

No. 12  
A SKETCH

OF THE LIFE OF

R. P ROBINSON,

THE ALLEGED MURDERER

OF HELEN JEWETT;

Containing copious extracts from his

JOURNAL.



NEW YORK,

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## P R E F A C E .

THE author believes that no apology is due for presenting to the public such facts as may be in his possession in regard to the life and character of the unfortunate Robinson. Without attempting to prejudice the public mind on the question of Robinson's guilt or innocence of the alleged murder of Helen Jewett, there may be much written that is not improper to be known. Of his birth, education, and habits of life, no one hesitates to make inquiry, or, if possible, to give information to others. The author pledges himself to use the freedom of the press as not abusing it. The prisoner's fate will not be decided upon the question of his former indiscretions, or the colour of his hair, or the lines in the palm of his hand, or the expression of his countenance ; neither will he be tried by a jury of phrenologists. If he be guilty, it must be so determined by law and evidence. That Helen Jewett was murdered no one doubts. It is equally certain that public opinion has marked Robinson as the perpetrator of the deed. It has certainly, therefore, become a legitimate object of inquiry, who is Robinson ?

In the annals of modern crime there is not recorded a murder committed under circumstances more calculated to arouse curiosity than the one in question. It awakens more than the thrilling interest of romance. It is a real tragedy which truth alone can embellish ; and if rightly improved will do more to guard the footsteps of the young than all the fictions of the stage, or the homilies of the pulpit. It is not an affair of another age or country, relying upon the credit of historians for its veracity ; but an event of but yesterday, passing before our own sight in the midst of our thronged metropolis. The victim of the murder was a person who, however unworthy, filled no small space in the public eye. Thousands who were ignorant, both of her name and character, have done homage to her charms. Such was the beauty of her person, that many who have seen her but once, will remember her forever. She was beautiful, witty, accomplished—all, but chaste, that woman can be—an Eve perverted to a Milwood. In another age or country, and under different circumstances, she might have figured as a Helen or Cleopa-



tra. How little did she in childhood anticipate—how little did those fond friends who nursed her infancy in the retirement of a New-England village, anticipate her future career of guilt, and the tragic end that awaited her! And the heartless villain who betrayed her to infamy—where is he? Why sleeps the vengeance of law? Where are the national morals? Why does not the voice of public sentiment shake down those altars upon which female virtue is daily sacrificed? How long shall the crime of seduction be tolerated? If it be countenanced by existing laws, and the existing code of morals, is it not time to frame new laws and a new code of morals? Surely it is the duty of all men of real honor to unite and speak out their true sentiments on this subject. For God's sake let us dare speak out manfully and say whether or not he shall be regarded as a gentleman, who, by the seduction of a gifted woman like Helen Jewett, as it were, rolls an avalanche upon society. If women were to show a disposition and ability to inflict upon our sex as great an amount of wretchedness as her own sex suffers from the art and perfidy of man, we should call public meetings and make resolves and enactments for the protection of our persons and privileges. But as woman has no direct political influence she must look for protection to the honor and generosity of man. Let us not abuse her confidence; for she has been ever faithful, from that hour when Adam went forth from the garden into the wilderness of thorns, leaning upon the arm of his devoted spouse. If woman has erred, she has erred in loving man too deeply, and in confiding in him too much.



F. P. ROBINSON was born of respectable parents, in Durham, Connecticut, on the 9th of June, 1817. His father was a Calvinist after the straitest sect. There are those who may think that the parentage and education of young Robinson were such as might effectually counteract the developement of a character like his; while others, with at least equal show of philosophy, will maintain that nothing is so sure to engender, and secretly nourish bad propensities of the heart, as excessive restraint and rigid family discipline. Be this as it may, it is certain that young Robinson was regularly exercised in the Westminster Catechism, and thoroughly trained in the way which the good puritan fathers considered the right way. The remark is frequently made, that the families of New-England furnish some of the most consummate scoundrels on earth. May not this fact, if true, be owing more to the superior advantages enjoyed by such children, and the facilities afforded them for cultivating their minds and becoming eminent either in vice or in virtue, than to any extraordinary depravity of their nature, or radical error in their education? Had Stephen Burroughs been the son of a farmer, his villainy might never have been conspicuous, and the Rev. Catholic counterfeiter of Three Rivers might have been, perchance, a thriving clock pedlar. The polish of education makes visible, as well the defects, as the excellencies of the mind. Upon inquiry I am unable to learn that any thing remarkable befel Robinson in the period of his childhood. (Something there was told him by an old woman while he was quite young which seemed darkly to shadow forth his coming fate. But the forebodings of a withered old crone were not likely to make a deep impression upon his young elastic mind.) He was always remarkable among his playmates for his love of pleasure.



He was ever ready for sport. Whether at a game of marbles, or in a running match, Robinson was never behind ; and such sports even puritan austerity sanctions. But there were less harmless pleasures in which he indulged in after years, of which we shall speak in due time. Some religious experience—some hopes of conversion he once had ; (as what church-going New-Englander has not ?) but as is usual, the unnatural excitement of a revival kindled the ardor of his feelings without shaking the rooted principles of his nature. Meantime he had not neglected, amidst his pleasures, to make such acquirements in literature as have rendered him respectable and useful to society through life. During this period he was much addicted to novel reading ; but whether this operated favorably or unfavorably upon his morals does not appear. The father was much grieved at the seeming waywardness of his son ; and yet there appeared nothing in the child's character to warrant the fears which he has fulfilled. It is certainly an error to suppose that a remarkable event in one's life must be preceded by a series of strange adventures. Robinson's history, previous to his late unfortunate intimacy with Helen Jewett, was very much like the history of thousands of other young men, similarly educated, who have left behind them the restraints of home, and waded in the dissipation of cities. It is quite unnecessary to give the particulars of the first affair of the heart in which he found himself ensnared. In short, thousands who think of Robinson only as a murderer, may find in his earlier history a fearful resemblance to their own.

It will be less the object of this work to detail the particulars of his life, than to portray the peculiarities of his character. In making extracts from his journal, it will obviously be necessary to omit many names and circumstances. This is due to the living. Many things of a nature too private for the public eye, decency alone requires to be concealed. With such exceptions, whatever he has written that may serve to illustrate his character, and make known his principles and habits of thought, shall be presented to the public. The journal proceeds :



My first journal, which I commenced many years since, is stolen. The person who took it would steal mill-stones. He has taken that, which, though interesting to me, is valueless to all others. He must have been prompted to the act solely by that meanest of all motives, an impertinent curiosity.

*Oct. 6, 1833.*

I am almost sick this evening ; have just returned from the races, having won, let me see, twenty-seven dollars. This is the last day of the races ; the day on which they run out all the dregs and draw off the equestrian settlings, the spavined, the ring-boned, the stifled, the blind, lame and halt. Friend P. advises me not to bet ; he gives me so much advice that, in fact, it would require more wisdom to profit by it than to live without it ; his system of morals is like J. R.'s patent dog churn, which was a most excellent machine, only it required three hands to tend it. I shall not attempt to cleanse my inner man particularly, being well convinced that, if I shake the devil out of me, there will be nothing left. G. pretends to be a moralist and a philosopher ; but what better is a moralist than a stoic ; or a philosopher than an hypothesis maker, and a wretched squatter on the wilderness of conjecture ?

*Oct. 7th.*

What mean materials great men are made of ! What is Andrew Jackson, but the soul of "old Noll" crammed into an Egyptian mummy ? Look at Martin Van Buren, who has slipped into power like the noiseless serpent, and secured his succession to the presidency, by making every body believe that his election is certain ! Even Isaac Hill has become a great man---isaac hill !---a little misshapen lump of granite, fit only for a cabinet of curiosities. If such men constitute the head of the nation, God forbid that there should be truth in phrenology. If I were not a native of poor little blue Connecticut, I would set up for a politician myself.

*Oct. 8th.*

I like the institution of towns, which is universally established in New-England. It is decidedly demo-



cratic, and ought to prevail throughout the republic. Towns should be neither very large nor too small; they should be regularly laid out. These nooks and angles are always the very hoofs of a town; and, what is worse, they are seldom shod with the preparation of the gospel; for my part, I am a great stickler for the gospel.

Oct. 9th.

I have spent the most of this day in reading history. Why don't somebody write a good history of the American revolution? History is a great drag net in the stream of time; and it is necessary to draw its contents to the shore as often as twice in a century. Thousands and thousands of interesting facts and stirring anecdotes of the period of the revolution, are fading away in the memories of the few war-worn veterans of that day who yet survive. By the way, I lately saw the watch that was held up by the hangman at the execution of Major Andre.

Oct. 10th.

I have just submitted my head to the manipulation of a phrenologist. He tells me some queer facts; but I am forced to smile when he talks gravely about the *science* of phrenology. Science of fiddle-stick! I would a thousand times rather dignify old Lavater's dreams with the name of science. How absurd, to think of reducing the study of moral and intellectual philosophy to a mere knowledge of the geography and topography of a man's head! Allowing the system to be true, it lacks definiteness. Phrenologists seem to lose all idea of the unity of mind. I cannot see, though, how the charge of materialism necessarily rests upon them, since they may maintain that the developement of any particular bump results from the voluntary exercise of that faculty of the mind of which said bump is the index, and thus that the bump does not mould the mind; but, on the contrary, is moulded by it. On the whole, I am inclined to think, that phrenology itself is a bump, which credulity has inflicted on the pate of that d——d ass---the public.



Oct. 11th.

Had an argument with Mr. M. on the question of the utility of Sunday schools ; he is perfect master of the church and state cant. Forsooth, he considers the institution dangerous to liberty, &c. For my part, I believe it is doing good. It tears up a great deal of ignorance by the roots, and is at war with priestcraft. It is good policy, in carrying a point against an obstinate adversary, to seem to yield ; for by this means he is generally disarmed. To convince an obstinate and conceited man, it is sometimes necessary to throw arguments around him and within his reach, which, though he may not observe it, really go to sustain the opinions you wish him to embrace ; and then, by attacking him in some weak point, compel him to lay hold of your strong arguments for defence ; which, regarding as his own, he will examine and view favorably ; and, before he is aware of it, make them the frame of the very conclusion you wish him to adopt. Some of the best reasoners are little skilled in changing men's opinions. Conviction is one thing--persuasion another.

Oct. 12th.

Took supper and a game of cards with M. The only difference betwixt an epicure and a stoic, is, that the epicure lives broader, and not quite so long. Just received a letter from my dear Miss B.

M. is very fond of giving definitions. He says, conchology is a hard study on the outside ; but perfectly easy when the crust is broken. Patience---a football, which more folks are willing to kick than to furnish. Ichthyology---a study, in which the prophet Jonah made greater progress than any of his successors in the science. Theology---a traffic, by which the clergy exchange drafts, payable in heaven, for the good things of this life. Missionary and education societies---toll-gates on the strait and narrow way, which induce a great many to take the other road. Chemistry---a science, which teaches how to unmask nature. Pity, M. is so wicked, and so fond of the girls, and \* \* \* \* \*



Oct. 13th.

How singular is the law of analogies ! The swallow reminds me of the minim—the robin, of the trout—the vulture of the shark, &c. I hardly comprehend the grounds of the first named classification. There is perhaps some resemblance, now unnoticed, of shape, size or color, which the mind readily found in one of its earlier methods of arrangement. The robin and the trout, however unlike, hold a similar relation to the inhabitants of their respective elements ; and this is undoubtedly the link that associates them in the mind. This is perhaps a more useful, and certainly a stronger law of association, than contrast, however natural the latter may be. In how few minds is the idea of an ostrich, close associated with that of a humming bird. Contrast is rather a painful order of association. It is to the mind, what sudden extremes of light and darkness are to the eye. Whereas the association of resemblance is both easy and delightful. Thus the vulture and the shark are associated on the ground of the similarity of their habits. On the same principle, I associate birds and brutes—as the turkey-buzzard and hyena—the ostrich and cameleopard—the eagle and the lion, &c. ; also brutes and vegetable—as the lion and the oak—; also brutes and fishes ; thus the whale is my sea elephant—and the shark, my tiger of the ocean. Thus do the threads of association run as well longitudinally as latitudinally—there is both warp and filling ;—and all kinds and species of living and inanimate things are so woven in into the tapestry of the mind, as, by gradation of size, harmony of resemblance and light and shade of contrast, to form a whole, at once beautiful and grand.

Oct. 14th.

Had an interview with Miss D. She is perfectly enchanting. Her splendor is not dimmed by a single speck of vanity or affectation. She takes no pains to show her handsome little feet. You see no mincing and trying to look lovely. I wish I could appropriate her. She is aided by art to be sure ; but that is right ; so is the painted girl of the forest. How does art differ from affectation ? Art is a transparent covering of nature—affectation, an *opaque*. Art is consistent with natural grace and ease—;



affectation is not. The former adorns—; the latter deforms nature. If Miss D. \* \* \* \*

Here follows a long dissertation, which however interesting, I shall take the liberty to suppress.

*October 15th.*

I have spent this day in castle-building, New-York plans, &c. I must visit J. and find out what my good friends there think of my projects.

*October 25th.*

A thin beak of a nose is indicative of a cold heart and a narrow understanding.

Why are people with short necks, more energetic, passionate and prompt than others? I cannot tell; unless it be owing to the closer union of head and heart. There is a more ready concurrence of the upper and lower houses. Your cool heads being in a higher latitude, put a frosty veto upon the warmest measures of the heart.

*October 26th.*

Wit is the crystallization of thought.

Some chose to take time by the foretop; but I prefer a solid grip at the old fellows cue.

Physicians—men who pull people into the world thro one nole and pitch them out thro' another.

Slavery is spreading like ink upon unsized paper. But what then, Mr. Abolitionist? Would you therefore seize the inkstand and pour its contents over the whole sheet? Would you inundate the conntry with blacks?

It is no more true that every man's calamity is somebody's blessing than that every man's blessing is somebody's misfortune; whether that misfortune be real or imaginary.

*October 27th.*

Slander tarnishes a bright character; but polishes a black one. Milton has rubbed and brushed the devil's sooty face, till it shines like 'Day & Martin.' I never formed a just conception of Paradise Lost, before. What a heaven, and what a hell!



**Query.** Where does the bottomless pit open to, on the under side? If it has no opening it must have a bottom; if it is open at the bottom, it cannot be bottomless, maugre my grandmother. If it has an opening, it is not a pit; but a tunnel. If there is a bottomless pit, why should there not, in strict architectural propriety, be a topless heaven for its roof?

**Query.** Would such a roof shut out the rain?

What a delightful picture Milton gives us of the young world! I say young world—for who can doubt that even nature may decay?—that the world, like the things in it, will wear out? Are there not proofs that the principle of animal and vegetable organization grows weaker as this globe grows older? Where are the giants and the men of a thousand years old, and the mammoths and the mastodons of olden time? I believe that in the process of ages the soil will lose its active qualities—; the sun and the planets—all—all are losing that power with which they were originally quickened, and will at length wander dimly thro' their orbits, treeless, lifeless, inert masses of matter,

*October 28th.*

I have been a tolerably close observer of women. Did you ever know a woman to get in love with a man she had never seen? I have.

Women despise cowards more than men do. The reason is obvious.

Men often dignify their envy with the name of contempt.

*October 29th.*

I have just been conversing with Dr. A. on the doctrine of materialism. How strangely the Dr. reasons. Some minds seem to be so constructed that they cannot advance in a direct line; but must wind thro' every subject like a corkscrew.

I believe we are apt to think most vigorously in the dark. It is more easy in darkness to abstract our thoughts, since then the sight of surrounding objects is not constantly disturbing the mind and interrupting its trains of reflection. Homer and Milton were blind.

Mrs. L. would rival John Bunyan in Allegory. She says, an intemperate man cannot be a Christian. The 'rhtho' of Se strait and narrow way, has fitted up neither



grogshops nor splendid hotels for the accommodation of pilgrims."

*October 30th.*

I have been looking into Brown's philosophy this evening. I cannot exactly subscribe to the whole of his theory of thought. I believe that every succeeding thought is modified by every preceding thought that has ever existed in the mind. The first thought must have taken its shape from the mind itself, as it come fashioned from the hand of God, or, if you please, from God himself.

Just received a pink letter from my dear little Miss B. Ah! what slaves the women make us!

*October 31st.*

Said A. to B. if you had your life to live over, what would you do? Go hang myself, replied B. The answer was philosophical enough; tho' I dont exactly know about this 'dancing on nothing,' as Daniel Webster or some other justice of the peace terms it.

The madness of moments, may destroy the wisdom of ages.

Trusting providence will make any man a bankrupt. To-morrow ought never to stand security for to-day.

Why is a dentist like sour grapes? Because he sets the childrens' teeth on edge.

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Here follows the copy of a letter from one of his correspondents, which must be omitted.

*November 3d.*

'Tis fortunate that mirth is so cheap. If nothing but real wit and genuine humor could raise a laugh, this world would be as solemn as a sepulchre.

No man is a proficient in self-knowledge who has not learned to despise himself.

To learn another man's character, we must observe him in his moments of excessive anger and good nature.

Hope is the rainbow of the mind; and confidence is physical power, the substratum of courage.

Male charity is the most despicable virtue extant. I know not why; unless because, from observation, the world is convinced that its existence is incompatible with nobler virtues.



*November 4th.*

True, some men judge of the tree by its fruits ; but a vastly greater number, judge of the fruit by the tree.

Certain it is, that a few men, do the thinking for the whole world. That greater mischief does not arise from the stupidity of the multitude, seems to be owing to the fact, that more people do right by accident than wrong by design.

No passion is so sure to work out its own defeat as Envy. My old comrade C. has forgotten me. Poverty is the bane of friendship. If I could shake fifty thousand dollars in my purse, what a resurrection of friends would start up ! The world looks into a man's pocket for his character. Tho' a person might have all the wit of Sheridan, if he were poor, his smart sayings would have no currency ; while the stupid maxims of a Girard are quoted as the oracles of wisdom.

*November 5th.*

Last night I dreamed of receiving a letter from my father ; and Lo ! it hath come to pass. How must we account for what seems prophetic in dreams ? I explain it thus : In the course of the day, our hurried minds leave a thousand thoughts and reasonings unfinished.—The mind has perhaps in its possession, all the data necessary to make up a reasonable conjecture, that some particular event is to happen to-morrow ; but neglects to push out the inferences from such data, to a conclusion. Sometimes this neglect may be owing to the hurry and pressure of other thoughts—sometimes to a glimmering presentiment that the conclusion may be painful. In sleep, the mind recurring to these data, draws conclusions from them, of events which the next day actually transpire.

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The following is an extract from the letter above alluded to which he received from his father.

\* \* \* \* I dislike the idea of your going to New York to reside ; nor will I attempt to disguise the reasons. I fear that your moral character may suffer. You will there be ensnared by a thousand temptations which I fear you have not strength of principle to resist. I know your



self-confidence ; but I also know your weakness, my son. Even where you are, I tremble for you. Indeed, indeed, you are, I fear, a child of the devil ! \* \* \*

It cannot be denied that the father had some ground for alarm at the time of writing the above letter. How little did his son, in disregarding the advice of his parent, foresee the awful precipice over which he was stepping. Young as he was, his principles had begun to be weakened by the insidious spell of pleasure. His graceful person, his winning address and sparkling conversation, rendered him a dangerous companion to the other sex. Nor can it be disputed that he ventured to think and speak on religious subjects, with a rather alarming degree of freedom for so young a man. The Journal proceeds,

My old father little knows the strength of my character. So I am not to be risked in a city ! Forsooth the carriages would run over me ! Indeed ! indeed ! I think I had best be taken back to the nursery ! But the danger arises from my being a child of the devil. Really the old man gives himself a hard name—I dislike such paternity.

*Nov. 6th.*

Mrs. C. denies that Mrs. B. is handsome. That is not strange. I find that a beautiful woman is never acknowledged to be such by women in general.

The Dr. says that blacks and whites are just alike. So they are in the same sense that charcoal and diamond are alike ; which, if both carbon, are not both diamond. (Query. Will there be African angels in heaven ?)

Ambition may be compared to a pine—avarice, to a banyan tree.

It is sometimes worse to suppress truth than to utter falsehoods.

*Nov. 7th.*

It is a curious thought, that every particle of matter around us, however accidental its position may appear to be, is located by some fixed law of nature.

If men were obliged to travel wherever their thoughts wander, they would, if possible, cease to think. There



is a certain power of forcing the mind into a listless reverie, which is often a great relief to us when our thoughts upon any subject grow painful. It is like unlocking the water-wheels of a steamboat.

The pattering of rain has a soothing influence on the mind. To lie on a bed under the roof and hear the rain pour down, is the luxury of gloom.

*Nov. 8th.*

Had another conversation with the Dr. on religious matters. He says he is friendly to religion, but inimical to bigotry; which he says is only the acetous fermentation of religion. I don't know about these hair-splitting distinctions. I see through the Dr.'s principles as plainly as I can through a vacuum. He might as well launch out into open infidelity. For my part, if I doubt any thing I must doubt all; if I go the gaff, I may as well go the slasher gaff! This Volney's Ruins of his will hardly ruin my orthodoxy, and I will read it at my leisure.

If all mankind would agree not to take offence at injurious language, but only at injurious actions, there would be very little quarrelling in the world.

At times nothing is so eloquent as silence.

“And they spoke not a word of sorrow,  
“But they silently gazed on the face of the dead,  
“And they bitterly thought on the morrow.”

*Nov. 9th.*

When we look over the world and see how much has been done—splendid cities built, and powerful navies—and, in short, all the productions of labour and skill, and at the same time see how few and feeble are those engaged in the work, it is difficult to conceive when and how so much has been accomplished.

Satire and flattery are instruments alike fatal; the former tortures to death—the latter tickles to death.

How fine! To see all the changes that in all time have been gradually wrought upon matter compressed into the space of a few moments.



Nov. 10.

Sincerity is often the mask of impudence. When a person says: "Now I mean to be sincere with you," the English of it generally is: "Now I mean to insult you."

A politic man measures his sayings by other people's prejudices and understandings.

I heard an anecdote lately which I consider better than the fable of the fox and the sour grapes. It is this: A poor drowning fellow being refused admission into the ark by Noah, exclaimed; Well, well, Gaffer, go off with your old scow; there will be only a sprinkling of rain after all!

Nov. 11.

How seldom do we think of our fathers as boys! I should like to chat with some of my great grandchildren that are to be. I can't form the least idea how they will look. Ah well! I am free from a participation in their sorrows. If I could be sure of its security, I might put a little money at interest for some of my distant posterity, and thus make them independant. 'Twould be well, for instance, to buy a lot of wild land for one's great grandchildren, in one of the new states. But then, my wife! perhaps *she* is not yet born.

A question. Which is the worse, fickleness or obstinacy? The extremes of refinement and barbarism meet. Bad men prefer the admiration to the respect of the world. May we not judge of the qualities of our own hearts, as well from the consciousness of the kind of fame we desire, as by the nature of that we already have?

Pun is Wit's bastard; yet, like other bastards, sometimes the brightest of the family.

Barber's distich. I am pleased with the following paraphrase of a couplet from Goldsmith.

"Man wants but little hair below,  
"Nor wants that little long."

The mocking bird is the actor—the nightingale is the poet of "the upper deep." The actor may have more talents, but the poet has all the immortality.

Nov. 12.

Why should I be angry at a fellow like S.? There are some men of whom God only requires that they shall do no harm. He has but two ideas in his head, and those two are not breeders. I should despise myself if I believed I were jealous of him. What a beauty he is! I wish I could hire him to let me take his picture for a pair of dog-irons. I wonder whether he belongs to the human species, or is from Tennessee? And yet the girl seemed to countenance the wretch's addresses. What whimsical fools women are!

Attended a party last evening. I think lawyer R.'s *jeu d'esprits* rather dull. Some excellent jokes are spoiled by transplanting—being like toad-stools.

Somebody says, that thoughts without style, are like bullets with-



out powder. Style is the urn of thought. He who expresses an idea inimitably well, of course places it above the reach of plagiarism. It is his own; for come the elements of its composition from whence they may, his mind has conceived it and given it birth. The genius of a Scott, brooding over the dust of ancient lore, till forms of beauty spring up like the phenix from its ashes, may it not be original genius? The oak of the forest embodies the decayed forms of an hundred mouldering trunks and shades with leafy greenness the sepulchre from which it sprung; yet is it not an oak? the undying king of the wilderness? the Shakspeare of the vegetable kingdom?

The Dr. says I must be consistent and not change my political creed. But why may not an individual change his politics, when the whole nation is turning a somerset? Revolution will carry us round in spite of ourselves. Truly we are a hopeful nation of democrats. This is a fine country, I allow—a beautiful country—but its inhabitants burrow in it like so many toads in paradise.

One of the greatest comforts in the world is to have good lounging places.

I think my death would not increase the sale of crape in this town. How little I should be missed here; how much less in the world!

I have observed that cripples are almost always saucy.

God go wi' you, said I to friend ———, as he was stepping into a stage coach. "No, Robinson," replied he, "we have no room inside for another passenger." I fear that he prefers the devil for a traveling companion.

People always have some selfish end in view in praising us. If we would always remember this we should seldom be flattered. It is hard work for an honest man to flatter. But when a decent person *does* a mean act, he generally does it in a hurry, as he would swallow pills.

Nov. 14th.

Just returned from witnessing a trial at court. The jury might have read their verdict in the prisoner's looks. The counsel for a criminal at the bar, ought to see that his client is washed and shaved, and made to look as decent and innocent as possible.

Just received a letter from old Mr. ———, who is considered quite a literary character; but what wretched orthography! Spelling must be learned while one is young—while the mind is new.

Is it uncommon for men to distrust their own sanity of mind? I believe not. I speak from my own experience.

Thoughts and feelings in which we indulge without aversion in the evening, often fill our minds with disgust when we reflect on them in the morning.

I consider Mr. M. a profound ass. He is one of those who get a reputation for wit by looking shrewd, as some others do for sanctity by looking solemn. He very sagely remarked last evening, that he believed in the possibility of constructing a railroad tunnel through the centre of the earth, for the purpose of carrying on the East India trade, &c. If this railroad mania continues, Uncle Sam will soon need a straight jacket. People seem to think that the business of this life is to fly over the face of the earth by the propelling power of hot water.



People's dogs, horses, &c. seem to resemble their owners ; and the resemblance becomes more remarkable the longer they live together. I knew a dog that went lame because his master did

'Tis a common remark, that no one can make a proposition intelligible to another, which is not perfectly clear to himself. This is not true ; for the speaker sometimes, even if by accident, gives a clue to the hearer's understanding, which the hearer, owing to better information, or a more logical head, runs out into a distinct and legitimate conclusion, while the speaker's mind loses track of the argument, and misses the conclusion. I am an enemy to adages. It is an old adage, that in quarrels both parties are always to blame. Hence the referees generally "split the difference." Adages are generally mischievous. They are popular only because they save the labor of thought and the drudgery of investigation. Men who are governed by adages are unfit to administer justice. Mottoes have great influence over weak minds. They save the labor of analysis. The sayings of poor Richard have made us a nation of misers. I believe that mottoes, saws, adages and proverbs, have much greater influence on national character, than ballads and patriotic songs.

*Nov. 15th.*

By comparison of my own thoughts and feelings with other people's, I am daily surprised at finding so many resemblances ; so that I am now in the habit of inferring, that what pleases me, will please other folks, and so vice versa. People are certainly more alike than they generally suppose. At least their thoughts and feelings are much more alike than their words and actions. "Do as you would like to be done by," with some slight alteration to suit the different professions and circumstances of different individuals, would be a good rule for popularity.

I have just read the two first cantos of that very moral and excellent poem "Don Juan."

Women less frequently treat the advances of a stranger with coldness than men do. Indeed they are kinder, and in every way better than we are. Perhaps I am too partial to that sex. I have a cousin who is a woman. Females are more jealous of the rights, and tenacious of the privileges of their sex, than males are.

How many disgusting things there are to poison the poetry of life ! For example, the decayed tooth of a mistress plays the very deuce with a lover's sentimentality. I am sorry that my dear little B. is compelled to wipe her nose.

*Nov. 16th.*

Wit is an abbreviation of truth.

Affliction is like a well ; the deeper one is in it, the plainer he can see the stars of heaven above him. When I am humble, heaven looks bright, even to me. Last night I watched with the dying C. M. Now he is dead. This sympathy is a curious property of mind. It may be wrought up by almost any object of sense. For instance, it makes me feel faint to see a steam engine laboring so hard in hot weather. How listless it makes one to see the smoke crawling out of a chimney as if it had nothing else to do. I have noticed that a horse and rider have a reciprocal influence upon each other,—each insensibly imparting to the other a portion of his own activity or indolence.

What are virtue and vice but relative terms ? Virtue is known by



comparison with vice, just as light is measured by contrast with darkness.

If you wish a person to hate you expose his ignorance. Female virtue (says a distinguished rake) may be appropriately represented in wax—masculine virtue, in marble.

*Nov. 17th.*

Have been reading at one end of one of these everlasting Congress speeches. It is perfectly spongy; and might all be condensed in a thimble. But the great man undoubtedly understands the character of his constituents; or he would not be in Congress. He finds more advantage in digesting files of old newspapers than he would in studying the orations of Demosthenes. It is easier to judge of quantity than of quality; and people are determined to be imposed on by weak, long-winded, disjointed speeches.

I should like to be in Durham this evening at twilight, standing on the olden bridge of 'sighs and tears.'

*Nov. 18th.*

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*Nov. 19th.*

I found a man to-day with sharp, winking, black eyes, who swore he was in heart a knave, I believe solely because he believed I had detected his character in his countenance.

Phrenology is a very fashionable instrument of flattery—more so than physiognomy;—perhaps because the phrenologist makes a show of science—or because it is less embarrassing to stand behind a man's head and flatter him than to look in his face and do it. Perhaps physiognomy is quite as popular as phrenology, with women.

Rogues are apt to wink faster than honest men. It pains their eyes to have them looked into; for it requires a strong effort to prevent the eye from betraying guilt;—and winking is a relief to it.

*Nov. 20th.*

It makes one feel very cheap and awkward to offer to shake hands with another and not to have the offer noticed. For my part, in such a case, I generally move my hand on, up to my hat or cravat and pretend to be adjusting that. Generally speaking it is the duty of Seniors to make the first advance toward a pump-handle salutation.—The shake should be firm or feeble, according to circumstances, and always perpendicular, instead of horizontal like the wagging of a dog's tail. There would be a great deal more shaking of hands if people would not wait for each other to make the first advance. It is a good social custom, which women ought to practise as well as men.

*Nov. 21st.*

Just now sent a letter full of gilded professions to Durham.

It is very painful to my mind to reflect on the hopeless multiplicity of books and men and women and things, with which I can never become acquainted. I almost believe, that our appetite for knowledge, like other appetites, causes us more pain by its intense hankerings than it affords us pleasure by its gratification.

*Nov. 22d.*

Attended court this day. This is a very common difference between two speakers:—that the one is intent on thought and the other on words;—the one shapes ideas, the other, sentences;—the former is cautious what he speaks the latter, how he speaks.



If the sexes would keep entirely apart, how fast we could get rich ! In a few years, our species would narrow down to a point or come ; —and the last couple—the isthmus as it were, of our race, might then, like Adam or Noah, begin to re-people and would leave to their children a very pretty real estate. Nothing but the silly practice of matrimony, keeps mankind so cursed poor. If it is a bad practice for a poor man, why not for a poor world ? But reform is hopeless.

*Nov. 23d.*

In composition, always, if possible, reject a word that fails to convey to the mind a definite meaning. Conciseness and precision are as essential to a good period as unity and outline are to a good painting. As coloring is to a picture so is imagery to composition. As outline is more essential than coloring, so is perspicuity more essential than rhetorical embellishment. Style should be but the drapery of thought. Thought should shine thro' style, 'like apples of gold in a net work of silver.'

This world wears more ruffle than shirt. I have often felt, (when shaving, for instance) a sudden and almost ungovernable desire to commit suicide. And yet I had as keen a relish for life as ever. I feel a kind of horrible delight in thus poisoning myself in imagination, over the dark gulf of eternity. There may be danger of increasing this excitement to such a degree as to induce insanity and suicide. Perhaps curiosity as often causes suicide, as misanthropy. My good old father would call it a temptation of the devil.

How happens it that all of a sudden, the tuneful throng of bards is all so hushed ? Only a few years ago, we had Scott, Byron, Campbell, Hogg, Wordsworth, Crockly, Southey and 40 more—publishing poems faster than we could read their prefaces. But now a days, a new poem is a novelty. Is not the appearance of poets, in great numbers, one of the phenomena that succeeds revolutions ? They follow the wreck of states and empires, much as crows and vultures hang over the rear of armies.

The Dr. proposes the following arithmetical question—If one apple cost Adam the damnation of all mankind, what ought to be the price of a barrel of cider ?

*Nov. 24th.*

What is more strange than a thought ? Reflect on it one moment. Whence cometh it and whither goeth it ? What, in fine, is it, but a wonderful mystery ? and yet who knows but the power of thought may pervade the universe ?—that all animals and insects and trees and vegetables do not reflect ?—that as life, in some form is inseparable from organized matter, so is also intellect inseparable from life ? To be sure our species holds a rank in creation, which, to minds organized as ours are, seems superior to all. With great self-complacency, we style ourselves lords of creation.

I cannot say that I am pleased with the most of the singing I have heard so highly applauded at our theatres. Some of the famous English singers, I think sing wretchedly. I heard a certain English songstress who was all the rage. I could not bear her. I would rather hear a hog squeal in a hurricane.

Analogy is the source of a thousand erroneous opinions. The vulgar generally suppose, that a cold axe brought to the fire, sweats ;—for they observe the drops of moisture upon it, and reason about it as if it were an animal.

*Nov. 25th.*

Man when most happy is only not unhappy.

Alas ! gloomy winter is coming. The sun looks as dim in the sky as a pewter plate. Cold winds are dissipating the balm and poetry of our little Indian summer—the long grass is bleached and rustling upon the plains—the forests are disrobing—and all nature falling into the sere and yellow leaf—the mustered millions of chattering black birds have left us and already glitter in the sunshine of the South. All here is desolation ; for hoary winter is leading his blustering battallions upon us, from the dark North.

*Nov. 26th.*

If the inhabitants of the ocean were as noisy as those of the land, a sea voyage would not be particularly monotonous.

I think horns would be quite an ornament to the hog. They would be characteristic of the animal ; but providence seems to have made swine in defiance of the rules of taste. On the other hand, what is the propriety of making a toad with horns ? I saw two toads of this description, in possession of an Englishman who was on his return from Texas. He says they live on ants and are not easily caught. The horns are as large in proportion to the size of the reptile, as a goat's ;—and much resemble the horns of that animal. They have also a smaller pair of horns



beneath these. They have tails also (God knows why) which taper much like the otter's. This is a description of one of them—perhaps the male. The other has a ruff of short horns around the neck beside. In other respects they are no better than the common toad. The Englishman seemed to think his a very superior breed of toads.

Wit often leaps over a subject which argument cannot wade thro'

The most populous part of this town is the grave yard; which the Dr. says is the grave yard; which the Dr. says is mainly owing to the great competition amongst phycicians and the increased facilities they have for despatching business. He compares it to the great increase of travelling within a few years past.

By the way, the Dr. told a good story last night which I must try to preserve.—Tis thus: Mr. Slang always used to say, 'my horses, my boys, &c.'; Mr. Slang now invariably says 'our horses, our boys, or our farm.' This substitution of 'our' for 'my,' by Mr. Slang, was brought about thus: Mr. Slang had just married a second wife. On the day after the wedding, Mr. Slang casually remarked, 'I now intend, Mrs. Slang, to enlarge my dairy.'

You mean our dairy, my dear, replies Mrs. Slang.

No. quoth Mr. Slang. I say I shall enlarge *my* dairy.

Say *our* dairy, Mr. Slang.

No; *my* dairy.

Say *our* dairy, say *our*, screamed Mrs. Slang, seizing the poker.

*My* dairy! *my* dairy! *my* dairy! voiciferated the husband.

*Our* dairy! *our* dairy! *our* dairy! re-echoed the wife, emphasizing each 'our' with a blow of the poker upon the back of her cringing spouse.

Mr. Slang retreated under the bed. In passing under the bed clothes, Mr. Slang's hat was brushed off. Mr. Slang remained under cover several minutes, waiting for a calm. At length his wife saw him thrusting his head out at the foot of the bed, much like a turtle from its shell.

What are you looking for, Mr. Slang, says she? I am looking, my dear, snivelled he, to see if I can see anything of *our* hat. The struggle was over. The next Sunday morning, Mr. Slang asked Mrs. Slang, if we might wear our clean linen breeches to meeting? And in short ever since the above mentioned occurrence, Mr. Slang has studiously avoided the use of that odious singular possessive pronoun.—He stands corrected. Forsooth he considers Mrs. Slang the better grammarian.

Query. Why do spotted pigs squeal on Christmas morning? Answer. Because they are hungry.

Nov. 27th.

A Southron once said to a Yankee. 'you lie, Sir! The Yankee replied; "well I guess not;—tho' I'll consider on it; may be I do; but if I don't I'll be damed if I don't lick you!"

I called last evening to see Miss B. I found it impossible for some time to determine whether or not I had made any impression on her heart; before we parted however, the dear creature made me sensible of her attachment. This has given me new life. What an astonishing power love exercises over us. Why should I be so enamoured of a piece of painted flesh?

The smallest minds least conceal their contempt of poverty. It is really as unreasonable to despise a person for being poor, as for being bald headed. For my own part I expect always to be poor. All my money seems to be liquid. Now I have ten dollars in my pocket; but I might as well try to keep the tencommandments. I have observed, though, that the most of men undergo a change of opinion as to what is the chief end of life, some time before they are thirty years of age, and commence, hoarding. They choose

"Avarice,  
"That good old gentlemanly vice."

Said Mr. M., I have just been struck with a thought—then, interrupted the Dr., you have much to be thankful for. For certainly the chances were more numerous of your being struck by lightning.

Nov. 28th.

In reading over the old English Reader, I am surprised to find it contain so many just sentiments, which, when a boy, entirely escaped my notice; but now, my own experience and reflection make me tolerably sensible of their truth. There is great advantage in re perusing books. It serves, not merely as a review of the author, and an interview with an old friend, but also brings into comparison the past and present states of our own minds—re-measures their progress—re-chisels the half-obliterated mile-stones—and illuminates the path of memory from the cradle to the coffin.

The remaining part of Robinson's diary was written since his residence in New-York. Under all circumstances, and at all times, the same spirit of inquiry, the same sh:wd observation of men and things seems to have characterized the writer. It



will, of course, be necessary to suppress such parts of the journal as may have a bearing, however remote, upon the question of the prisoner's guilt or innocence of the alleged murder of Helen Jewett. Nothing here written shall operate to prejudice the public mind.

Here am I in New-York—the great theatre of all my hopes. My bark is upon the waters. The future is known to heaven alone. It is a common saying, that every man moulds his own fortune. It is just as true as that every man moulds his own face.

To-day I visited Harper's mammoth book manufactory. Truly is it said, that of making books there is no end. And yet how seldom does a new book contain a new thought. The history and biography of each passing generation, serve only to re-point old morals and give piquancy to ancient axioms. Nothing new remains to be said, or thought, or done; and he is the wittiest man who can crowd the most common-place matter into the narrowest compass. This has been true for centuries. Seneca and Solomon have no other claim to wit than sententiousness. With all their wisdom they were only a couple of old saw-setters.

Why will a man who is ready to commit suicide, fight like a devil in defence of his life, if attacked? This seems absurd. But it is one thing to jump, and another thing to be pushed off.

One must visit a city like New-York, before he can form an adequate conception of the populousness of our earth. What a tide of human beings is forever pouring through Broadway! How grand would be the spectacle, if at a glance we could see the earth spinning upon its axis, like a pin-ball, stuck full of people, trees, &c. At a moderate estimate I find there are human entrails enough in the world to make a rope of three hundred and twelve strands, reaching from the earth to the moon; there are, also, above six billions of human toe-nails. The earth contains about six hundred and twenty-five thousand miles of inhabitants, long measure, or two hundred and thirty-nine millions, sixty-two thousand and five hundred cords, solid measure.

What avails all the hurry, and bustle, and restlessness that so strongly characterize New-York? What are they all in pursuit of, that they thus fly about like the inhabitants of an assaulted ant hill? Wealth. They cannot understand, that those who dig for happiness always get underneath it. Happiness is not to be found in solid ore. It is everywhere diffused, like particles of gold, over the sandy waste of human existence. Contentment extracts happiness from life, as the gills of a fish separate breath from water. Yet money does miracles in New-York. It converts a dolt into a wit—a booby into a beauty—a jackass into a gentleman; while poverty pelts a fellow to death with insults, and buries him with contempt.

Just returned from a visit at the Insane Hospital. What chaos of mind is there! But is any person perfectly sane? No. I grant that the madness of the maniac is more peculiar, and less popular, and therefore less apparent; but probably not more real than mine. No mind is strictly sane while under the undue influence of any passion; for passion always distorts the intellectual vision. We are, perhaps, generally more sane in the morning than in the evening. How many sanguine projects we form in the evening, which we reject as foolish or visionary the next morning? This results from the different states of our minds. In the morning the mind is calm, and reason vigorous, and imagination asleep; but at night the passions are up. They love late hours. Sometimes, at the dead hour of midnight, a thought is roused up from the deep caverns of the mind, like a startled maniac, which all the energy of reason can scarcely re-cage!

The following extract from a letter to one of his friends, throws some light on the state of his mind at about the period of his removal to New-York.

MY DEAR C.

\* \* \* \* \*

"My plans!" Why, I suppose they are marked out in the book of Fate; but that is a book which I can no more read than the Hebrew Christomathy. Why should I lay plans, who am the very weathercock of Fortune? And yet a plan is a good thing—an excellent thing—a ladder, as it were, by which to rise in the world. I have ambition that burns like a fever in my veins. I sometimes feel strength to soar up like a young eagle; but alas! when I spread my wings they prove to be waxen.

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"My plans!" Why, I have no more plan than the cascade that comes foaming, and tumbling, and leaping headlong from crag to precipice. The current of my life seems subject only to that law of hydrostatics by which liquids have a tendency to escape through the lowest aperture. I fear I shall accomplish nothing; though you well know, that when under the stimulus of high hope, there lives not a more laborious, daring spirit on earth than mine. \* \* \*

But I shall go to New-York; and however reluctantly, must leave her.



We have now presented to the reader such extracts from Robinson's diary, as are deemed most illustrative of his peculiar habits of thought, and which furnish the key to his whole character. On the whole, it is clear, that whatever may be thought of the correctness of his principles, and the truth of his opinions, he has an astonishing insight into human nature—a depth and grasp of observation uncommon to men of maturer age. No person, perhaps, ever relied more entirely upon the resources of his own mind than he. He seems to have adopted no opinions upon the credit of great names. He scanned every measure—he analyzed every character that came under his notice. He considered no subject too low for examination, or too high for investigation. There seems to be nothing in nature destitute of interest to him. And yet there is little in his appearance or conversation indicative of strong character. He seems to have lived within himself. That he has often felt the strongest impulses of ambition, prompting him to struggle in the career of greatness, is evident. But as is usual with persons of his age, love seems often to have gained the ascendancy, and become the controlling passion of his breast. We shall now present to the reader a copy of a letter from Robinson to one of his friends in the country. We have permission to publish the letter, on condition of suppressing names.

MY DEAR R.

I will now fulfil my promise of giving you a sketch of one of my adventures in this city. This is a large town, and contains as great a variety of character as can well be brought together. Of course vice and virtue are often found in juxtaposition; indeed they are frequently bed-fellows. Sin wears a very serene, genteel aspect here. Character has not much index in the city; so you have only to scan it the more narrowly. I find it unnecessary now to hunt for adventures. But I will tell you how I at first fell into an adventure, as it were, when I came to the city, as innocent, comparatively, as Joseph was when Mrs. Potiphar pulled off his coat. I was walking to my lodgings one very warm summer evening, through ——— street. As I was passing by a very superb house, I chanced to see standing at the window the most beautiful woman I had then ever beheld. You know the influence a handsome face has over me. What do you think I did? I stood, like a fool, and looked in her dark liquid eye. In a moment she flew to the door, and in a voice that thrilled my heart, exclaimed, 'My dear cousin, is it you? Come to my arms!' Now, to be sure, that was the very thing I wished to do; for never were arms more beautiful. But there was evidently some mistake. I was not her cousin. And yet I might be her cousin. If a wise child only, knows his own father, how much wiser must he be who knows his own cousins? Beside, I could not do less than go in and make an explanation to the lady. In a word, the motives were all on one side of the question, and so I went in. She embraced me very tenderly, and with an hundred questions conducted me to a sofa. "Have you been well? When did you leave M.? How tall you have grown! I am sure my old husband will need his spectacles to recognize you." As she sat by my side, propounding this multiplicity of questions, which of course would terminate some time, and require answers, I felt much like one standing on the drop of a gallows. I dreaded explanation. The charm was too delicious to be broken. I drank up her words—my eye fed upon her charms—I looked on her beautiful neck—her slender waist—her delicate foot—her taper hand—her rosy mouth—oh why had not heaven made me her cousin!

\* \* \* \* \*

I am convinced she now loves me better than any of her cousins.

The author has now presented all the facts in relation to the prisoner that he deems it right at the present time to make public. Robinson is about to stand before a jury of his country to be tried for his life. We are unwilling to offer one word that may have a tendency to bias the public mind as to the question of his guilt. If, young and interesting as he is, he shall be found innocent of the crime alleged, we shall heartily rejoice at it; if he shall be proved guilty, and be sentenced to execution upon the scaffold, may God have mercy upon his soul!