 20.

"DEAR SIR: Herewith you will receive more of our printed sheets corrected by me. "You must not mistake my motive in sending them out.

"I am quite content to stand upon the MS. I have sent you, and I secretly hope that you have already printed and published that MS. But I have taken for granted that you would at all events like to be kept informed what we are doing here. Moreover, I need not tell you that print always reveals some blots to an author, however carefully his MS. may have been polished.

"I make it my particular request that as soon as ever you are out you will send me an interleaved copy. By means of this I will prepare you a second edition that shall be as faultless as I can make any work. With these printed sheets I send you a sketch of 'The Southern Cross,' the South Polar Constellation, which is to figure on my pages in vol. 3, English, and in what I presume will be your 2d volume.

"I cannot help feeling some anxiety about your wood-cuts, and this anxiety is increased by your silence, which leads me to fear I have not succeeded in showing you the importance of those effects I aim at by them.

"These are no vulgar illustrations; they are not done upon the common plan of illustrations. *They take the place of the text, and the reader reads them as well as views them.*

"The more important is it that they should be finely executed, and, above all, true. However, at present I can only repeat what I have said to you before, that it will be worth your while to look closely into the matter and reject all *inaccurate or feeble representations* of tombstones and knives with gold-dust on them. I have an appendix to 'It is Never too Late to Mend.' This appendix contains some curious matter: 'The Autobiography of a Thief,' and critical remarks thereon by the Parson. Now, this appendix I do not mean to print unless the novel should meet with greater success than I dare hope for. Still, as the matter is as good as anything in the story, I shall send it you out with this understanding, that you run the novel first without it. After your first sale, should any U. S. publisher try to interfere with your monopoly, it *might* be worth while to issue a second edition, with this 'Autobiography of a Thief' added by the author's hand. You would then have something to offer your public which would be inaccessible to any rival publisher. Since I shall not print the said

appendix in England, you see that I am not indifferent to our joint interest in the U. S."

He winds up one letter full of business detail with these words, which appear to be the foreshadowing of another of his famous books: "I hate a lie in yellow, white, blue, just as much as I do in black and white, and would not for the world one should go to the American or any public in my name." These words were written with reference to what he considered an imperfect illustration which had been forwarded to him of "Susan Merton."

Again he writes, with his anxieties unabated:

"I have promised to pay the sum Bentley was to receive for early sheets from Appleton.

"I needed not to do this. I have never acknowledged his right to sell my sheets out of England, but in a case of such deep importance I would not leave you without any additional safeguard a few pounds could buy. . . .

"'Susan Merton' is a very bad title, because, under that title, the book is a *failure*, Susan Merton being a third-rate character in point of invention and color.

"This title, too, would prepare the public for a disappointment. I have written two novels with female titles and female heroes,—women the principal characters.

"It would be a signal want of judgment in me to let a three-volume novel, competing with one-vol. novels, be disgracefully defeated.

"How would you like to hear your public saying of Susan Merton: Oh! she is not to be compared with Christie Johnstone or Peg Woffington? This sort of remark, though leveled at the character, would hit the work, if I were so unwise as to make the work and the character one.

"My new novel is an original and important work, but both its originality and its importance—moral and pictorial—are unconnected, or slightly connected, with Susan Merton. The scenes in which she figures are the stale and conventional part of the work. The soul of it are the scenes in which a bad man is despaired of and tortured by fools, and afterward not despaired of by a wise and good man, but encouraged, softened, converted. These psychological scenes and the melodramatic scenes that follow, in which the thief's understanding is convinced as well as his heart, are the immortal part of the work. The rest dozens of men and women on both sides the water could have written, and better than I have done them. I stand, therefore, on my ace of spades and not on

my nine of hearts, and the title of the work is 'It's Never too Late to Mend.'

"On this I am peremptory and sensitive, too. As it is cruel to make you lose the effect of past advertisements, I suppose you must add 'or "Susan Merton,"' if you are bent on it; but, if so, mind, 'It is Never too Late to Mend' must be the first title. But even this is against my judgment.

"If you can't do the diggers' knife and gold so that a digger, seeing them, should acknowledge the likeness, cut out the whole passage 'Would you know,' etc.—cut and all. Your public will never miss it, and besides, it ends a volume with us, so that a *coup* is required, but it will come in the heart of your second volume, where no *coup* is required. To conclude, in this and other details remember that at present our most important object is to occupy the ground—to produce at once in Boston a reasonably correct edition of 'Never too Late to Mend.'

"Publish at once; but print for once on movable type. This is my advice. The work published, send me over a copy to Trübner's (not by a private hand, for God's sake). I will collate your edition and Bentley's, correcting his by yours, which is far superior in places, and yours by his where print has revealed, as print always does, a few blots and superfluities, and produce a uniform second edition for both countries, identical *ad litera*. Meantime, if you are ready, publish without fear. I repeat that I will stand or fall by the *Boston MS., as corrected by those elisions* which I sent you out by letter two months or more ago. Should these elisions not have been *comprehended*, the London sheets may be useful.

"Many thanks for your wish that I was at Boston. I should be there if I was not a fool. For I have received magnificent offers from countrymen of yours if I would come over and lecture to them about 'the Drama,' a subject I am not ignorant of, and I have a nobler temptation in a grand and untouched theme; for nothing can be more obvious to any man who *thinks* than that no human creature, Yankee or Briton, has ever really sung or painted the United States or the men and women who make them what they are. But alas! I shall never see that glorious land, I shall never see the great Anglo-Saxon race going ahead, with the fetters of fog and mist and prejudice taken off their souls and brains and bodies, and shall never have the honor of giving the world poetical pictures of things and men known here only by sordid caricatures—and all because I cannot live eight days at sea. Well, mind, you have not the same excuse for not coming to see me, for you have crossed the Atlantic and can again.

"Write to me oftener; you have had about four letters from me for one you have sent me, and this was a mistake. However, I will take care that we have never all this bother about a work again. But there have been peculiar difficulties in this case, as you are well aware.

"However, I venture to hope that, two months hence, you will not grudge them nor repent the trouble you have taken with me.

"I am, dear sir, yours faithfully,

"CHAS. READE."

Careful as his publishers were, his anxious spirit was always up and a-field before them.

Here is a truly business-like epistle:

"193 PICCADILLY, Oct. 4.

"GENTLEMEN: I am quite satisfied with your offer, ten per cent. on each copy sold and paid, and am ready, on these conditions, to hold myself engaged to you with respect to 'Susan Merton' and future works.

"But I must ask you to withdraw one clause in your proposal, 'provided we are not printed upon by any other publisher.' Now, it is not in my power to prevent a New York or Boston publisher from issuing an edition *after* yours. To this your exertions, not mine, must and will be addressed. All I can do is to give you a long start, and so the *cream* of the business. If Messrs. A or B, publishing from your sheets, as you from mine, should rob us of the *milk*, or some of it, this would be our joint misfortune. I should share it with you in the proportion of ten per cent. (since my profit depends on your sales), and I think you ought to share it with me.

"Mr. Trübner agrees with me, and would, I believe, as your agent, commit you to this view of our relation; but as there is time to refer the question to you, it is fairer to you to do so. This, therefore, is under consideration.

"As, however, I have no doubt your answer will be satisfactory, I shall act in your favor, and by advice of Mr. Trübner, pending your answer.

"I am having a MS. written out in a copper-plate hand, and from this MS., carefully corrected by me, you will perhaps have to print a considerable portion of the novel.

"Perhaps you will think me very precise in settling the exact terms of our relation; but you must consider that this is no slight or temporary business. I think I am now building a connection which, if the foundation be perfect, will last my whole career."

Hope and fear respecting the success of his labors swiftly alternated and troubled his mind

at this period. Unhappily his book was not to be as successful as he hoped.

He wrote again:

"Who is so sick of 'Susan Merton' as I am?"

"But I am a writer. I *cannot scribble*. A three-volume novel is a great prose epic. I hope never to write another, and this one must not lower me. My delay is caused by labor, and labor is seldom wasted."

Later on he says, speaking of the plans and prospects for his new book: "Do not talk to me of four thousand copies of such a work as 'Never too Late to Mend'—*please*." And then I find this intermediate letter before the result was known in America, which is given in full as follows:

"HOTEL RIVOLI, RUE RIVOLI,
"PARIS, Oct. 4.

"DEAR SIR: Your letter 8 Sept. has just been forwarded to me, and relieves me of considerable anxiety, although I had provided for the correction of your sheets by my friend Tom Taylor.

"I am happy to inform you that the title is as successful as I expected—letters have been written in the journals under the signature 'It Is Never Too Late,' etc., and many public allusions show that the title has hit.

"I cannot tell you what measure of success the book has, for I don't know. But it is a success, and they have really made a cut into a second edition; I hope you will not sell it too cheap. I shall never write another fiction of that bulk and solidity—5 vols., the size of 'Christie Johnstone'!—(are you aware that is its precise magnitude?), and I naturally look for remuneration to the country where I know my success is really great.

"As far as England is concerned the book is a dead loss to me. Two years out of my life, the brains out of my skull, and the heart out of my body—for what?"

"Bernard Tauchnitz publishes me in Leipzig upon an agreement, and the French are translating 'Christie Johnstone.'

"In about a fortnight I hope to be at my home in 6 Bolton Row, where any friends of yours, or any countrymen, who shall have provided themselves with a line from you, will be cordially received. Be so good as to make this known as widely as possible.

"It is a small acknowledgment of respect and affection toward a great public that has had the pluck to form a decided opinion (right or wrong) upon a living author, and *at once*.

"I am, dear sir,

"Yours very truly,

"CHARLES READE."

Too soon, alas! came the word of discouragement, proving that his American publisher understood "the pulse of the machine" only too well. Reade replied:

"Four thousand copies is a small return, and bears a very slight proportion to the English sale, whereas until now the American sale of my work has far exceeded the English sale. . . . The cheap English edition has been dishonestly brought out. . . . Were he the only publisher in the British isles, he should never publish another work for me, except by fraud or violence. . . . You will perhaps be glad to hear there is a chance of my next work being a single volume, such as would make one good dollar's worth for you."

Reade's interest in every-day life, in the social condition of the people, in the world outside of books, was like that of a child born and bred in city streets, when first allowed to enjoy "green growing things" and the freedom of the country. He was as native to the world of books as a bee to a clover-field, and might well distrust his own personal, because comparatively narrow, experience of men; therefore he was always crying out to have extracts sent him from American newspapers, and asks that his correspondent shall "take note of any very gallant actions that are done in your part of the world. I am going to write something where this would be useful. No matter whether the brave fellows are soldiers, sailors, tinkers, or tailors. Will you make a note of this?"

"Never too Late to Mend" was far from being his last story. It was his first great ship launched out into the sea of novel-writing. His brain was teeming with plans, and it was only necessary for him to watch the retreating figures of one drama, to behold another company entering by the opposite wing upon the theater of his mind.

It seemed a very pleasant spring morning in London, whatever the weather may have been, when Charles Reade came to breakfast, and we heard him talk for the first time. Two or three hours slipped away while he excited himself by eagerly describing a case at law in which he was interested for charity's sake. I remember he said the case had been deferred, and for every three months' delay permitted by Lord Campbell he was obliged to expend seventy pounds. He also described the ingratitude of the person for whom he had undertaken the suit. But the details of conversation have necessarily vanished. I can only recall with singular distinctness the ardor of the converser, and the scintillations of his wit. He spoke with the fire of the same man who had written the scene in "Peg Woffing-

ton," where the heroine dances with the Triplets and their children, and he soon proved himself to be the author of Peggy's reconciliation with Mrs. Vane.

In a later visit, although the subject was different, the same power of self-excitement was apparent, as well as a kind of pre-Raphaelism in his studies from life. Each new fact startled him, and seemed to present itself as the corner-stone of a fresh romance.

"The Cloister and the Hearth" was seriously progressing at this period, and for this he was making studies during his summer vacation at Oxford. Nevertheless his "mediæval story," as he was wont to call it in his letters, was delayed, cast and recast, printed in part, with another title, in "Once a Week," and, in short, left to float in mid-air, while "White Lies," "The Eighth Commandment," and "Love me Little, Love me Long" appeared in swift succession. There was more or less correspondence respecting each of the books, but "The Cloister and the Hearth" seems to have been a favorite with the author.

I can recall his taking down the "Autobiography of Erasmus" from the shelf in the great library at Oxford, and showing us a brief description (only a line or two) of the father and mother of Erasmus, with a few dates concerning them, saying, "There is all the foundation for my story, 'A Good Fight.'" This was the title he gave to the first draught of the "mediæval story." In one of his letters he writes :

"You may well be surprised that I am so long over 'Good Fight,' but the fact is, it is not the writing but the reading which makes me slow. It may perhaps give you an idea of the system in which I write fiction, if I get down the list of books I have read, skimmed, or studied to write this little misery.

"The great work, 1. 'Lacroix and Sire on the Middle Ages,' 5 thick quartos. 2. 'Du Sommerard,' do.; the plates only. 5. 'Strutt's Works,' and 9. 'Hone's Day-books, Table-books,' etc. 10. 'Leland's Itinerary.' 11. Fynes' Moryson's do. 12. 'Bouyer's History of the Popes.' 13. Ranke's ditto. 14. 'Erasm. Colloquia.' 15. 'Erasm. Parabola.' 16. Munster's 'Cosmographia.' 17. Luther's 'Table Talk.' 18. Wanley's 'Little World.' 19. Victor Hugo's 'Hunchback.' Scott's 'Quentin D.' 'Monastery.' 22. 'Abbot.' 23. Fosbrooke's 'British Monachism.' 24. Newcome's 'Abbey of St. Albans.' 25. 'Fox on Monasteries.' 26. M. H. Bloxam on ditto. 27. 'Monumenta Franciscana.' 28. 'Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum.' 29. Mosheim. 30. Jamieson's 'Legends of the Monastic Orders,' ditto. 31.

'Sacred and Legendary Art.' 32. Vasari. 33. Bryant. 34. Mrs. Merrifield's 'History of Painting.' 35. 'Mores Catholici.' 36. 3 vols. Southey's 'Common-Place Book.' 37. 'History of the Dominicans,' Marchese. 38. Hallam's 'Middle Ages.' 39. Lit. Europe. 41. Humphrie's two works on do. 42. Shaw's 'Dresses and Decorations.' 43. Maitland's 'Dark Ages.' 44. Pugin and Smith, 'Ecclesiastical Vest.' 45. Warton's 'Early English Poetry.' 46. 'The Harleian Miscellany.' 47. 'The Paston Letters.' 48. 'Correspondence, Henry and Wolsey,' Government Publication. 49. Grove's 'Antiquarian Repository.' 50. Index 'Gentleman's Magazine.' 51. Do. 'Archæological Journal.' 52. Labarti's 'Handbook of the Middle Ages.' 53. 'Les Voyages de Montaigne.' 54. Coryat's 'Crudities.' 55. Monteil's 'Vie Privée des Français.' 56. 'Le Grand d'Aupy,' ditto. 57. 'Dutch Geography,' Reynolds G. Van Reschied. 58. Knight's 'Life of Erasmus.' 59. Jortin's. 60. Bayle's in Dict. 61. 'Chronique de Flandres.' 62. Henry's 'History Great Britain.' 63. Sharon Turner's ditto. 64. Froissart. 65. Monstrelet. 66. Philippe de Comines. 67. Barante's 'Dukes of Burgundy.' 68. Brandt's 'History of the Reformation.' 69. Liber Vagatorum. 70. Hecker's 'Epidemics of the Middle Ages.' 71. Welars de Honecort's 'Sketch-book.' 72. Norica. 73. John Guttenberg. 75. Ben Jonson's 'Alchemist,' and 'Volpone,' the old plays in Dodsley, and especially 76. 'The Four P's.' 77. 'Le Livre d'Or des Meteors,' by Michel & Fournier. 78. Pugin's 'Contrasts.' 79. Monuments Français inédits, etc., etc.

"This system, wasted on an Old World story, has kept you and me apart some months, which I regret; but then I hope your time will come to benefit by it; for surely this *must be* the right method. Any way, I shall apply the same diligence and research to the subject of our own day I am preparing for you, that I have expended, perhaps wasted, on a mediæval tale. Luckily a great part of the research is already done. I shall not venture next year on the theme I mentioned to you; that must be reserved for 1862 or '3, if I am alive.

"But I have a theme for which I have already collected many invaluable facts, and a living character or two. Then I have got what Ben Jonson called 'brave notions' in my head. So keep a good slice of the 'Atlantic' for me in May, and we will do something considerable together."

Later he writes again: "My mediæval story has been interrupted by cruel lawsuits in defense of my copyrights which have laid me on a sick-bed, as well as hindered my work."

And in another letter: "Let us hope that 'White Lies' will not be quite so dead a failure as 'Never too Late to Mend.'" And yet again: "Let me express a hope that your Government will some day deign to remember that we have the honor to be more nearly related to you in blood than we are to France, Prussia, Saxony, etc., etc.; and will hold us out a hand as these nations have done."

All the loss, uncertainty, and trouble he experienced through the absence of copyright culminated at last in that extraordinary production, "The Eighth Commandment," regarding which he writes in one of his letters: "I think that 'Eighth Commandment' is a bit of good seed, which will bear fruit in time, and that sooner or later it will be an honor both to publisher and author to have stood firm in so just and honorable a cause."

This is a modest reference to a book which stands among the first of Charles Reade's works in dramatic power. His sketch of the life of M. Maquet is unrivaled, and if novel-readers fail to read the book for lack of a love-story, no author should fail to read it as an example of vigorous wit infused into a dry subject.

In the following letter he describes an unexpected outgrowth from its publication:

"There is no news in England. Parliament dissolved; literature taking her usual rest. Nothing going but Garibaldi.

"There is one Garibaldian in our house, which came about thus: Mr., or, as we used to call them at his age, *Master* —— saved my life, by which I mean my copyright. *Vide* Appendix to 'Eighth Commandment'—

"'You take my house, when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life,
When you do take the means whereby I live.'
SHAKESPEARE.

—or something to that effect. I was very much obliged to him, and showed it, after the manner of authors, in sentences tolerably well turned. Imposed on by the sound of these, he writes to me one day that he is tired of being a vegetable and wants to be an active member of society, and will I help? Yes. Then what he wants is 'to fight for Italian liberties, and to go upon the ground at *somebody else's* expense, having no money, but only pluck.' I reply that I understand the only conditions on which the Signor Garibaldi will allow a Briton to be knocked on the head in his sacred cause are, that the said Briton shall be so disposed of at his own cost and charges. But I placed my house at his service and invited him to come and try if he could not make a better bargain with the agents of

Garibaldi aforesaid. Well, he comes and haunts the town for a fortnight, and finds several men of words, but not one man of dollars, shillings, and so on.

"At last, the very day before he had arranged to go back to Dublin, turns up from Italy one of Garibaldi's staff, Captain Styles, an Englishman, very scarlet, very bedizened, and wearing a scimitar — that shape instead of the good old-fashioned toasting-fork of Anglo-Saxon armies. This hero came to recruit for Garibaldi, and he did it on this wise:

"First he called for pen and ink, 'which did come at his command,' and wrote to 'The Times' a letter that would have done no discredit to an attorney. It invited Englishmen to *visit* Italy, and undertook to make the voyage easy to them and to furnish them with the means of protecting themselves against all the dangers of the country. At this equivocating proclamation the law winked, and the ardent spirits called on Styles and enlisted. Then went Styles down to the House of Commons, so scarlet and so green, so scimitared and bedizened, that, instead of passing their bills, the members were all Styles-struck; and while they sat gazing at his plumage, legislation died out like the snuff of a candle, the clock struck unawares, the session had ended, and there was an end of *them*. That afternoon two M. P.'s enlisted, and ordered their regimentals of Isaacs, 71 Jermyn st. And now I shall relate a lamentable incident at the corner of 'Bridge st.,' Westminster. Outside a shop hung a cage in which was an Australian parrot gorgeous to behold. This bird looked down on jays and goldfinches, and even western parrots, with just disdain, and life-guardsmen passing did but provoke a smile.

"Styles sauntered by after electrifying the House, and at sight of him the wretched bird gave one squawk and the next minute was found on the floor of his cage dead of envy.

"Styles passed on as if nothing had happened, and on reaching his humble lodging, whose dinginess set off his preternatural brightness, he found my Irishman waiting for him. (Mark how the simplest narrative of true events falls sometimes into the forms of art.) They soon struck the bargain. Italy to find the voyage out, the plumage, the rifle, and one shilling per day. Dublin to find the man, the valor, and the voyage back. This last, however, is an inconsiderable item, the costume being such that no rifleman *can* miss it, and the Neapolitan army possessing rifles amongst its implements of war.

"In Styles's lodgings was stuck up a placard to this effect: 'Whereas Englishmen are noto-

riously fond of excursions at the slack time of year, and as Italy, with its rare beauties of art and nature, is becoming every year a more popular field of those excursions, Signor Garibaldi, anxious to show his appreciation of the sympathy his country and her sorrows excite in noble England, has placed a steamboat at the English excursionists' disposal. On arriving they will find the country in a troubled state; they will therefore be provided with arms against all who might otherwise molest them with impunity. However, Signor Garibaldi's precautions will not end there. Being strangers in a foreign land, they will be provided with a uniform costume, by means of which the excursionists will at once recognize each other, and sustain, defend, and support each other in case of any serious danger, which, however, is not expected.

"And so they keep on the windy side of the law. It is, however, to be hoped they will not manoeuvre so profoundly as this on the field of battle; for, if they do, the Bourbons are safe at Naples for my day.

"At this juncture comes to me a letter from Dublin, in a lady's hand. The Garibaldian brings it in to me, and says in a peculiar tone: 'That's from my people.' I look up and see his face the color of his future uniform. My mind misgives me. The letter is from the mamma *du petit* Garibaldian, and at the first word I suspect I am not held at Dublin the benevolent character I have been all along considering myself, nor at all the friend of the Three Stars Family. Letter begins not 'Dear Sir,' nor 'Horned Sir' (misspelling for Honored Sir), nor even 'Sir,' but

"'Mr. Reade.'

"*Voilà qui est sec.*

"In short, I learn from my correspondent that under all this chivalry my young hero is a bit of a liar. That he had read to his family, not my letters about Garibaldi, but carefully selected extracts, in which no Italian name was mentioned; and thus he had easily obtained the maternal consent to visit me and London, and had him furnished with money for sights and amusements (bloodless ones). His secret intentions, however, had been betrayed by his sweetheart, doubtlessly on the principle that to betray a traitor is as fair as to spoil an Egyptian.

"Nice lot, the Irish.

"I wrote a short explanation, and in answer to mamma's question, whether I approved his going to Garibaldi, I said certainly not, unless the alternative was to be a life of absolute nullity and dependence. Whereupon I advised her either to propose to the boy some way of life, or to give him her blessing and let him start for Italy, but under the distinct

understanding that her door and arms are to be open to him, should fillibustering disappoint him. Comes a reply, beginning, 'My dear sir,' and withdrawing her objection to Garibaldi; but in the body of the letter she quietly, and without saying I must undeceive you on one point, or any such phrase, just lets me know the various businesses and professions that had been offered to her poor foolish boy, as she mildly calls him (this is so like a woman), and by him rejected either without trial or upon a short trial.

"On this I catch my crusader, and explain to him that however foolish an act may be, there is a creditable and discreditable way of doing it. Item: I let him know that out of my house romantic young blockheads must go to the devil on the square, or not at all.

"Finally, his better angel gets the upper hand, probably for a while only, and off he goes to Dublin, where I hope he will stay, or at least not go without his friends' cordial advice.

"Now, what do you think of this young scamp getting money to go to London, meaning all the time to go to Italy, nay farther, to seek that 'bourne no traveler returns,' by running among rifles in the dress of a popinjay? Here endeth part the first of

"THE TALE OF A CRUSADER.

"And if you want to hear the rest, first, it will have to happen, and secondly, you will have to write to me and pretend you are interested in it. Adieu!"

About this period he writes further:

"I have read the critiques on 'Eighth C.' with interest, and amusement at the variety of opinion on a matter so little open to doubt.

"But the feeling seems much to preponderate in favor of Moses, and leans, though very properly in a less degree, in favor of me. I am content with the success of my chief."

In a foot-note at the end of the "Eighth Commandment," he says:

"Besides my losses at Croydon" (where the case was tried of which he wrote), "it costs me, at least, £1000 to write such a book as this, the sale of which will not pay its expenses. Yet, with the same labor, I could have produced three volumes of lucrative fibs."

It was not extraordinary, therefore, that, in our first interview, he should have appeared strangely excited in discussing the subject of the courts. He had already begun to struggle against the wrongs of the time.

But he *loved* something else, and he was

fond of "his lucrative fibs," as he disdainfully called his stories. I may say, more justly, it was his "enthusiasm for humanity," driven into channels native to his genius, which made him a story-teller first of all. When he turned into the world of romance, he was like a lamb turned into a green field, and the story began to tell itself to him and to the world.

Meanwhile, the letters of the busy author continue to give an idea of his life and condition.

"2 ALBERT TERRACE, KNIGHTSBRIDGE,
January 10.

"DEAR FIELDS: I was very glad to hear from you of your safe arrival, and thank you much for your hospitable invitation to the U. S. It is, indeed, a land attractive to bodily and also to mental gluttons. But how about the Atlantic? Your bill of fare does not mention the salt water.

"Now I have something nice in store for you, viz., a Thunderclap. Know, my worthy friend, that in a weak moment the devil tempted me, and I fell—to a certain extent. I was guilty of the meanness of setting a spy on you and your fair companions.

"There is a wise American, a man called Howard, who lives by locomotions,—he it was who went four times round the wandering Jew, between San Francisco and Damascus. I requested him to cross in the ship with you and report to me. 'Keep your eye on that little lot,' said I, 'and tell me how they sail.' He accepted the commission at once; he doesn't care where he goes, so that he goes. I told him there were two of the party he might even find it agreeable to keep his eye on; but that was superfluous; all he wanted was to be in motion.

"Well, this sorry blade crossed the water with you, landed, ate one plate of fried oysters, and came back to me directly, open-mouthed. 'They were ill all the time. I never saw them on deck but once.' Thus speaking he went off to Egypt like an arrow from a bow.

"The tidings thus obtained have daunted my nautical ardor, if I ever had any—off paper; and I propose to send across that honored water sprightly letters, kind messages, ideas,—if by some immense fortuity I should ever have any,—proof-sheets, and, in short, any thing, or things, that can't be sick.

"At the present moment, however, I fear I can send you nothing worth the voyage, for I am ill, and stupid, and half-mad with headache, and generally good for nothing.

"However, I send you my best and kindest regards to yourself and ———, and also to

———, and tell her I often think of her; and to P. W., with his high views of the sanctity of property. To fill up this paper—could you procure me, in the way of business, catalogues of your first-class public libraries—the Astor, etc., and of a good law library or two? Item: Should you encounter a medium who will work gratis, please entrance her, and learn who was the enlightened citizen that lately sent me over *four* canvas-back ducks, anonymously. I am aware that charity, in its highest form, courts obscurity; but the receivers are not bound to coöperate. I think it concerns mankind that superlative virtue should not be allowed to hide its head and its very name, while vice marches openly with blazoned heart. Excuse my eloquence, and all the other nonsense in the letter, and believe me,

"Yours truly,
"CHAS. READE."

The next letter shows his real sympathy with the North during the war, as well as something of the timidity and unfaith of a time when fear almost conquered hope in the heart of many an English cousin. He writes:

" . . . I can fully enter into your feelings in the present crisis, though I have a sad foreboding that you will all bitterly repent the labor, the courage, the wealth, that has been and will be expended to keep those Southern States a part of the great American Union. If you succeed, all the better for them. For separated, they would have sunk in the scale of nations, and you would have risen, until they would have come sneaking back, and begged for reannexation. Meanwhile, you have this consolation, among the rest, that you did not provoke this civil war.

"The Southern States elect President after President who favors their views, and the Northern States submit, like good citizens, to a constitutional act. At last the Northern interest elects *one*. It is only for four years; yet these fire-eaters cannot even wait two months to see whether his acts will be as extreme as his opinions (and when a man takes the helm of a great country, his opinions always do moderate), but dash into rebellion or civil war. Therefore, those members of the English press are either very unjust or ignorant, who refuse to see a distinction between the revolt of the Southern States from the Federal Government and the revolt of the original colony from Great Britain.

"The 'Annual Register' is British; yet it is impossible to read it without admiring the calmness, the patient dignity, and high but stern resolve of the original separatists; and more, the affectionate reluctance to part from

the mother country, with which they began the struggle. Moreover, in England the great spirits of the day—the Camdens, Chathams, Burkes—said from the first they were in the right, and now everybody can see it, and, *malgré* 'The Times,' I must take leave to distinguish between a just revolt and an unjust one.

"Still I wish you had let those States go; that is to say, I wish it for your sake. In reality, you are champions at a terrible cost of oppressed humanity. For, freed from the control of their civilized brethren, those States would have spread slavery over the continent of America, or so much of it as they could annex or conquer. There, these are my vague opinions. You know I am no politician, and that my good-will toward my Northern friends is far greater than my ability to scope all the points of a disaster so complicated as this civil war.

"Doubtless there is more at bottom than any Englishman knows or understands. When you are tired of it, you two, come to me at Oxford, and I will seat you on smooth turf in cool umbrageous recesses, and with nothing in sight more modern than buildings that saw the wars of the Red and White Roses. And that reminds me, however is it that your people can read a mediæval story in the middle of a civil war? I thought we should sell two copies of the 'Cloister,' etc. But my friend Cornwallis reports a success. If true (I can't believe it), I am the more sorry I could not persuade a certain firm in Boston to venture on it. . . ."

It is a hard task to select from among the numerous letters which lie before me; difficult to consign any of them to the dust, and still more difficult to make sure when private letters should be printed. But the thirst for biography, grown so conspicuous in our time, is one, I believe, that should be respected. There are many parallelisms between the lives of the humblest of men and those whom the world calls great; how natural it is, therefore, that we should crave a knowledge of the means and opportunities for development, the inheritances and circumstances, surrounding and molding men who have helped to feed or form our own lives.

Again he writes from Magdalen College:

"I have been trying to qualify myself by hard reading to write a story of the day. I don't know whether you remember a dome-shaped building called the Radcliffe Library. This building has lately been made a reading-room for students, in connection with the Bodleian; and, unlike all other public libraries in

this country, it is well lighted and kept open till ten at night. This affords me facilities I cannot meet with in London. Unfortunately a set-off has come in the shape of gout or something very like it, which impairs my powers, so behold me in anxiety and despondency about my forthcoming production. . . .

"I will read Trollope's 'America,' since you tell me it is endurable. I had no intention of reading it otherwise, or anything else the man writes. He is mediocrity incarnate.

"Tell Mr. Meadows I have got a tidy little house in Bolton Row, with a drawing-room and bedroom for you two. Literature cannot flourish amongst bayonets, and he really ought to come and do a little here where he has made so many friends. . . ."

Oxford was Charles Reade's true home. He visited elsewhere, he had a house in London, but he wrote and thought and found room for his true life in Magdalen College. Here it was we found him first, as I have said, in the summer of 1859, when he was delighted to show the beauties of Oxford to his American friends. The president's rooms had just then been refitted in the style suited to their real antiquity. It was a new idea at that time, and we followed him with delight as he showed us the oriel windows refilled with old Flemish glass, and observed that the very handles and hinges of the doors were modeled after the old forms. His own rooms were antique enough (they were built in 1485), and there were no fine restorations; but I remember an old cider-cup in the center of the dinner-table, of silver overladen with gold, which was quite as ancient as the college and very ornamental. Many a delightful hour went like a breath in that room. I recall especially his enthusiasm for Victor Hugo, one volume of whose plays had been thrown into a corner, and was the only book to be seen; and how the tea-kettle was always on the hob; and how one night he read aloud the last chapters of "A Good Fight." He showed us one old cloister with walnut roof, "in which the spiders never build," and the only authentic picture of Cardinal Wolsey, and all the works of Erasmus in their mighty folios. I remember there was much speculation as to how the huge folios of old were paid for—"not those of Erasmus; there is no doubt about those," said Mr. Fields, "because twenty thousand copies of his works were sold"; and so they talked together, making the ancient things seem affairs of yesterday, but a yesterday of great lessons and of good men.

And the late summer afternoon returns half like a dream, when we wandered into the rooms of one of Reade's friends high up under

the roof of Magdalen. There were hanging gardens outside the windows, and a forest-like tangle of pleasant things inside; but it was a rainy day outside, and the light was beginning to fade when Reade opened a small piano in one corner, and sang two or three quaint English songs with a pathos all his own. The singing was as strange and dream-like as the place. We sat there in the gloaming until the sound of the pattering rain seemed like the tears of the last song, and then we rose silently and closed the doors behind us forever.

Reade himself was a strangely compacted character, as his letters, together with his books, have testified. He was himself a mediæval knight suddenly awakened in the heart of the nineteenth century. He could never quite tell, I am sure, what had become of his breast-plate and helmet, nor when he last slept upon his shield. The prose garments for mind and body, lying in wait for him every morning, were very unsatisfying; and the Bursar's cap and gown, which he contrived to wear for a few months every year, were a kind of cloistral compensation which suited the sad new era.

He was always ready to ride forth on some new tilt or tourney in behalf of the Right. "The Eighth Commandment" is a series of pictures portraying such readiness. He was often mistaken, doubtless, in the means he employed, and often, too, in the value of the end he desired to obtain. Let us remember, however, that although he was mediæval he was always ready to serve. The story of "James Lambert" is an excellent illustration of his eagerness to recognize and uphold the good. In 1874 he sent out to the "New York Tribune" this story of a poor blind swimmer, who had lost his eyesight while struggling to save drowning men. Reade's attention was first drawn to the existence of such a person by hearing the tale of a child who was drowned in the Clyde, while the people stood screaming upon the bank and watching the sinking boy. As the child's figure rose for the last time a man, who was stone-blind, was seen making his way to the brink, holding the hand of a girl, and crying: "Let me to him! I'll save him yet!" But he was withheld by his granddaughter, who clung to him and would not lead him to the shore. Then he threw up his arms in distress, and cried: "It was a laddie flung away; clean flung away!" And so Reade, as he says, "began to weigh the vulgar griefs of men against James Lambert's high distress. . . . Summer and winter he plunged into the Clyde, and saved men and women with his bare body. . . . And what was his reward on earth? For his benevolent courage he was stricken blind, through so many immersions of his heated body in icy

water. . . . He was potent as ever in the water, but impotent on land; and they would not help him into the water; and so a young life was flung away that he could have saved, and he went home flinging his arms about in agony, and weeping tears that angels might be proud to dry with loving wing. . . . It made me desire to see James Lambert, and give him my poor sympathy."

And so the great writer hunted up the obscure old man some years after he first heard the tale, and wrote out the heroic story to gather together a small sum and make his declining years more comfortable. He wrote, in answer to a word of recognition of this labor of love: "I am pleased to hear that this true tale strikes fire in American hearts. One thing: those hearts have a great deal of fire in them, so it is not so hard to strike it with a bit of true steel like James Lambert.

"My more pachydermatous friend has received the blow with his usual composure. But, as I have resolved to bleed him a bit, for the benefit of my poor old Jamie, I am going at him again with a pamphlet and the advertising sheet."

The son of an Oxfordshire squire, Charles Reade could not allow his two American friends to leave England without seeing Ipston House, where he was born. It was the month of May, and the hawthorn was in bloom, and the "little speedwell" covered the ground with its "darling blue." He surrendered the livelong day to driving and walking with us over the familiar neighborhood, and visiting the church where lie the bodies of crusaders. He was a generous and enthusiastic host, and nothing could make old England live again more vividly than such a visit with such a man to Ipston and the home of his youth.

Ten years passed before we saw Charles Reade again. Year after year he continued to write, perpetually finding new incidents to excite his imagination, and ever beginning with fresh ardor.

The next time we met was in the charming house in London, at Albert Gate, of which Mr. Robert Buchanan speaks in his "Recollections," lately printed in the "Pall Mall Gazette." He says: "There, surrounded by his books of wonderful memoranda, he was ever happy to hold simple wassail with the few friends he loved." The house looked directly upon Hyde Park at its liveliest part, what is called "The Ladies' Mile," and was a quaint place enough. There was a dramatic glamour over everything; the pictures were chosen for that quality of interest; there were pretty lamp-glasses, like flowers, to illuminate the dining-room, and tall oriental

plants standing here and there; the fire was burning brightly on the hearth, while the doors which gave on the little garden stood wide open; there were steps leading to rooms on different levels, and draperies half-concealing mirrors, so placed as to make the rooms appear much larger than they really were.

Again he sang to us; this time Mercy Vint's song, and some old English ditty unfamiliar to me. There was a plaintive strain in his voice and a tenderness peculiar to the singer's self.

One of his favorite topics of conversation, and one which never lost its interest, was the life of Shakspeare and the numberless speculations regarding his personal career. On this occasion he talked of him chiefly as a playwright, saying it was not wonderful his plays were not printed during his life, nor did this show any disregard for them on the part of the writer. In looking up some law cases of that period, he found that printing a play in those days prevented an author from receiving the same amount when it was represented on the boards; therefore, as there were comparatively few readers at that period, a play was seldom printed until it had ceased to draw at the theater. "Hamlet" and one or two others were printed in Shakspeare's lifetime; the rest only after his death.

He was severe in his denunciation of Hawthorne for giving countenance to anything so puerile as Miss Bacon's argument; but I am sure if he could have heard Hawthorne's own disapproval of himself on this head he would have been disarmed of his keen weapon. "Any one," Reade said, "who had ever made a study of either mind or style must see how clearly impossible it is that the works of Bacon and Shakspeare could be evolved from the same brain. As well hold an eagle under water twenty minutes and expect him to come up the better for it."

"It is wonderful to see how genius can borrow!" he continued. "Look at the Seven Ages, as Horace has treated the subject after his own philosophical manner; how fine and yet how unlike Shakspeare, who chose to borrow the subject and make a new thing of it. Take the scene also in 'Macbeth,' which he gets from Holinshed (between *Malcolm* and *Macduff*), a piece of wretched nonsense, but turned from prose into poetry by the simplest transposition of words. The Witches' scene, which also comes from Holinshed, is equally wonderful, leaving the prose almost untouched, but touched so finely as to transform, not change, it into poetry. It would

be well worth your while," he added, "to go to any library and compare the two. It is most curious and beautiful work, such as only genius can do.

"Most people think there is nothing to be learned at Stratford in these days, that they must come to London for all things. But I find, in looking up my cases in law, that Shakspeare probably had a better chance for studying the courts of law in Stratford than he could obtain in London. People have speculated much as to where Shakspeare could have studied the horrors of the charnel-house described by *Juliet*, but at that time there was a large charnel-house on the street in Stratford, and I can believe that young Will looked through those iron bars often enough to be perfectly familiar with its dreadful contents.

"Clearly, Shakspeare's object in life, after he had done his work, was to make money enough to buy a house and lands in Stratford.

"It is indeed strange there should be no manuscript left, but at the time of the Ireland forgeries, or just before, it was said that an enormous mass of manuscript had been destroyed in that same house. This, and the great London fires, may account for much."

Mr. Buchanan says very justly that "any personal recollections of Charles Reade would be incomplete without some reference to his connection with the stage. From first to last he followed, with eager pertinacity, the will-o'-the-wisp of theatrical fame. . . . His love for the stage amounted to a passion." All this was native to the mediæval knight we called our friend. The world to him was always a wondrous show, and he brought a child's naïveté into his dealings with it.

Once more, and again nearly ten years later, I saw him for the last time. He was at Oxford with a group of young people about him, whom he was entertaining. Sorrow and disappointment had lain heavily upon him, and the old joys had vanished; but the pleasure of giving pleasure, which always remains with us, was still sustaining him. He drew me aside once and told me of his hopes and fears for that future whither his mind was now often voyaging; but he stretched out his hands like a child groping in the dark, sorrowing for what had been, and a stranger among things unseen.

In his last note, written in 1883, to introduce a young friend, he added: "Alas! evidence of what we both pine to believe comes not to me; I am one of little faith." A few months later, without long waiting, he was mercifully granted that evidence.