WORD PORTRAITS OF FAMOUS WRITERS

EDITED BY
MABEL E. WOTTON

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‘What manner of man is he?’
Twelfth Night

LONDON
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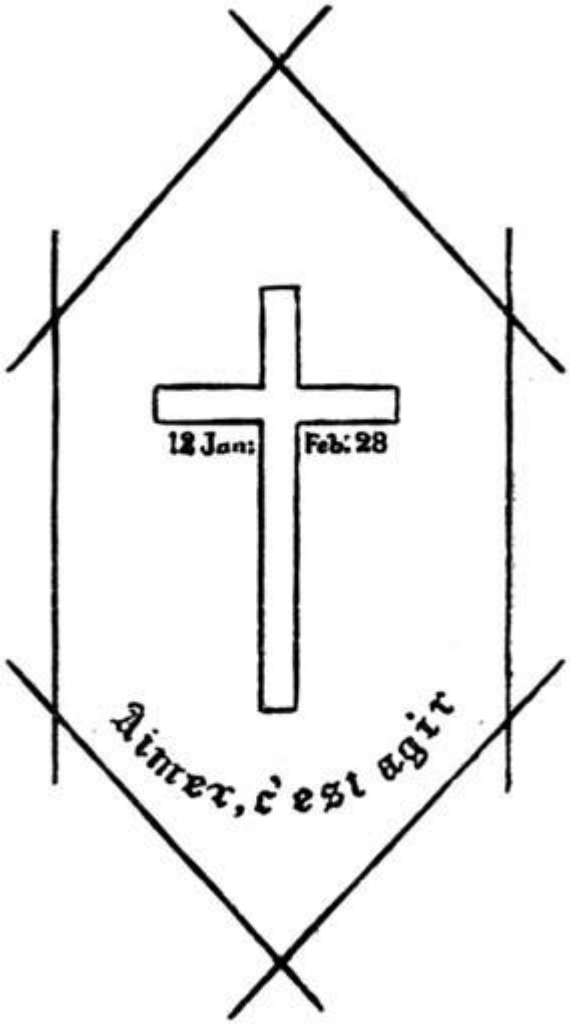

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INTRODUCTION

"The world has always been fond of personal details respecting men who have been celebrated." These were the words of Lord Beaconsfield, and with them he prefixed his description of the personal appearance of Isaac D'Israeli; but we hardly need the dictum of our greatest statesman to convince ourselves that at all events every honest literature-lover takes a very real interest in the individuality of those men whose names are perpetually on his lips. It is not enough for such a one merely to make himself familiar with their writings. It does not suffice for him that the *Essays of Elia*, for instance, can be got by heart, but he feels that[Pg viii] he must also be able to linger in the playground at Christ's with the "lame-footed boy," and in after years pace

the Temple gardens with the gentle-faced scholar, before he can properly be said to have made Lamb's thoughts his own. At the best it is but a very incomplete notion that most of us possess as to the actual personality of even the most prominent of our British writers. The almost womanly beauty of Sidney, and the keen eyes and razor face of Pope, would, perhaps, be recognised as easily as the well-known form of Dr. Johnson; but taking them *en masse* even a widely-read man might be forgiven if, from amongst the scraps of hearsay and curtly-recorded impressions on which at rare intervals he may alight, he cannot very readily conjure up the ghosts of the very men whose books he has studied, and to whose haunts he has been an eager pilgrim.

Such a power the following pages have[Pg ix] attempted to supply. They contain an account of the face, figure, dress, voice, and manner of our best-known writers ranging from Geoffrey Chaucer to Mrs. Henry Wood,—drawn in all cases when it is possible by their contemporaries, and when through lack of material this endeavour has failed, the task of portrait-painting has devolved either on other writers who owed their inspiration to the offices of a mutual friend, or on those whose literary ability and untiring research have qualified them for the task. Infinite toil has not always been rewarded, and it would be easy to supply at least half a dozen names whose absence is to be regretted. Beaumont and Fletcher are as much read as Thomas Otway, and William Wotton has perhaps as much right of entrance as his famous opponent Richard Bentley, but as a small child pointed out when the book was first proposed: "*You can't find what isn't there.*"[Pg x] And the worth of the book naturally consists in keeping to the lines already indicated.

An asterisk placed under the given reference means that the writer of that particular portrait (who is not necessarily the writer of that particular book) did not actually see his subject, but that he is describing a picture, or else that he is building up one from substantiated evidence. Sometimes, as in the case of Suckling, this distinction leads to the same book supplying two portraits, only one of which is at first hand.

When a date is placed at the foot of a description, it refers to the appearance presented at that time, and not to the period when the words were penned.

British writers only are named, and amongst them there is of course no living author.

Chaucer's birth-date has been given as *About* 1340, for the traditional year of 1328[Pg xi] is based on little more than the inscription on his tomb, which was not placed there until the middle of the sixteenth century, while according to his own deposition as witness, his birth could not have taken place until about twelve years later.

In only one other instance has there been a departure from recognised precedent, and that is in the case of Thomas de Quincey. In defiance of almost every compiler and present-day writer, I have entered the name in the Q's and spelt it as here written. The reason for this is threefold: First, he himself invariably spelt his name with a small d. Second, Hood, Wordsworth, and Lamb, and, I believe, all his other contemporaries did the same. Third, de Quincey himself was so determined about the matter that he actually dropped the prefix altogether for some little time, and was known as Mr. Quincey. "His name I write with a small d[Pg xii] in the de, as he wrote it himself. He would not have wished it indexed among the D's, but the Q's," wrote the Rev. Francis Jacox, who was one of his Lasswade friends, and in spite of his recent and skilful biographers, it must be conceded that after all the little man had the greatest right to his own name.

I am glad to take this opportunity of thanking those who have helped me, and who will not let me speak my thanks direct. It is a pleasant thought that while working amongst the literary men of the past, I have received nothing but kindness from those of to-day. First and foremost to Mr. George Augustus Sala, to whom I am infinitely indebted; also to Mrs. Huntingford, Mrs. and Mr. Frederick Chapman, Mr. Henry M. Trollope, Dr. W. F. Fitz-Patrick, and Mr. S. C. Hall: to all these, as well as to my own personal friends, I offer my hearty and sincere thanks.

M. E. W.

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JOSEPH ADDISON
1672-1719

Temple Bar,
1874.
*

“Of his personal appearance we have at least two portraits by good hands. Before us are three carefully-engraved portraits of him, but there is a great dissimilarity between the three except in the wig. Sir Godfrey Kneller painted one of these portraits, which is entirely unlike the two others; let us, however, give Sir Godfrey the credit of the best picture, and judge Addison’s appearance from that. The wig almost prevents our judging the shape of the head, yet it seems very high behind. The forehead is very lofty, the sort of forehead which is called ‘commanding’ by those people who do not know that some of the[Pg 2] least decided men in the world have had high foreheads. The eyebrows are delicately ‘pencilled,’ yet show a vast deal of vigour and expression; they are what his old Latin friends, who knew so well the power of expression in the eyebrow, would have called ‘supercilious,’ and yet the nasal end of the supercilium is only slightly raised, and it droops pleasantly at the temporal end, so that there is nothing Satanic or ill-natured about it. The eyebrow of Addison, according to Kneller, seems to say, ‘You are a greater fool than you think yourself to be, but I would die sooner than tell you so.’ The eye, which is generally supposed to convey so much expression, but which very often does not, is very much like the eyes of other amiable and talented people. The nose is long, as becomes an orthodox Whig; quite as long, we should say, as the nose of any member of Peel’s famous long-nosed ministry, and quite as delicately chiselled. The mouth is very tender and beautiful, firm, yet with a[Pg 3] delicate curve upwards at each end of the upper lip, suggestive of a good joke, and of a calm waiting to hear if any man is going to beat it. Below the mouth there follows of course the nearly inevitable double chin of the eighteenth century, with a deep incision in the centre of the jaw-bone, which shows through the flesh like a dimple. On the whole a singularly handsome and pleasant face, wanting the wonderful form which one sees in the faces of Shakespeare, Prior, Congreve, Castlereagh, Byron, or Napoleon, but still extremely fine of its own.”

Johnson’s
Lives of the
Poets.

“Of his habits, or external manners, nothing is so often mentioned as that timorous or sullen taciturnity, which his friends called modesty by too mild a name. Steele mentions, with great tenderness, ‘that remarkable bashfulness, which is a cloak that hides and muffles merit;’ and tells us ‘that his abilities were covered only by modesty, which doubles the beauties which are seen, and gives credit and esteem to all[Pg 4] that are concealed.’ Chesterfield affirms that ‘Addison was the most timorous and awkward man that he ever saw.’ And Addison, speaking of his own deficiency in conversation, used to say of himself that, with respect to intellectual wealth, ‘he could draw bills for a thousand pounds though he had not a guinea in his pocket.’... ‘Addison’s conversation,’ says Pope, ‘had something in it more charming than I have found in any other man. But this was only when familiar; before strangers, or, perhaps, a single stranger, he preserved his dignity by a stiff silence.’”

HARRISON AINSWORTH
1805-1882

S. C. Hall’s
Retrospect of a
Long Life.

“I saw little of him in later days, but when I saw him in 1826, not long after he married the daughter of Ebers of New Bond Street, and ‘condescended’ for a brief time to be a[Pg 5] publisher, he was a remarkably handsome young man—tall, graceful in deportment, and in all ways a pleasant person to look upon and talk to. He was, perhaps, as thorough a gentleman as his native city of Manchester ever sent forth.”

A personal
friend.

“Harrison Ainsworth was certainly a handsome man, but it was very much of the barber’s-block type of beauty, with wavy scented hair, smiling lips, and pink and white complexion. As a young man he was gorgeous in the *outré* dress of the dandy of ’36, and, in common with those other famous dandies, d’Orsay, young Benjamin Disraeli, and Tom Duncombe, wore multitudinous waistcoats, over which dangled a long gold chain, numberless rings, and a black satin stock. In old age he was very patriarchal-looking. His gray hair was swept up and back from a peculiarly high broad forehead; his moustache, beard, and whiskers were short, straight, and silky, and[Pg 6] the mouth was entirely hidden. His eyes were large and oval, and rather *flat* in form,—less expressive altogether than one would have expected in the head of so graphic a writer.

The eyebrows were somewhat overhanging, and the nose was straight and flexible. Up to the day of his death he was always a well-dressed man, but in a far more sober fashion than in his youth."

Ainsworth's
Rookwood.

"What have we to add to what we have here ventured to record, which the engraving which accompanies this memoir will not more happily embody? (*This refers to a portrait by Maclise which appeared in* The Mirror.) Should that fail to do justice to his face—to its regularity and delicacy of feature, its manly glow of health, and the cordial nature which lightens it up—we must refer the dissatisfied beholder to Mr. Pickersgill's masterly full-length portrait exhibited last year, in which the author of *The Miser's Daughter* may be seen, not as some pale, worn, pining scholar,—some fagging,[Pg 7] half-exhausted, periodical romancer,—but, as an English gentleman of goodly stature and well-set limb, with a fine head on his shoulders, and a heart to match. If to this we add a word, it must be to observe, that, though the temper of our popular author may be marked by impatience on some occasions, it has never been upon any occasion marked by a want of generosity, whether in conferring benefits or atoning for errors. His friends regard him as a man with as few failings, blended with fine qualities, as most people, and his enemies know nothing at all about him."

JANE AUSTEN
1775-1817

Tytler's *Jane Austen and her Works*.
*

"In person Jane Austen seems to have borne considerable resemblance to her two favourite heroines, Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse. Jane, too, was tall and slender,[Pg 8] a brunette, with a rich colour,—altogether 'the picture of health' which Emma Woodhouse was said to be. In minor points, Jane Austen had a well-formed though somewhat small nose and mouth, round as well as rosy cheeks, bright hazel eyes, and brown hair falling in natural curls about her face."

Leigh's *Memoir of Jane Austen*.
*

“As my memoir has now reached the period when I saw a great deal of my aunt, and was old enough to understand something of her value, I will here attempt a description of her person, mind, and habits. In person she was very attractive; her figure was rather tall and slender, her step light and firm, and her whole appearance expressive of health and animation. In complexion she was a clear brunette, with a rich colour; she had full round cheeks, with mouth and nose small and well-formed, bright hazel eyes, and brown hair forming natural curls close round her face. If not so regularly handsome as[Pg 9] her sister, yet her countenance had a peculiar charm of its own to the eyes of most beholders. At the time of which I am now writing, she never was seen, either morning or evening, without a cap; I believe that she and her sister were generally thought to have taken to the garb of middle age earlier than their years or their looks required; and that, though remarkably neat in their dress, as in all their ways, they were scarcely sufficiently regardful of the fashionable, or the becoming.”—1809.

Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*.

“Of personal attractions she possessed a considerable share; her stature rather exceeded the middle height; her carriage and deportment were quiet, but graceful; her features were separately good; their assemblage produced an unrivalled expression of that cheerfulness, sensibility, and benevolence which were her real characteristics; her complexion was of the finest texture—it might with truth be said that her eloquent blood spoke through[Pg 10] her modest cheek; her voice was sweet; she delivered herself with fluency and precision; indeed, she was formed for elegant and rational society, excelling in conversation as much as in composition.... The affectation of candour is not uncommon, but she had no affectation.... She never uttered either a hasty, a silly, or a severe expression. In short, her temper was as polished as her wit; and no one could be often in her company without feeling a strong desire of obtaining her friendship, and cherishing a desire of having obtained it.”

FRANCIS, LORD BACON
1560-1-1626

Montague’s *Life of Bacon*.

*

Evelyn
on Medals.

“He was of a middle stature, and well proportioned; his features were handsome and expressive, and his countenance, until it was injured by politics and worldly warfare, singularly[Pg 11] placid. There is a portrait of him when he was only eighteen now extant, on which the artist has recorded his despair of doing justice to his subject, by the inscription,—‘Si tabula daretur digna, animum mallem.’ His portraits differ beyond what may be considered a fair allowance for the varying skill of the artist, or the natural changes which time wrought upon his person; but none of them contradict the description given by one who knew him well, ‘That he had a spacious forehead and piercing eye, looking upward as a soul in sublime contemplation, a countenance worthy of one who was to set free captive philosophy.’”

Aubrey’s
Lives of
Eminent
Persons.
*

Campbell’s
Lives of the
Lord
Chancellors.
*

“He had a delicate, lively hazel eie; Dr. Harvey told me it was like the eie of a viper.”

“All accounts represent him as a delightful companion, adapting himself to company of every degree, calling, and humour,—not engrossing the conversation,—trying to get[Pg 12] all to talk in turn on the subject they best understood, and not disdaining to light his own candle at the lamp of any other.... Little remains except to give some account of his person. He was of a middling stature; his limbs well-formed though not robust; his forehead high, spacious and open; his eye lively and penetrating; there were deep lines of thinking in his face, his smile was both intellectual and benevolent; the marks of age were prematurely impressed upon him; in advanced life his whole appearance was venerably pleasing, so that a stranger was insensibly drawn to love before knowing how much reason there was to admire him.”

JOANNA BAILLIE
1762-1851

Crabb
Robinson's
Diary.

"We met Miss Joanna Baillie, and accompanied her home. She is small in figure, and[Pg 13] her gait is mean and shuffling, but her manners are those of a well-bred woman. She has none of the unpleasant airs too common to literary ladies. Her conversation is sensible. She possesses apparently considerable information, is prompt without being forward, and has a fixed judgment of her own, without any disposition to force it on others. Wordsworth said of her with warmth, 'If I had to present any one to a foreigner as a model of an English gentlewoman, it would be Joanna Baillie.'"—1812.

S. C. Hall's
Memories of
Great Men.

"Of the party I can recall but one; that one, however, is a memory,—Joanna Baillie. I remember her as singularly impressive in look and manner, with the 'queenly' air we associate with ideas of high birth and lofty rank. Her face was long, narrow, dark, and solemn, and her speech deliberate and considerate, the very antipodes of 'chatter.' Tall in person, and habited according to the 'mode' of an[Pg 14] olden time, her picture, as it is now present to me, is that of a very venerable dame, dressed in coif and kirtle, stepping out, as it were, from a frame in which she had been placed by the painter Vandyke."—1825-26.

Sara
Coleridge's
Letters.

"I saw Mrs. Joanna Baillie before dinner. She wore a delicate lavender satin bonnet; and Mrs. J. says she is fond of dress, and knows what every one has on. Her taste is certainly exquisite in dress though (strange to say) not, in my opinion, in poetry. I more than ever admired the harmony of expression and tint, the silver hair and silvery-gray eye, the pale skin, and the look which speaks of a mind that has had much communing with high imagination, though such intercourse is only perceptible now by the absence of everything which that lofty spirit would not set his seal upon."—1834.

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BENJAMIN, LORD BEACONSFIELD
1804-1881

Jeaffreson's
Novels and
Novelists.

"His ringlets of silken black hair, his flashing eyes, his effeminate and lisping voice, his dress-coat of black velvet lined with white satin, his white kid gloves with his wrist surrounded by a long hanging fringe of black silk, and his ivory cane, of which the handle, inlaid with gold, was relieved by more black silk in the shape of a tassel.... Such was the perfumed boy-exquisite who forced his way into the salons of peeresses."—1829.

Mill's
Beaconsfield.

"In the front seat on the Conservative side of the House, may be observed a man who, if his hat be off, which it generally is, is sure to arrest one's attention, and we need scarcely to be told after having once seen him that he is the leader of that[Pg 16] great party. He is not old, just turned fifty we may suppose, but he bears his age well, whatever it may be. His face, which was once handsome, is now 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.' The head is long, and the forehead massive and finished. The eye is restless, but full of fire; the hair black and curly. Nature has evidently taken some pains to finish the exterior."—about 1855.

J. H. du Vivier,
Portraits comparés
des hommes
d'état.

"Certes, le premier aspect de Mr. Gladstone ... réponds à l'idée qu'on peut se faire d'un chef doué d'un élan irrésistible, mieuxque l'attitude maladive de lord Beaconsfield, ses traits mous, son regard flétri et comme perdu dans l'abstraction ou dans une réverie hantée par la désillusion et la lassitude.... Chez le plus faible ... on devine bientôt que si le fourreau est usé par la lame, c'est à raison de la dévorante activité de celle-ci.... La tête s'incline avec mélancholie, la bouche a pris l'habitude des contractions douleureuses; mais que de patience invincible dans cette attitude![Pg 17] quelle fécondité, quelle soudaineté d'inspirations marquées sur ces lèvres que plisse le rictus de l'ironie!"

JEREMY BENTHAM
1748-1832

Sir John
Bowring's
Autobiographical
Recollections.

"In the very centre of the group of persons who originated the *Westminster Review* stands the grand figure of Jeremy Bentham. Though closely resembling Franklin, his face expresses a profounder wisdom and a more marked benevolence than the bust of the American printer. Mingled with a serene contemplative cast, there is something of playful humour in the countenance. The high forehead is wrinkled, but is without sternness, and is contemplative but complacent. The neatly-combed long white hair hangs over the neck, but moves at[Pg 18] every breath. *Simplex munditiis* best describes his garments. When he walks there is a restless activity in his gait, as if his thoughts were, 'Let me walk fast, for there is work to do, and the walking is but to fit me the better for the work.'"

Sir John Bowring's
Life of
Bentham.

"The striking resemblance between the persons of Franklin and Bentham has been often noticed. Of the two, perhaps, the expression of Bentham's countenance was the more benign. Each remarkable for profound sagacity, Bentham was scarcely less so for a perpetual playfulness of manner and of expression. Few men were so sportive, so amusing, as Bentham,—none ever tempered more delightfully his wisdom with his wit.... Bentham's dress was peculiar out of doors. He ordinarily wore a narrow-rimmed straw hat, from under which his long white hair fell on his shoulders, or was blown about by the winds. He had a plain brown coat, cut in the Quaker style; light-brown[Pg 19] cassimere breeches, over whose knees outside he usually exhibited a pair of white worsted stockings; list shoes he almost invariably used; and his hands were generally covered with merino-lined leather gloves. His neck was bare; he never went out without his stick 'dapple,' for a companion. He walked, or rather trotted, as if he were impatient for exercise; but often stopped suddenly for purposes of conversation."

Crabb
Robinson's
Diary.

"*December 31st*.—At half-past one went by appointment to see Jeremy Bentham, at his house in Westminster Square, and walked with him for about half an hour in his garden, when he dismissed me to take his breakfast and have the paper read to him. I have but little to report concerning him. He is a small man. He stoops very much (he is eighty-four), and shuffles in his gait. His hearing is not good, yet excellent considering his age. His eye is restless, and there is a fidgety activity about him, increased probably[Pg 20] by the habit of having all round fly at his command."—1831.

RICHARD BENTLEY
1662-1742

R. C. Jebb's
Bentley.
*

"The pose of the head is haughty, almost defiant; the eyes, which are large, prominent, and full of bold vivacity, have a light in them as if Bentley were looking straight at an impostor whom he had detected, but who still amused him; the nose, strong and slightly tip-tilted, is moulded as if Nature had wished to show what a nose can do for the combined expression of scorn and sagacity; and the general effect of the countenance, at a first glance, is one which suggests power—frank, self-assured, sarcastic, and, I fear we must add, insolent: yet, standing a little longer before the picture, we become aware of an essential kindness in those[Pg 21] eyes of which the gaze is so direct and intrepid; we read in the whole face a certain keen veracity; and the sense grows—this was a man who could hit hard, but who would not strike a foul blow, and whose ruling instinct, whether always a sure guide or not, was to pierce through falsities to truth."

JAMES BOSWELL
1740-1795

Littell's
Living Age,

1870.
*

“The sketch by Sir Thomas Lawrence of Boswell, prefixed to Mr. Murray’s edition of Johnson’s *Life*, illustrates with striking accuracy the saying of Hazlitt, that ‘A man’s life may be a lie to himself and others; and yet a picture painted of him by a great artist would probably stamp his character.’ The busy vanity, the garrulous complacency of the man when out of sight of Dr. Johnson, as he may be[Pg 22] supposed to have been when the portrait was etched, are brought out with all the humour and point of a caricature, without its exaggeration. The thin nose, that seems to sniff the air for information, has the sharp shrewdness of a Scotch accent. The small eyes, too much relieved by the high-arched eyebrows, twinkle with the exultation of victories not won—an expression contracted from a vigilant watching of Dr. Johnson, who, when he spoke, spoke always for victory; the bleak lips, making by their protrusion an angle almost the size of the nose, proclaim Boswell’s love of ‘drawing people out,’ a thirst for information at once droll and impertinent; but which finally embodied itself in a form that has been pronounced by Lord Macaulay the most interesting biography in the world; the ample chins, fold upon fold, tell of a strong affection, gross, and almost sottish, for port wine and tainted meats; whilst the folded arms, the slightly-inclined posture, the[Pg 23] strong and arrogant setting of the head, exhibit the self-importance, the shrewd understanding, not to be obscurated by vanity, the imperturbable but artless egotism, the clever inquisitiveness which have made him the best-despised and best-read writer in English literature. The portraits handed down to us of Boswell by his contemporaries are most graphic; some of them are malignant, some bitter, some temperate; and those that are temperate are probably just.... Miss Burney thus caricatures the appearance of Boswell in Johnson’s presence, when intent upon his note-taking: ‘The moment that voice burst forth, the attention which it excited on Mr. Boswell amounted almost to pain. His eyes goggled with eagerness; he leant his ear almost on the shoulder of the doctor, and his mouth dropped down to catch every syllable that was uttered; nay, he seemed not only to dread losing a word, but to be anxious not to miss a breathing, as if hoping[Pg 24] from it latently or mystically some information.’”

CHARLOTTE BRONTË
1816-1855

Mrs Gaskell’s
Life of C. Brontë.

“In 1831, she was a quiet, thoughtful girl, of nearly fifteen years of age, very small in figure—‘stunted’ was the word she applied to herself; but as her limbs and head were in just proportion to the slight, fragile body, no word in ever so slight a degree suggestive of deformity could properly be applied to her; with soft, thick, brown hair, and peculiar eyes, of which I find it difficult to give a description as they appeared to me in her later life. They were large and well-shaped, their colour a reddish brown, but if the iris were closely examined, it appeared to be composed of a great variety of tints. The usual expression was of quiet, listening intelligence; but now and then, on[Pg 25] some just occasion for vivid interest or wholesome indignation, a light would shine out, as if some spiritual lamp had been kindled, which glowed behind those expressive orbs. I never saw the like in any other human creature. As for the rest of her features, they were plain, large, and ill-set; but, unless you began to catalogue them, you were hardly aware of the fact, for the eyes and power of the countenance overbalanced every physical defect; the crooked mouth and the large nose were forgotten, and the whole face arrested the attention, and presently attracted all those whom she herself would have cared to attract. Her hands and feet were the smallest I ever saw; when one of the former was placed in mine, it was like the soft touch of a bird in the middle of my palm. The delicate long fingers had a peculiar fineness of sensation, which was one reason why all her handiwork, of whatever kind—writing, sewing, knitting,—was so clear in its minuteness. She was[Pg 26] remarkably neat in her whole personal attire; but she was dainty as to the fit of her shoes and gloves.”—1831.

Harriet
Martineau’s
Biographical
Sketches.

“There was something inexpressibly affecting in the aspect of the frail little creature who had done such wonderful things, and who was able to bear up, with so bright an eye and so composed a countenance, under not only such a weight of sorrow, but such a prospect of solitude. In her deep mourning dress (neat as a Quaker’s), with her beautiful hair, smooth and brown, her fine eyes, and her sensible face indicating a habit of self-control, she seemed a perfect household image—irresistibly recalling Wordsworth’s description of that domestic treasure. And she was this.”—1850.

Bayne’s
Two great
Englishwomen.

“I can only say of this lady, *vide tantum*. I saw her first just as I rose out of an illness from which I never thought to recover. I remember the trembling little frame, the little hand, the great[Pg 27] honest eyes. An impetuous honesty seemed to me to characterise the woman.... She gave me the impression of being a very pure, and lofty, and high-minded person. A great and holy reverence of right and truth seemed to be with her always. Such, in our brief interview, she appeared to me.”—1851.

HENRY, LORD BROUGHAM
1778-1868

Ticknor’s *Life*
and Letters.

“Brougham, whom I knew in society, and from seeing him both at his chambers and at my own lodgings, is now about thirty-eight, tall, thin, and rather awkward, with a plain and not very expressive countenance, and simple or even slovenly manners. He is evidently nervous, and a slight convulsive movement about the muscles of his lips gives him an unpleasant expression now and then. In short, all that[Pg 28] is exterior in him, and all that goes to make up the first impression, is unfavourable. The first thing that removes this impression is the heartiness and good-will he shows you, whose motive cannot be mistaken, for such kindness comes only from the heart. This is the first thing, but a stranger presently begins to remark his conversation. On common topics nobody is more commonplace. He does not feel them, but if the subject excites him, there is an air of originality in his remarks which, if it convinces you of nothing else, convinces you that you are talking with an extraordinary man. He does not like to join in a general conversation, but prefers to talk apart with only two or three persons, and, though with great interest and zeal, in an undertone. If, however, he does launch into it, all the little, trim, gay pleasure-boats must keep well out of the way of his great black collier, as Gibbon said of Fox. He listens carefully and fairly—and with a kindness which would[Pg 29] be provoking if it were not genuine—to all his adversary has to say; but when his time comes to answer, it is with that bare, bold, bullion talent which either crushes itself or its opponent.... Yet I suspect the impression Brougham generally leaves is that of a good-natured friend. At least that is the impression I have most frequently found, both in England and on the Continent.”—1819.

Newspaper
cutting
1876.

“Standing in the narrow Gothic railed-off place reserved for the public—the throne at the opposite extremity of the House—you may see on one of the benches to the right, almost every forenoon, Saturday and Sunday excepted, during the session, a very old man with a white head, and attired in a simple frock and trousers of shepherd’s plaid. It is a leonine head, and the white locks are bushy and profuse. So, too, the eyebrows, penthouses to eyes somewhat weak now, but that can flash fire yet upon occasion. The face is ploughed with[Pg 30] wrinkles, as well it may be, for the old man will never see fourscore years again, and of these, threescore, at the very least, have been spent in study and the hardest labour, mental and physical. The nose is a marvel—protuberant, rugose, aggressive, inquiring and defiant: unlovely, but intellectual. There is a trumpet mouth, a belligerent mouth, projecting and self-asserting; largish ears, and on chin or cheeks no vestige of hair. Not a beautiful man this, on any theory of beauty, Hogarthesque, Ruskinesque, Winclemenesque, or otherwise. Rather a shaggy, gnarled, battered, weather-beaten, ugly, faithful, Scotch-collie type. Not a soft, imploring, yielding face. Rather a tearing, mocking, pugnacious cast of countenance. The mouth is fashioned to the saying of harsh, hard, impertinent things: not cruel, but downright; but never to whisper compliments, or simper out platitudes. A nose, too, that can snuff the battle afar off, and with dilated nostrils breathe forth a glory[Pg 31] that is sometimes terrible; but not a nose for a pouncet-box, or a Covent Garden bouquet, or a *flacon* of Frangipani. Would not care much for truffles either, I think, or the delicate aroma of sparkling Moselle. Would prefer onions or strongly-infused malt and hops; something honest and unsophisticated. Watch this old man narrowly, young visitor to the Lords. Scan his furrowed visage. Mark his odd angular ways and gestures passing uncouth. Now he crouches, very dog-like, in his crimson bench: clasps one shepherd’s plaid leg in both his hands. Botherem, *q.c.*, is talking nonsense, I think. Now the legs are crossed, and the hands thrown behind the head; now he digs his elbows into the little Gothic writing-table before him, and buries his hands in that puissant white hair of his. The quiddities of Floorem, *q.c.*, are beyond human patience. Then with a wrench, a wriggle, a shake, a half-turn and half-start up—still very dog-like, but of the Newfoundland[Pg 32] rather, now—he asks a lawyer or a witness a question. Question very sharp and to the point, not often complimentary by times, and couched in that which is neither broad Scotch nor Northumbrian burr, but a rebellious mixture of the two. Mark him well, eye him closely: you have not much time to lose. Alas! the giant is very old, though with frame yet unenfeebled, with intellect yet gloriously unclouded. But the sands are running, ever running. Watch him, mark him, eye him, score him on your mind tablets: then home, and in after years it may be your lot to tell your children that once at least you have seen with your own eyes the famous Lord of Vaux; once listened to the voice which

has shaken thrones and made tyrants tremble; that has been a herald of deliverance to millions pining in slavery and captivity; a voice that has given utterance, in man's most eloquent words, to the noblest, wisest thoughts lent to this man of men by heaven; a voice that has been trumpet-sounding[Pg 33] these sixty years past in defence of Truth, and Right, and Justice; in advocacy of the claims of learning and industry, and of the liberties of the great English people, from whose ranks he rose; a voice that should be entitled to a hearing in a Walhalla of wise heroes, after Francis of Verulam and Isaac of Grantham; the voice of one who is worthily a lord, but who will be yet better remembered, and to all time,—remembered enthusiastically and affectionately,—as the champion of all good and wise and beautiful human things—Harry Brougham."

Temple Bar,
1868.

"The personal man, the bodily man, the private man, did not vary. From 1830 to 1866,—the period between his brightest glow of fame and his mental eclipse,—he was always the same gaunt, angular, raw-boned figure, with the high cheek-bones, the great flexible nose, the mobile mouth, the shock head of hair, the uncouthly-cut coat with the velvet collar, the high black stock, the bulging shirt front, the[Pg 34] dangling bunch of seals at his fob, and the immortal pantaloons of checked tweed. It is said that one of his admirers in the Bradford Cloth Hall gave him a bale of plaid trousering 'a' oo''[1] in 1825, and that he continued until the day of his death to have his nether garments cut from the inexhaustible store. I have seen Lord Brougham in evening dress and in the customary black continuations; but I never met him by daylight without the inevitable checks."

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING
1809-1861

M. R. Mitford's
Recollections of a
Literary Life.

"My first acquaintance with Elizabeth Barrett commenced about fifteen years ago. She was certainly one of the most interesting persons that I had ever seen. Everybody who then[Pg 35] saw her said the same; so that it is not merely the impression of my partiality, or my enthusiasm. Of a slight delicate figure, with a shower of dark curls falling on either side of a most expressive face, large tender eyes, richly fringed with

dark eyelashes, a smile like a sunbeam, and such a look of youthfulness, that I had some difficulty in persuading a friend, in whose carriage we went together to Chiswick, that the translatress of the *Prometheus* of Æschylus, the authoress of the *Essay on Mind*, was old enough to be introduced into company, in technical language, was *out*."—1835.

Sara Coleridge's
Letters.

"She is little, hard featured, with long dark ringlets, a pale face, and plaintive voice, something very impressive in her dark eyes and her brow. Her general aspect puts me in mind of Mignon,—what Mignon might be in maturity and maternity."—1851.

Crab Robinson's
Diary.

"Dined at home, and at eight dressed to go to Kenyon. With him I found an[Pg 36] interesting person I had never seen before, Mrs. Browning, late Miss Barrett—not the invalid I expected; she has a handsome oval face, a fine eye, and altogether a pleasing person. She had no opportunity for display, and apparently no desire. Her husband has a very amiable expression. There is a singular sweetness about him."—1852.

JOHN BUNYAN
1628-1688

Charles Doe's *Life*
of John Bunyan.

"He appeared in countenance to be of a stern and rough temper. He had a sharp, quick eye, accomplished, with an excellent discerning of persons. As for his person, he was tall of stature, strong-boned, though not corpulent; somewhat of a ruddy face, with sparkling eyes, wearing his hair on the upper lip after[Pg 37] the old British fashion; his hair reddish, but in his later days time had sprinkled it with gray; his nose well set, but not declining or bending, and his mouth moderate large, his forehead something high, and his habit always plain and modest."

Tulloch's *English*
Puritanism.
*

“It is impossible to look at his portrait, and not recognise the lines of power by which it is everywhere marked. It has more of a sturdy soldier than anything else—the aspect of a man who would face dangers any day rather than shun them; and this corresponds exactly to his description by his oldest biographer and friend, Charles Doe.... A more manly and robust appearance cannot well be conceived, his eyes only showing in their sparkling depth the fountains of sensibility concealed within the roughened exterior. Here, as before, we are reminded of his likeness to Luther.”

Bunyan’s
Works, 1692.

“Give us leave to say his natural parts and abilities were not mean, his fancy and[Pg 38] invention were very pregnant and fertile; the use he made of them was good, converting them to spiritual objects. His wit was sharp and quick; his memory tenacious; it being customary with him to commit his sermons to writing, after he had preached them. His understanding was large and comprehensive; his judgments sound and deep in the fundamentals of the Gospel, as his writings evidence. And yet, this great saint was always, in his own eyes, the chiefest of sinners and the least of saints; esteeming any, where he did believe the truth of (their) grace, better than himself. There was, indeed, in him all the parts of an accomplished man. His carriage was condescending, affable, and meek to all; yet bold and courageous for Christ’s and the Gospel’s sake. His countenance was grave and sedate, and did so, to the life, discover the inward frame of his heart, that it did strike something of awe into them that had nothing of the fear of God.... His conversation was as becomes the Gospel.”

[Pg 39]

EDMUND BURKE
1730-1797

Burney’s *Diary*
and Letters.

“No expectation that I had formed of Mr. Burke, either from his works, his speeches, his character, or his fame, had anticipated to me such a man as I now met. He appeared, perhaps, at the moment, to the highest possible advantage in health, vivacity, and spirits. Removed from the impetuous aggravations of party contentions, that at times, by inflaming his passions, seemed (momentarily, at least), to disorder his character, he was lulled into gentleness by the grateful sense of prosperity; exhilarated, but not intoxicated, by sudden success; and just rising, after toiling years

of failures, disappointments, fire and fury, to place, affluence, and honours, which were brightly smiling on the zenith of his powers.[Pg 40] He looked, indeed, as if he had no wish but to diffuse philanthropic pleasure and genial gaiety all around.

“His figure is noble, his air commanding, his address graceful; his voice clear, penetrating, sonorous, and powerful; his language copious, eloquent, and changefully impressive; his manners are attractive; his conversation is past all praise.

“You may call me mad, I know; but if I wait till I see another Mr. Burke for such another fit of ecstacy, I may be long enough in my sober good senses.”—1782.

Peter Burke’s
Life of Burke.
*

“The personal description of Edmund Burke has been handed down. He was about five feet ten inches high, well made and muscular; of that firm and compact frame that denotes more strength than bulk. His countenance had been in his youth handsome. The expression of his face was less striking than might have been anticipated; at least it was so until lit up by the animation of his conversation,[Pg 41] or the fire of his eloquence. In dress he usually wore a brown suit; and he was in his later days easily recognisable in the House of Commons from his bob-wig and spectacles.”

Macknight’s
Life of Burke.
*

“He deserved … worship better than most idols. Gentle, affectionate, unassuming towards the members of his own family, he was also dignified, polished, and courteous in his manner to all the rest of mankind. Nature had stamped the noblest impress of genius on his wrinkled brow, and time had slowly conferred a grace on his address which made him appear singularly pleasing and lovable. In the House of Commons only the fiercer peculiarities of his character were now seen; while at home he seemed the mildest and kindest, as well as one of the best and greatest of human beings. He poured forth the rich treasures of his mind with the most prodigal bounty. At breakfast and dinner his gaiety, wit, and pleasantry enlivened the[Pg 42] board, and diffused cheerfulness and happiness all round.”

ROBERT BURNS
1759-1796

Currie's
Life of Burns.

"Burns ... was nearly five feet ten inches in height, and of a form that indicated agility as well as strength. His well-raised forehead, shaded with black curling hair, indicated extensive capacity. His eyes were large, dark, full of ardour and intelligence. His face was well-formed, and his countenance uncommonly interesting and expressive. His mode of dressing, which was often slovenly, and a certain fulness and bend in his shoulders, characteristic of his original profession, disguised in some degree the natural symmetry and elegance of his form. The external appearance of Burns was most strikingly indicative of the character of his mind. On a first[Pg 43] view, his physiognomy had a certain air of coarseness, mingled, however, with an expression of deep penetration, and of calm thoughtfulness, approaching to melancholy.... His dark and haughty countenance easily relaxed into a look of good-will, of pity, or of tenderness, and, as the various emotions succeeded each other in his mind, assumed with equal ease the expression of the broadest humour, of the most extravagant mirth, of the deepest melancholy, or of the most sublime emotion. The tones of his voice happily corresponded with the expression of his features, and with the feelings of his mind. When to these endowments are added a rapid and distinct apprehension, a most powerful understanding, and a happy command of language—of strength as well as brilliancy of expression—we shall be able to account for the extraordinary attractions of his conversation—for the sorcery which in his social parties he seemed to exert on all around him."

Lockhart's
Life of Scott.

[Pg 44]"His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect, perhaps, from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture, but to me it conveys the idea that they are diminished, as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school; *i.e.* none of your modern agriculturists, who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament.

It was large, and of a dark cast, and glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head,[Pg 45] though I have seen the most distinguished men in my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet, at the same time, with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted, nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognise me, as I could not expect he should."—1787.

Dumfries
Journal, 1796.

"His personal endowments were perfectly correspondent to the qualifications of his mind, his form was manly, his action energy itself, devoid in a great measure perhaps of those graces, of that polish, acquired only in the refinement of societies where in early life he could have no opportunities of mixing; but where, such was the[Pg 46] irresistible power of attraction that encircled him, though his appearance and manners were always peculiar, he never failed to delight and to excel. His figure seemed to bear testimony to his earlier destination and employments. It seemed rather moulded by nature for the rough exercises of agriculture, than the gentler cultivation of the *Belles Lettres*. His features were stamped with the hardy character of independence, and the firmness of conscious, though not arrogant, pre-eminence; the animated expressions of countenance were almost peculiar to himself; the rapid lightenings of his eye were always the harbingers of some flash of genius, whether they darted the fiery glances of insulted and indignant superiority, or beamed with the impassioned sentiments of fervent and impetuous affections. His voice alone could improve upon the magic of his eye; sonorous, replete with the finest modulations, it alternately captivated the ear with the melody of poetic numbers, the perspicuity of[Pg 47] nervous reasoning, or the ardent sallies of enthusiastic patriotism."

SAMUEL BUTLER
1612-1680

Aubrey's *Lives*
of Eminent Men.

“He is of a middle stature, strong sett, high-colored, a head of sorrell haire, a severe and sound judgement: a good fellowe.”

Aubrey’s *Lives*
of Eminent Men.

“He was of a leonine-colored haire, sanguine, cholerique, middle-sized, strong; a boon and witty companion, especially among the companie he knew well.”

GEORGE, LORD BYRON
1788-1824

Moore’s
Life of Byron.

“Among the impressions which this meeting left upon me, what I chiefly remember to[Pg 48] have remarked was the nobleness of his air, his beauty, the gentleness of his voice and manners, and—what was naturally not the least attraction—his marked kindness to myself. Being in mourning for his mother, the colour, as well of his dress as of his glossy, curling, and picturesque hair, gave more effect to the pure, spiritual paleness of his features, in the expression of which, when he spoke, there was a perpetual play of lively thought, though melancholy was their habitual character when in repose.”—1811.

Geo. Ticknor’s
Life.

“I called on Lord Byron to-day, with an introduction from Mr. Gifford. Here, again, my anticipations were mistaken. Instead of being deformed, as I had heard, he is remarkably well-built, with the exception of his feet. Instead of having a thin and rather sharp and anxious face, as he has in his pictures, it is round, open, and smiling; his eyes are light, and not black; his air easy and careless, not forward and[Pg 49] striking; and I found his manners affable and gentle, the tones of his voice low and conciliating, his conversation gay, pleasant, and interesting in an uncommon degree.”—1815.

Moore’s
Life of Byron.

“It would be to little purpose to dwell upon the mere beauty of a countenance in which the expression of an extraordinary mind was so conspicuous. What serenity

was seated on the forehead, adorned with the finest chestnut hair, light, curling, and disposed with such art, that the art was hidden in the imitation of most pleasing nature! What varied expression in his eyes! They were of the azure colour of the heavens, from which they seemed to derive their origin. His teeth, in form, in colour, in transparency, resembled pearls; but his cheeks were too delicately tinged with the hue of the pale rose. His neck, which he was in the habit of keeping uncovered as much as the usages of society permitted, seemed to have been formed in a[Pg 50] mould, and was very white. His hands were as beautiful as if they had been the works of art. His figure left nothing to be desired, particularly by those who found rather a grace than a defect in a certain light and gentle undulation of the person when he entered a room, and of which you hardly felt tempted to inquire the cause. Indeed it was hardly perceptible,—the clothes he wore were so long.... His face appeared tranquil like the ocean on a fine spring morning, but, like it, in an instant became changed into the tempestuous and terrible, if a passion (a passion did I say?), a thought, a word occurred to disturb his mind. His eyes then lost all their sweetness, and sparkled so that it became difficult to look on them."—1819.

[Pg 51]

THOMAS CAMPBELL
1777-1844

Leigh Hunt's
Autobiography.

"They who knew Mr. Campbell only as the author of *Gertrude of Wyoming*, and the *Pleasures of Hope*, would not have suspected him to be a merry companion, overflowing with humour and anecdote, and anything but fastidious.... When I first saw this eminent person, he gave me the idea of a French Virgil. Not that he was like a Frenchman, much less the French translator of Virgil. I found him as handsome as the Abbé Delille is said to have been ugly. But he seemed to me to embody a Frenchman's ideal notion of the Latin poet; something a little more cut and dry than I had looked for; compact and elegant, critical and acute, with a consciousness of authorship upon him; a taste over-anxious[Pg 52] not to commit itself, and refining and diminishing nature as in a drawing-room mirror. This fancy was strengthened, in the course of conversation, by his expatiating on the greatness of Racine. I think he had a volume of the French poet in his hand. His skull was sharply cut and fine; with plenty, according to the phrenologists, both of the reflective and amative organs; and his poetry will bear them out. For a lettered solitude, and a bridal properly got up, both according to

law and luxury, commend us to the lovely *Gertrude of Wyoming*. His face and person were rather on a small scale; his features regular; his eye lively and penetrating; and when he spoke, dimples played about his mouth, which, nevertheless, had something restrained and close in it. Some gentle puritan seemed to have crossed the breed, and to have left a stamp on his face, such as we often see in the female Scotch face rather than in the male. But he appeared not at all grateful for this; and when his critiques[Pg 53] and his Virgilianism were over, very unlike a puritan he talked! He seemed to spite his restrictions, and, out of the natural largeness of his sympathy with things high and low, to break at once out of Delille's Virgil into Cotton's, like a boy let loose from school. When I had the pleasure of hearing him afterwards, I forgot his Virgilianisms, and thought only of the delightful companion, the unaffected philanthropist, and the creator of a beauty worth all the heroines in Racine."—About 1809.

Patmore's *Sketch*
from Real Life.

"The person of this exquisite writer and delightful man is small, delicately formed, and neatly put together, without being little or insignificant. His face has all the harmonious arrangement of features which marks his gentle and refined mind; it is oval, perfectly regular in its details, and lighted up not merely by 'eyes of youth,' but by a bland smile of intellectual serenity that seems to pervade and penetrate all the features, and impart to them all a corresponding[Pg 54] expression, such as the moonlight lends to a summer landscape; the moonlight, not the sunshine; for there is a mild and tender pathos blended with that expression, which bespeaks a soul that has been steeped in the depths of human woe, but has turned their waters (as only poets can) into fountains of beauty and of bliss."

Beattie's *Life*
and Letters of
Thomas Campbell.

"He was generally careful as to dress, and had none of Dr. Johnson's indifference to fine linen. His wigs were always nicely adjusted, and scarcely distinguishable from natural hair. His appearance was interesting and handsome. Though rather below the middle size, he did not seem little; and his large dark eye and countenance bespoke great sensibility and acuteness. His thin quivering lip and delicate nostril were highly expressive. When he spoke, as Leigh Hunt has remarked, dimples played about his mouth, which, nevertheless, had something restrained and close in it.... In personal[Pg 55] neatness and fastidiousness—no less than in genius and taste—Campbell in his best days resembled Gray. Each was distinguished by the same

careful finish in composition—the same classical predilections and lyrical fire, rarely but strikingly displayed. In ordinary life they were both somewhat finical—yet with greater freedom and idiomatic plainness in their unreserved communications—Gray's being evinced in his letters, and Campbell's in conversation."

THOMAS CARLYLE
1795-1881

Caroline Fox's
Journals and
Letters.

"Carlyle soon appeared, and looked as if he felt a well-dressed London crowd scarcely the arena for him to figure in as a popular lecturer. He is a tall, robust-looking man; rugged simplicity and indomitable strength are in his[Pg 56] face, and such a glow of genius in it,—not always smouldering there, but flashing from his beautiful gray eyes, from the remoteness of their deep setting under that massive brow. His manner is very quiet, but he speaks like one tremendously convinced of what he utters.... He began in a rather low nervous voice, with a broad Scotch accent, but it soon grew firm, and shrank not abashed from its great task."—1840.

Froude's
Carlyle.

"He was then fifty-four years old; tall (about five feet eleven), thin, but at the same time upright, with no signs of the later stoop. His body was angular, his face beardless, such as it is represented in Woolner's medallion, which is by far the best likeness of him in the days of his strength. His head was extremely long, with the chin thrust forward; the neck was thin; the mouth firmly closed, the under lip slightly projecting; the hair grizzled and thick and bushy. His eyes, which grew lighter with age, were then of a deep violet, with fire burning at the[Pg 57] bottom of them, which flashed out at the least excitement. The face was altogether most striking, most impressive in every way. And I did not admire him the less because he treated me—I cannot say unkindly, but shortly and sternly. I saw then what I saw ever after—that no one need look for conventional politeness from Carlyle—he would hear the exact truth from him and nothing else."—1849.

Wylie's
Carlyle.

“The maid went forward and said something to Carlyle and left the room. He was sitting before a fire in an arm-chair, propped up with pillows, with his feet on a stool, and looked much older than I had expected. The lower part of his face was covered with a rather shaggy beard, almost quite white. His eyes were bright blue, but looked filmy from age. He had on a sort of coloured night-cap, a long gown reaching to his ankles, and slippers on his feet. A rest attached to the arm of his chair supported a book before him. I could not[Pg 58] quite see the name, but I think it was Channing’s works. Leaning against the fireplace was a long clay pipe, and there was a slight smell of tobacco in the room.... His hands were very thin and wasted, he showed us how they shook and trembled unless he rested them on something, and said they were failing him from weakness.... He seemed such a venerable old man, and so worn and old looking, that I was very much affected. Our visit was on Tuesday, 18th May 1880, at about 2 P.M.”

THOMAS CHATTERTON
1752-1770

Wilson’s
Chatterton.
*

“It is to be feared that no authentic portrait of Chatterton exists; and even the accounts furnished as to his appearance, only partially aid us in realising an idea of the manly, handsome boy, with his flashing,[Pg 59] hawklike eye, through which even the Bristol pewterer thought he could see his soul. His forehead one fancies must have been high; though hidden, perhaps, as in the supposed Gainsborough portrait, with long flowing hair. His mouth, like that of his father, was large. But the brilliancy of his eyes seems to have diverted attention from every other feature; and they have been repeatedly noted for the way in which they appeared to kindle in sympathy with his earnest utterances. Mr. Edward Gardner, who only knew him during his last three months in Bristol, specially recalled ‘the philosophic gravity of his countenance, and the keen lightening of his eye.’ Mr. Capel, on the contrary, resided as an apprentice in the same house where Lambert’s office was, and saw Chatterton daily. His advances had been repelled at times with the flashing glances of the poet; and the terms in which he speaks of his pride and visible contempt for others show there was little friendship[Pg 60] between them. But he also remarks: ‘Upon his being irritated or otherwise greatly affected, there was a light in his eyes which seemed very remarkable.’ He had frequently heard this referred to by others; and Mr. George

Catcott speaks of it as one who had often quailed before such glances, or been spell-bound, like Coleridge's wedding guest by the 'glittering eye' of the Ancient Mariner. He said he could never look at it long enough to see what sort of an eye it was; but it seemed to be a kind of hawk's eye. You could see his soul through it."

Gregory's *Life of Chatterton*.

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"The person of Chatterton, like his genius, was premature; he had a manliness and dignity beyond his years, and there was a something about him uncommonly prepossessing. His more remarkable feature was his eyes which, though gray, were uncommonly piercing; when he was warmed in argument or otherwise, they sparked with fire, and one eye, it is said, was still more remarkable than the other."

[Pg 61]

GEOFFREY CHAUCER
ABOUT 1340-1400

Nicholas's *Life of Chaucer*.

*

"The affection of Occleve" (*his contemporary and dear friend*) "has made Chaucer's person better known than that of any individual of his age. The portrait of which an engraving illustrates this memoir, is taken from Occleve's painting already mentioned in the Harleian MS. 4866, which he says was painted from memory after Chaucer's decease, and which is apparently the only genuine portrait in existence. The figure, which is half-length, has a background of green tapestry. He is represented with gray hair and beard, which is bi-forked; he wears a dark-coloured dress and hood, his right hand is extended, and in his left he holds a string of beads. From his vest a black case is suspended, which appears to[Pg 62] contain a knife, or possibly a 'penner'[2] or pencase. The expression of the countenance is intelligent, but the fire of the eye seems quenched, and evident marks of advanced age appear on the countenance. This is incomparably the best portrait of Chaucer yet discovered."

Nicholas's *Life of Chaucer*.

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"There is a third portrait in a copy of the *Canterbury Tales* made about the reign of King Henry the Fifth, being within twenty years of the poet's death, in the Lansdowne MS. 851. The figure, which is a small full-length, is placed in the initial letter of the volume. He is dressed in a long gray gown, with red stockings, and black shoes fastened with black sandals round the ankles. His head is bare, and the hair closely cut. In his right hand he holds an open book; and a knife or pencase, as in the other portraits, is attached to his vest."

[Pg 63]*Tradition asserts that Chaucer merged his own personality in that of the Poet in his* Canterbury Tales.

Prologue to
The Rime of
Sire Thopas.

"... Our Hoste to japen he began,

And than at erst he loked upon me,

And saide thus; 'What man art thou?' quod he;

'Thou lokest, as thou woldest finde an hare,

For ever upon the ground I see thee stare.

'Approche nere, and loke up merily.

Now ware you, sires, and let this man have place.

He in the waste is shapen as wel as I:

This were a popet,[3] in an arme to enbrace

For any woman, smal and faire of face.

He semeth elvish[4] by his contenance,

For unto no wight doth he daliance.'"

PHILIP, LORD CHESTERFIELD
1694-1773

Life and Letters
of Lord Chesterfield.

“Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, was a slight-made man, of the middle[Pg 64] size; rather genteel than handsome either in face or person: but there was a certain suavity in his countenance, which, accompanied with a polite address and pleasing elocution, obtained him in a wonderful degree the admiration of both sexes, and made his suit irresistible with either. He was naturally possessed of a fine sensibility; but by a habit of mastering his passions and disguising his feelings, he at length arrived at the appearance of the most perfect Stoicism: nothing surprised, alarmed, or discomposed him.”

Hayward’s
Lord Chesterfield.
*

“The name of Chesterfield has become a synonym for good breeding and politeness. It is associated in our minds with all that is graceful in manner and cold in heart, attractive in appearance and unamiable in reality. The image it calls up is that of a man rather below the middle height, in a court suit and blue riband, with regular features wearing an habitual expression of gentleman-like ease.[Pg 65] His address is insinuating, his bow perfect, his compliments rival those of *Le Grand Monarque* in delicacy; laughter is too demonstrative for him, but the smile of courtesy is ever on his lips; and by the time he has gone through the circle, the great object of his daily ambition is accomplished—all the women are already half in love with him, and every man is desirous to be his friend.”

Blackwood’s
Magazine, 1868.

“... Lord Hervey pauses in his story of Queen Caroline and her Court to describe with cutting and bitter force the character and appearance of his rival courtier.... ‘His person was as disagreeable as it was possible for a human figure to be without being deformed,’ he says. ‘He was very short, disproportioned, thick and clumsily made, with black teeth, and a head big enough for a Polyphemus. One Ben Ashurst, who said few good things though admired for many, told Lord Chesterfield once that he was like a stunted giant, which was a humorous idea, and really[Pg 66] apposite.’... The defects of his personal appearance are evidently exaggerated in this truculent sketch; but his portrait by Gainsborough, which is said to be the best, affords some foundation for the picture. The face is heavy, rugged, and unlovely, though full of force and intelligence; and his unheroic form and stature are points which Chesterfield himself does not attempt to conceal.”

WILLIAM COBBETT
1762-1835

Bamford's
Passages in the
Life of a Radical.

"Had I met him anywhere else save in the room and on that occasion, I should have taken him for a gentleman farming his own broad estate. He seemed to have that kind of self-possession and ease about him, together with a certain bantering jollity, which are[Pg 67] so natural to fast-handed and well-housed lords of the soil. He was, I should suppose, not less than six feet in height, portly, with a fresh, clear, and round cheek, and a small gray eye, twinkling with good-humoured archness. He was dressed in a blue coat, yellow swan's-down waistcoat, drab kerseymere small-clothes, and top-boots. His hair was gray, and his cravat and linen fine, and very white."—1818.

Hazlitt's
Table Talk.

"Mr. Cobbett speaks almost as well as he writes. The only time I ever saw him he seemed to me a very pleasant man, easy of access, affable, clear-headed, simple and mild in his manner, deliberate and unruffled in his speech, though some of his expressions were not very qualified. His figure is tall and portly. He has a good, sensible face, rather full, with little gray eyes, a hard square forehead, a ruddy complexion, with hair gray or powdered; and had on a scarlet broadcloth waistcoat with the flaps of the pockets hanging down, as was the custom[Pg 68] for gentleman farmers in the last century, or as we see it in pictures of members of parliament in the reign of George I. I certainly did not think less favourably of him for seeing him."

Watson's
Biographies of
Wilkes and Cobbett.

"In stature the late Mr. Cobbett was tall and athletic. I should think he could not have been less than six feet two, while his breadth was proportionately great. He was indeed one of the stoutest men in the House.... His hair was of a milk-white colour, and his complexion ruddy. His features were not strongly marked. What struck you most about his face was his small, sparkling, laughing eyes. When disposed to be humorous yourself, you had only to look at his eyes, and you were sure to sympathise with his merriment. When not speaking, the expression of his eye and his countenance was very different. He was one of the most striking refutations of the

principles of Lavater I ever witnessed. Never were the[Pg 69] looks of any man more completely at variance with his character. There was something so heavy and dull about his whole appearance, that any one who did not know him would at once set him down for some country clodpole, to use a favourite expression of his own, who not only had never read a book, or had a single idea in his head, but who was a mere mass of mortality, without a particle of sensibility of any kind in his composition. He usually sat with one leg over the other, his head slightly drooping, as if sleeping, on his breast, and his hat down almost to his eyes. His usual dress was a light-gray coat of a full make, a white waistcoat, and kerseymere breeches of a sandy colour. When he walked about the House, he generally had his hands inserted in his breeches' pocket. Considering his advanced age, seventy-three, he looked remarkably hale and healthy, and walked with a firm but slow step."—1835.

[Pg 70]

HARTLEY COLERIDGE
1796-1849

Derwent
Coleridge's
Memoir of
Hartley Coleridge.

"I first saw Hartley in the beginning, I think, of 1837, when I was at Sedbergh, and he heard us our lesson in Mr. Green's parlour. My impression of him was what I conceived Shakespeare's idea of a gentleman to be, something which we like to have in a picture. He was dressed in black, his hair, just touched with gray, fell in thick waves down his back, and he had a frilled shirt on; and there was a sort of autumnal ripeness and brightness about him. His shrill voice, and his quick, authoritative 'Right! right!' and the chuckle with which he translated 'rerum repetundarum' as 'peculation, a very common vice in governors of all ages,'[Pg 71] after which he took a turn round the sofa—all struck me amazingly."—1837.

Derwent
Coleridge's
Memoir of
Hartley Coleridge.

"His manners and appearance were peculiar. Though not dwarfish either in form or expression, his stature was remarkably low, scarcely exceeding five feet, and he early

acquired the gait and general appearance of advanced age. His once dark, lustrous hair, was prematurely silvered, and became latterly quite white. His eyes, dark, soft, and brilliant, were remarkably responsive to the movements of his mind, flashing with a light from within. His complexion, originally clear and sanguine, looked weather-beaten, and the contour of his face was rendered less pleasing by the breadth of his nose. His head was very small, the ear delicately formed, and the forehead, which receded slightly, very wide and expansive. His hands and feet were also small and delicate. His countenance when in repose, or rather in stillness, was stern and thoughtful[Pg 72] in the extreme, indicating deep and passionate meditation, so much so as to be at times almost startling. His low bow on entering a room, in which there were ladies or strangers, gave a formality to his address, which wore at first the appearance of constraint; but when he began to talk these impressions were presently changed,—he threw off the seeming weight of years, his countenance became genial, and his manner free and gracious."—1843.

Littell's
Living Age,
1849.

"His head was large and expressive, with dark eyes and white waving locks, and resting upon broad shoulders, with the smallest possible apology for a neck. To a sturdy and ample frame were appended legs and arms of a most disproportioned shortness, and, 'in his whole aspect there was something indescribably elfish and grotesque, such as limners do not love to paint, nor ladies to look upon.' He reminded you of a spy-glass shut up, and you wanted to take hold of him and pull him out[Pg 73] into a man of goodly proportions and average stature. It was difficult to repress a smile at his appearance as he approached, for the elements were so quaintly combined in him that he seemed like one of Cowley's conceits translated into flesh and blood.... His manners were like those of men accustomed to live much alone, simple, frank, and direct, but not in all respects governed by the rules of conventional politeness. It was difficult for him to sit still. He was constantly leaving his chair, walking about the room, and then sitting down again, as if he were haunted by an incurable restlessness. His conversation was very interesting, and marked by a vein of quiet humour not found in his writings. He spoke with much deliberation, and in regularly-constructed periods, which might have been printed without any alteration. There was a peculiarity in his voice not easily described. He would begin a sentence in a sort of subdued tone, hardly above a whisper, and end it in[Pg 74] something between a bark and a growl."—1848.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE
1772-1834

de Quincey's
Life and
Writings.

"I had received directions for finding out the house where Coleridge was visiting; and in riding down a main street of Bridgewater, I noticed a gateway corresponding to the description given me. Under this was standing and gazing about him, a man whom I shall describe! In height he might seem to be about five feet eight (he was in reality about an inch and a half taller, but his figure was of an order which drowns the height); his person was broad and full, and tended even to corpulence; his complexion was fair, though not what painters technically style fair, because it was associated with black hair; his eyes were large[Pg 75] and soft in their expression, and it was from the peculiar haze or dreaminess which mixed with their light that I recognised my object. This was Coleridge."—1807.

Bryan Procter's
Recollections of
Men of Letters.

"Coleridge had a weighty head, dreaming gray eyes, full, sensual lips, and a look and manner which were entirely wanting in firmness and decision. His motions also appeared weak and undecided, and his voice had nothing of the sharpness or ring of a resolute man. When he spoke his words were thick and slow, and when he read poetry his utterance was altogether a chant."—About 1820.

Froude's *Life*
of Carlyle.

"I have seen many curiosities; not the least of them I reckon Coleridge, the Kantian metaphysician and quondam Lake Poet. I will tell you all about our interview when we meet. Figure a fat, flabby, incurvated personage, at once short, rotund, and relaxed, with a watery mouth, a snuffy nose, a pair of strange brown, timid, yet earnest-looking eyes, a high tapering[Pg 76] brow, and a great bush of gray hair, and you have some faint idea of Coleridge. He is a kind, good soul, full of religion and affection and poetry and animal magnetism. His cardinal sin is that he wants *will*. He has no resolution. He shrinks from pain or labour in any of its shapes. His very attitude bespeaks this. He never straightens his knee-joints. He stoops with his fat, ill-shapen shoulders, and in walking he does not tread, but shovel and slide. My father would call it 'skluiffing.' He

is also always busied to keep, by strong and frequent inhalations, the water of his mouth from overflowing, and his eyes have a look of anxious impotence. He *would* do with all his heart, but he knows he dares not. The conversation of the man is much as I anticipated—a forest of thoughts, some true, many false, more *part* dubious, all of them ingenious in some degree, often in a high degree. But there is no method in his talk; he wanders like a man sailing among many currents,[Pg 77] whithersoever his lazy mind directs him; and, what is more unpleasant, he preaches, or rather soliloquises. He cannot speak, he can only *tal-k* (so he names it). Hence I found him unprofitable, even tedious; but we parted very good friends, I promising to go back and see him some evening—a promise which I fully intend to keep. I sent him a copy of *Meister*, about which we had some friendly talk. I reckon him a man of great and useless genius: a strange, not at all a great man."—1824.

WILLIAM COLLINS
1720-1756

Gentleman's Magazine, 1781.

"Collins I was intimately acquainted with from the time that he came to reside at Oxford. In London I met him often.... He was of moderate stature, of a light and clear complexion, with gray[Pg 78] eyes so very weak at times as hardly to bear a candle in the room, and often raising within him apprehensions of blindness. He was passionately fond of music, good-natured and affable, warm in his friendships and visionary in his pursuits, and, as long as I knew him, temperate in his eating and drinking."

Johnson's *Life of Collins*.

"About this time I fell into his company. His appearance was decent and manly; his knowledge considerable, his views extensive, his conversation elegant, and his disposition cheerful."—1744.

J. Langhorne's *Memoirs of William Collins*.

“Mr. Collins was, in stature, somewhat above the middle size; of a brown complexion, keen expressive eyes, and a fixed sedate aspect, which, from intense thinking, had contracted an habitual frown. His proficiency in letters was greater than could have been expected from his years. He was skilled in the learned languages, and acquainted with the Italian, French, and Spanish.”

[Pg 79]

WILLIAM COWPER
1731-1800

Cowper’s
Letters.

“As for me, I am a very smart youth of my years. I am not indeed grown gray so much as I am grown bald. No matter. There was more hair in the world than ever had the honour to belong to me. Accordingly, having found just enough to curl a little at my ears, and to intermingle with a little of my own that still hangs behind, I appear, if you see me in an afternoon, to have a very decent head-dress, not easily distinguished from my natural growth; which being worn with a small bag, and a black ribbon about my neck, continues to me the charms of my youth, even on the verge of age. Away with the fear of writing too often.

“Yours, my dearest cousin,

“W. C.

[Pg 80]“*P.S.*—That the view I give you of myself may be complete, I add the two following items,—that I am in debt to nobody, and that I grow fat.”—1785.

H. F. Cary’s
Notice of Cowper.

“Cowper was of a middle height, with limbs strongly framed, hair of light brown, eyes of a bluish gray, and ruddy complexion.”

Rossetti’s *Memoir*
of Cowper.
*

“The eager, sudden-looking, large-eyed, shaven face of Cowper is familiar to us in his portraits—a face sharp-cut and sufficiently well-moulded, without being handsome,

nor particularly sympathetic. It is a high-strung, excitable face, as of a man too susceptible and touchy to put himself forward willingly among his fellows, but who, feeling a ‘vocation’ upon him, would be more than merely earnest,—self-asserting, aggressive, and unyielding. This is in fact very much the character of his writings.”

[Pg 81]

GEORGE CRABBE
1754-1832

Life of Crabbe,
by his son.

“In the eye of memory I can still see him as he was at that period of his life,—his fatherly countenance unmixed with any of the less lovable expressions that in too many faces obscure that character; but pre-eminently *fatherly*, conveying the ideas of kindness, intellect, and purity; his manner grave, manly, and cheerful, in unison with his high and open forehead; his very attitudes, whether as he sat absorbed in the arrangement of his minerals, shells, and insects; or as he laboured in his garden until his naturally pale complexion acquired a tinge of fresh healthy red; or as, coming lightly towards us with some unexpected present, his smile of indescribable benevolence spoke exultation in the foretaste of our raptures.”—1789.

Life of Crabbe,
by his son.

[Pg 82]“... Mr. Lockhart ... recently favoured me with the following letter.... ‘His noble forehead, his bright beaming eye, without anything of old age about it—though he was then, I presume, above seventy; his sweet, and, I would say, innocent smile, and the calm mellow tones of his voice, are all reproduced the moment I open any page of his poetry.’”—1822.

S. C. Hall’s
Memories of
Great Men.

“In the appearance of Crabbe there was little of the poet, but even less of the stern critic of mankind, who looked at nature askance, and ever contemplated beauty animate or inanimate,—

‘The simple loves and simple joys,’

‘through a glass darkly.’ On the contrary, he seemed to my eyes the representative of the class of rarely troubled, and seldom thinking, English farmers. A clear gray eye, a ruddy complexion, as if he loved exercise[Pg 83] and wooed mountain breezes, were the leading characteristics of his countenance. It is a picture of age, ‘frosty but kindly,’—that of a tall and stalwart man gradually grown old, to whom age was rather an ornament than a blemish. He was one of those instances of men, plain perhaps in youth, and homely of countenance in manhood, who become absolutely handsome when white hairs have become a crown of glory, and indulgence in excesses or perilous passions has left no lines that speak of remorse, or even of errors unatoned.”—1825-26.

DANIEL DE FOE
1661-1731

Secretary
of State’s
Proclamation.

“Whereas, Daniel De Foe, *alias* De Fooe, is charged with writing a scandalous and seditious pamphlet entitled *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. He is a middle-sized[Pg 84] spare man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion, and dark brown-colored hair, but wears a wig; a hooked nose, a sharp chin, gray eyes, and a large mole near his mouth.”—1703.

Wilson’s
De Foe.
*

“A likeness of the author, engraved by M. Vandergucht, from a painting by Taverner, is prefixed.” (*To a volume of treatises published in 1703.*) “It is the first portrait of De Foe, and probably the most like him. The following description of it by a recent biographer is strikingly characteristic: ‘No portrait can have more verisimilitude, to say the least of it. It exhibits a set of features rather regular than otherwise, very determined in its outlines, more particularly the mouth, which expresses great firmness and resolution of character. The eyes are full, black, and grave-looking, but the impression of the whole countenance is rather a striking than a pleasing one. Daniel is here set forth in a most lordly and full-bottomed wig, which[Pg 85] flows down lower than his elbow, and rises above his forehead with great amplitude of curl. A richly-laced cravat, and fine loose-flowing cloak completes his attire, and preserve, we may suppose, the likeness

of that civic “gallantry” which Oldmixon ascribes to Daniel on the occasion of his escorting King William to the Lord Mayor’s feast. It is altogether more like a picture of a substantial citizen of the “surly breed” De Foe has himself so often satirised, than that of a poor pamphleteer languishing in jail after the terrors of the pillory.’”

John Forster’s
Bibliographical
Essays.
*

“It is, to us, very pleasing to contemplate the meeting of such a sovereign and such a subject, as William and De Foe. There was something not dissimilar in their physical aspect, as in their moral temperament resemblances undoubtedly existed. The King was the elder by ten years, but the middle size, the spare figure, the hooked nose, the sharp chin, the keen gray eye, the large forehead, and grave appearance,[Pg 86] were common to both. William’s manner was cold, except in battle, and little warmth was ascribed to De Foe’s, unless he spoke of civil liberty.”

CHARLES DICKENS
1812-1870

Forster’s *Life*
of Dickens.

“Very different was his face in those days from that which photography has made familiar to the present generation. A look of youthfulness first attracted you, and then a candour and openness of expression which made you sure of the qualities within. The features were very good. He had a capital forehead, a firm nose with full wide nostrils, eyes wonderfully beaming with intellect and running over with humour and cheerfulness, and a rather prominent mouth strongly marked with sensibility. The head was altogether well[Pg 87] formed and symmetrical, and the air and carriage of it was extremely spirited. The hair so scant and grizzled in later days was then of a rich brown and most luxuriant abundance, and the bearded face of his last two decades had hardly a vestige of hair or whisker; but there was that in the face as I first recollect it which no time could change, and which remained implanted on it unalterably to the last. This was the quickness, keenness, and practical power, the eager, restless, energetic outlook on each several feature, that seemed to tell so little of a student or writer of books, and so much of a man of action and business in the world. Light and motion flashed from every part of it. *It was as if made of steel*, was said of it, four or

five years after the time to which I am referring, by a most original and delicate observer, the late Mrs. Carlyle. ‘What a face is his to meet in a drawing-room!’ wrote Leigh Hunt to me, the morning after I had made them known to each other. ‘It[Pg 88] has the life and soul in it of fifty human beings.’ In such sayings are expressed not alone the restless and resistless vivacity and force of which I have spoken, but that also which lay beneath them of steadiness and hard endurance.”—1838.

J. T. Fields’s
Yesterdays with
Authors.

“How well I recall the bleak winter evening in 1842 when I first saw the handsome, glowing face of the young man who was even then famous over half the globe! He came bounding into the Tremont House, fresh from the steamer that had brought him to our shores, and his cheery voice rang through the hall, as he gave a quick glance at the new scenes opening upon him in a strange land on first arriving at a Transatlantic hotel. ‘Here we are!’ he shouted, as the lights burst upon the merry party just entering the house, and several gentlemen came forward to meet him. Ah, how happy and buoyant he was then! Young, handsome, almost worshipped for his genius, belted round by[Pg 89] such troops of friends as rarely ever man had, coming to a new country to make new conquests of fame and honor,—surely it was a sight long to be remembered and never wholly to be forgotten. The splendour of his endowments and the personal interest he had won to himself called forth all the enthusiasm of old and young America, and I am glad to have been among the first to welcome his arrival. You ask me what was his appearance as he ran, or rather flew, up the steps of the hotel, and sprang into the hall? He seemed all on fire with curiosity, and alive as I never saw mortal before. From top to toe every fibre of his body was unrestrained and alert. What vigor, what keenness, what freshness of spirit, possessed him! He laughed all over, and did not care who heard him! He seemed like the Emperor of Cheerfulness on a cruise of pleasure, determined to conquer a realm or two of fun every hour of his overflowing existence. That night impressed itself on my memory for all time, so far as I am[Pg 90] concerned with things sublunary. It was Dickens, the true ‘Boz,’ in flesh and blood, who stood before us at last, and with my companions, three or four lads of my own age, I determined to sit up late that night.”—1842.

The Cowden
Clarkes’ *Recollections*
of writers.

“Charles Dickens had that acute perception of the comic side of things which causes irrepressible brimming of the eyes; and what eyes his were! Large, dark blue, exquisitely shaped, fringed with magnificently long and thick lashes—they now swam in liquid, limpid suffusion, when tears started into them from a sense of humour or a sense of pathos, and now darted quick flashes of fire when some generous indignation at injustice, or some high-wrought feeling of admiration at magnanimity, or some sudden emotion of interest and excitement touched him. Swift-glancing, appreciative, rapidly observant, truly superb orbits they were, worthy of the other features in his manly, handsome face. The mouth was singularly mobile, full-lipped, well-shaped,[Pg 91] and expressive; sensitive, nay restless, in its susceptibility to impression that swayed him, or sentiment that moved him. He, who saw into apparently slightest trifles that were fraught to his perception with deeper significance; he, who beheld human nature with insight almost superhuman, and who revered good and abhorred evil with intensity, showed instantaneously by his expressive countenance the kind of idea that possessed him. This made his conversation enthralling, his acting first-rate, and his reading superlative.”

ISAAC D’ISRAELI
1766-1848

S. C. Hall’s
Retrospect of
a long Life.

“I found him a most kindly and courteous gentleman, obviously of a tender, loving nature, and certainly more than willing to give me what I asked for. I do not recall him as like his[Pg 92] illustrious son; if my memory serves me rightly, he was rather fair than dark; not above the middle height, with features calm in expression; his eyes (which, however, were always covered with spectacles) sparkling, and searching, but indicating less the fire of genius than the patient inquiry that formed the staple of his books.”—1823.

Beaconsfield’s
Memoirs of
Isaac D’Israeli.

“As the world has always been fond of personal details respecting men who have been celebrated, I will mention that he was fair, with a Bourbon nose, and brown eyes of extraordinary beauty and lustre. He wore a small black velvet cap, but his white hair

latterly touched his shoulders in curls almost as flowing as in his boyhood. His extremities were delicate and well formed, and his leg, at his last hour, as shapely as in his youth, which showed the vigour of his frame. Latterly he had become corpulent. He did not excel in conversation, though in his domestic circle he was garrulous. Everything interested him,[Pg 93] and blind and eighty-two, he was still as susceptible as a child.... He more resembled Goldsmith than any man that I can compare him to: in his conversation, his apparent confusion of ideas ending with some felicitous phrase of genius, his *naïveté*, his simplicity not untouched with a dash of sarcasm affecting innocence—one was often reminded of the gifted and interesting friend of Burke and Johnson. There was, however, one trait in which my father did not resemble Goldsmith; he had no vanity. Indeed, one of his few infirmities was rather a deficiency of self-esteem."

Chorley's
Personal
Reminiscences.

"Mr. D'Israeli was announced.... An old gentleman, *strictly* in his appearance; a countenance which at first glance (owing, perhaps, to the mouth, which hangs), I fancied slightly chargeable with solidity of expression, but which developed strong sense as it talked; a rather *soigné* style of dress for so old a man, and a manner good-humoured, complimentary (to Gebir), discursive and prosy, bespeaking[Pg 94] that engrossment and interest in his own pursuits which might be expected to be found in a person so patient in research and collection. But there is a tone of *philosophe* (or I fancied it), which I did not quite like."—1838.

JOHN DRYDEN
1631-1700

Anderson's
Poets of
Great Britain.

"Of the person, private life, and domestic manners of Dryden, very few particulars are known. His picture by Kneller would lead us to suppose that he was graceful in his person; but Kneller was a great mender of nature. From the *State Poems* we learn that he was a short, thick man. The nickname given him by his enemies was *Poet Squab*. 'I remember plain John Dryden' (says a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February 1745, who was then eighty-seven years of[Pg 95] age) 'before he paid his court to the

great, in one uniform clothing of Norwich drugget. I have eat tarts with him and Madam Reeve (the actress) at the Mulberry Garden, when our author advanced to a sword and *Chedreux* wig (probably the wig that Swift has ridiculed in *The Battle of the Books*). Posterity is absolutely mistaken as to that great man. Though forced to be a satirist, he was the mildest creature breathing, and the readiest to help the young and deserving. Though his comedies are horribly full of *double entendre*, yet 'twas owing to a false compliance for a dissolute age; he was in company the modestest man that ever conversed.'... From those notices which he has very liberally given us of himself, it appears, that 'his conversation was slow and dull, his humour saturnine and reserved, and that he was none of those who endeavour to break jests in company, and make repartees.'"

Gilfillan's
Life of Dryden.
*

"As to his habits and manners little is known, and that little is worn threadbare by[Pg 96] his many biographers. In appearance he became in his maturer years fat and florid, and obtained the name of 'Poet Squab.' His portraits show a shrewd but rather sluggish face, with long gray hair floating down his cheeks, not unlike Coleridge, but without his dreamy eye like a nebulous star. His conversation was less sprightly than solid. Sometimes men suspected that he had 'sold all his thoughts to his booksellers.' His manners are by his friends pronounced 'modest,' and the word modest has since been amiably confounded by his biographers with 'pure.' Bashful he seems to have been to awkwardness; but he was by no means a model of the virtues. He loved to sit at Will's coffee-house and be the arbiter of criticism. His favourite stimulus was snuff, and his favourite amusement angling. He had a bad address, a down look, and little of the air of a gentleman."

Christie's
Memoir of
Dryden.
*

"Some notion of Dryden's personal appearance may be gathered from contemporary[Pg 97] notices. He was of short stature, stout, and ruddy in the face. Rochester christened him 'Poet Squab,' and Tom Brown always calls him 'Little Bayes.' Shadwell, in his *Medal of John Bayes*, sneers at him as a cherry-cheeked dunce; another lampooner calls him 'learned and florid.' Pope remembered him as plump and of fresh colour, with a down look. Lady de Longueville, who died in 1763 at the age

of a hundred, told Oldys that she remembered Dryden dining with her husband, and that the most remarkable part of his appearance was an uncommon distance between his eyes. He had a large mole on his right cheek. The friendly writer of some lines on his portrait by Closterman says:

‘A sleepy eye he shows, and no sweet feature.’

He appears to have become gray comparatively early, and he let his gray hair grow long. We see him with his long gray locks in the portrait by which, through engravings, his face is best known to us, painted by Kneller in 1698.[Pg 98] The face, as we know it by that picture and the engravings, is handsome, it indicates intellect, and sensual characteristics are not wanting.”

MARY ANNE EVANS
(George Eliot)
1819-1880

Harper’s Magazine,
1881.

“In more than one striking passage in his novels Mr. Hardy has recognised the fact that the beauty of the future, as the race is more developed in intellect, cannot be the mere physical beauty of the past; and in one of the most remarkable he says that ‘ideal physical beauty is incompatible with mental development, and a full recognition of the evil of things. Mental luminousness must be fed with the oil of life, even though there is already a physical need for it.’ And this was the case with George Eliot. The face was one of a[Pg 99] group of four, not all equally like each other, but all of the same spiritual family, and with a curious interdependance of likeness. These four are Dante, Savonarola, Cardinal Newman, and herself.... In the group of which George Eliot was one there is the same straight wall of brow; the droop of the powerful nose; mobile lips, touched with strong passion, kept resolutely under control; a square jaw, which would make the face stern, were it not counteracted by the sweet smile of lip and eye.... The two or three portraits that exist, though valuable, give but a very imperfect presentiment. The mere shape of the head would be the despair of any painter. It was so grand and massive that it would scarcely be possible to represent it without giving the idea of disproportion to the frame of which no one ever thought for a moment when they saw her, although it was a surprise, when she stood up, to see that after all, she was but a little fragile woman who bore this weight of brow and brain.”

The Century,
1881.

[Pg 100]"Everything in her aspect and presence was in keeping with the bent of her soul. The deeply-lined face, the too marked and massive features, were united with an air of delicate refinement, which in one way was the more impressive because it seemed to proceed so entirely from within. Nay, the inward beauty would sometimes quite transform the external harshness; there would be moments when the thin hands that entwined themselves in their eagerness, the earnest figure that bowed forward to speak and hear, the deep gaze moving from one face to another with a grave appeal,—all these seemed the transparent symbols that showed the presence of a wise benignant soul. But it was the voice which best revealed her, a voice whose subdued intensity and tremulous richness seemed to environ her uttered words with the mystery of a work of feeling that must remain untold.... And then again, when in moments of more intimate converse some current of emotion would set[Pg 101] strongly through her soul, when she would raise her head in unconscious absorption and look out into the unseen, her expression was not one to be soon forgotten. It had not, indeed, the serene felicity of souls to whose child-like confidence all heaven and earth are fair. Rather it was the look (if I may use a platonic phrase) of a strenuous Demiurge, of a soul on which high tasks are laid, and which finds in their accomplishment its only imagination of joy."

William
Morgan's
George Eliot.
*

"I was disappointed when I found the illustrated papers gave no portraits of George Eliot, and I afterwards learned that, celebrated as she is in other ways, she enjoys the rare, and perhaps unique, distinction that she was never photographed. Two portraits of her are, however, in existence. One, by Mr. Lawrence, hangs in Mr. Blackwood's drawing-room in Edinburgh; the other, by Mr. Buxton, was in her own house at Chelsea. She is described as a woman of large, massive, and homely features,[Pg 102] which were softened and irradiated by a gracious and winning smile. The size, shape, and poise of her head were very noticeable, and some of her friends have been struck by her resemblance to the portrait of Savonarola by Fra Bartolommea. Her voice was rich and melodious, and those who best knew her speak of her as a strangely fascinating and sympathetic woman, who left on every one who approached her an impression of goodness and greatness. Her conversation had no traces of the

rich humour which runs through some of her writings, but she joined very heartily in the jocularity of others."

HENRY FIELDING
1707-1754

Roscoe's
Life of
Fielding.
*

"With regard to his personal appearance, Fielding was strongly built, robust, and in height rather exceeding six feet; he was[Pg 103] also remarkably active, till repeated attacks of gout had broken down the vigour of a fine constitution. Naturally of a dignified presence, he was equally impressive in his tone and manner, which added to his peculiarly-marked features; his conversational powers and rare wit must have given him a decided influence in general society, and not a little ascendency over the minds of common men."

Jeaffreson's
Novels and
Novelists.
*

"That our nation was well and favourably represented by him, amongst the lads at the university, there can be no doubt; for he was a magnificent fellow, frank in bearing, agile as a trained wrestler, rather exceeding six feet in height, with a face, both by aristocratic features and gallant expression, remarkably engaging, with a fresh, slightly ruddy complexion, and a winning smile of the most mirthful intelligence, with an air commanding, but free from the slightest taint of haughtiness, and lastly, with a disposition as well endowed[Pg 104] as his mind,—generous and truly noble as became one sprung from the seed of kings."—1725.

Lawrence's
Life of
Fielding.
*

"The personal appearance of the great novelist has been thus described by his friend, Mr. Arthur Murphy: 'Henry Fielding was in stature rather rising above six feet; his frame

of body large and remarkably robust, till the gout had broken the vigour of his constitution.' His features were marked and striking, so much so, that a portrait of him was painted by his friend Hogarth from memory, with the assistance of a profile which had been cut in paper with a pair of scissors by a lady. Though he was singularly handsome in his youth, in his later years it appears, from his own account, that his gouty and dropsical figure was anything but agreeable to behold. But his cheerfulness and good temper rendered him to the last a delightful companion, and endeared him to his family and friends."

[Pg 105]

JOHN GAY
1688-1732

Coxe's
Life of
John Gay.

"His physiognomy does not appear to have been remarkable for strong lines or expressive features, it rather denoted benignity and meekness.... In his person Gay was inclined to corpulency; a circumstance which he humorously alludes to in his Epistle to Lord Burlington:

'You knew fat bards might tire,

And mounted sent me forth your trusty squire.'

His natural corpulency was increased by extreme indolence, for which his friends often rallied him. Swift, in a letter to the Duchess of Queensberry, thus expresses himself on this subject: 'You need not be in pain about Mr. Gay's stock of health; I promise you he will spend it all upon laziness, and run deep in debt by a winter's repose in town; therefore I entreat your Grace will[Pg 106] order him to move his chaps less, and his legs more, the six cold months, else he will spend all his money in physic and coach-hire.'—8th October 1731.... In the early part of his life Gay was extremely fond of dress.... Pope also touches upon this weakness in a letter to Swift.—18th December 1713.

... "'One Mr. Gay, an unhappy youth, who writes pastorals during the time of divine service; whose case is the more deplorable, as he hath miserably lavished away all that silver he should have reserved for his soul's health in buttons and loops for his coat.'"

Thackeray's
English
Humourists.
*

"In the portraits of the literary worthies of the early part of the last century, Gay's face is the pleasantest perhaps of all. It appears adorned with neither periwig nor nightcap (the full dress and *négligée* of learning without which the painters of those days scarcely ever pourtrayed wits), and he laughs at you over his shoulder[Pg 107] with an honest boyish glee—an artless sweet humour. He was so kind, so gentle, so jocular, so delightfully brisk at times, so dismally woe-begone at others, such a natural good creature, that the Giants loved him."

EDWARD GIBBON
1737-1794

Colman's
Random
Recollections.

"The learned Gibbon was a curious counter-balance to the learned (may I not say the less learned) Johnson. Their manners and tastes, both in writing and conversation, were as different as their habiliments. On the day I first sat down with Johnson in his rusty brown suit and his black worsted stockings, Gibbon was placed opposite to me in a suit of flowered velvet, with a bag and sword. Each had his measured phraseology, and Johnson's famous parallel between Dryden and Pope might be[Pg 108] loosely parodied in reference to himself and Gibbon. Johnson's style was grand, and Gibbon's elegant: the stateliness of the former was sometimes pedantic, and the latter was occasionally finical. Johnson marched to kettledrums and trumpets, Gibbon moved to flutes and hautboys. Johnson hewed passages through the Alps, while Gibbon levelled walks through parks and gardens. Mauled as I had been by Johnson, Gibbon poured balm upon my bruises by condescending once or twice in the course of the evening to talk with me. The great historian was light and playful, suiting his matter to the capacity of a boy; but it was done *more suo*—still his mannerism prevailed, still he tapped his snuff-box, still he smirked and smiled, and rounded his periods with the same air of good-breeding, as if he were conversing with men. His mouth, mellifluous as Plato's, was a round hole nearly in the centre of his visage."

Lord
Sheffield's
Gibbon.

"M. Pavilliard has described to me the[Pg 109] astonishment with which he gazed on Mr. Gibbon standing before him; a thin little figure, with a large head, disputing and urging, with the greatest ability, all the best arguments that had ever been used in favour of popery. Mr. Gibbon many years ago became very fat and corpulent, but he had uncommonly small bones, and was very slightly made."

Quarterly
Review,
1809.
*

"As to his manners in society, without doubt the agreeableness of Gibbon was neither that yielding and retiring complaisance, nor that modesty which is forgetful of self; but his vanity never showed itself in an offensive manner: anxious to succeed and to please, he wished to command attention, and obtained it without difficulty by a conversation animated, sprightly, and full of matter: all that was dictatorial in his tone betrayed not so much that desire of domineering over others, which is always offensive, as confidence in himself. Notwithstanding this, his conversation never[Pg 110] carried one away; its fault was a kind of arrangement which never permitted him to say anything unless well."

WILLIAM GODWIN
1756-1836

S. C. Hall's
Memories of
Great Men.

"In person he was remarkably sedate and solemn, resembling in dress and manner a Dissenting minister rather than the advocate of 'free-thought' in all things—religious, moral, social, and intellectual; he was short and stout, his clothes loosely and carelessly put on, and usually old and worn; his hands were generally in his pockets; he had a remarkably large, bald head, and a weak voice; seeming generally half asleep when he walked, and even when he talked. Few who saw this man of calm exterior, quiet manners, and inexpressive features, could[Pg 111] have believed him to have originated three romances—*Falkland*, *Caleb Williams*, and *St. Leon*,—not yet

forgotten because of their terrible excitements; and the work, *Political Justice*, which for a time created a sensation that was a fear in every state of Europe.... Lamb called him ‘a good-natured heathen’; Southey said of him, in 1797, ‘He has large noble eyes, and a nose—oh! most abominable nose.’”

George Ticknor’s
Life.

“Godwin is as far removed from everything feverish and exciting as if his head had never been filled with anything but geometry. He is now about sixty-five, stout, well-built, and unbroken by age, with a cool, dogged manner, exactly opposite to everything I had imagined of the author of *St. Leon* and *Caleb Williams*.”—1819.

H. Martineau’s
Autobiography.

“The mention of Coleridge reminds me, I hardly know why, of Godwin, who was an occasional morning visitor of mine. I looked upon him as a[Pg 112] curious monument of a bygone state of society; and there was still a good deal that was interesting in him. His fine head was striking, and his countenance remarkable. It must not be judged of by the pretended likeness put forth in *Fraser’s Magazine* about that time, and attributed, with the whole set, to Maclise.... The high Tory favourites of the Magazine were exhibited to the best advantage; while Liberals were represented as Godwin was. Because the finest thing about him was his noble head, they put on a hat; and they represented him in profile because he had lost his teeth, and his lips fell in. No notion of Godwin’s face could have been formed from that caricature.”—1833.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH
1728-1774

Forster’s *Life*
and Times
of Oliver
Goldsmith.

“You scarcely can conceive how much eight years of disappointment, anguish, and study,[Pg 113] have worn me down.... Imagine to yourself a pale melancholy visage, with two great wrinkles between the eyebrows, with an eye disgustingly severe, and, a big wig, and you may have a perfect picture of my present appearance.... I can neither laugh nor drink, have contracted a hesitating disagreeable manner of speaking, and a

visage that looks ill-nature itself; in short, I have thought myself into a settled melancholy, and an utter disgust of all that life brings with it."—1759.

Boswell's *Life*
of Dr. Johnson.

"He was very much what the French call *un étourdi*, and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman."—1763.

R. Walsh's
British Poets.
*

"Nothing could be more amiable than the general features of his mind; those of his[Pg 114] person were not perhaps so engaging. His stature was under the middle size, his body strongly built, and his limbs more sturdy than elegant. His complexion was pale, his forehead low, his face almost round and pitted with the small-pox, but marked with strong lines of thinking. His first appearance was not captivating; but when he grew easy and cheerful in company, he relaxed into such a display of good-humour as soon removed every unfavourable impression."

DAVID GRAY
1838-1861

Buchanan's
Life of David
Gray.

"At twenty-one years of age ... David was a tall young man, slightly but firmly built, and with a stoop at the shoulders. His head was small, fringed with black curly hair. Want of candour was not his fault, though he seldom looked one[Pg 115] in the face; his eyes, however, were large and dark, full of intelligence and humour, harmonising well with the long thin nose and nervous lips. The great black eyes and woman's mouth betrayed the creature of impulse; one whose reasoning faculties were small, but whose temperament was like red-hot coal. He sympathised with much that was lofty, noble, and true in poetry, and with much that was absurd and suicidal in the poet. He

carried sympathy to the highest pitch of enthusiasm; he shed tears over the memories of Keats and Burns, and he was corybantic in his execution of a Scotch 'reel.'"—1859.

R. M. Milnes's
Notice on David
Gray.

"I was told a young man wished to see me, and when he came into the room I at once saw it was no other than the young Scotch poet. It was a light, well-built, but somewhat stooping figure, with a countenance that at once brought strongly to my recollection a cast of a face of Shelley in his youth, which[Pg 116] I had seen at Mr. Leigh Hunt's. There was the same full brow, out-looking eyes, and sensitive melancholy mouth."

Hedderwick's
Memoir of
David Gray.

"In person, the deceased poet was tall, with a slight stoop. His head was not large, but his temperament was of the keenest and brightest edge. With black curling hair, eyes dark, large, and lustrous, and a complexion of almost feminine delicacy, his appearance never failed to make a favourable impression on strangers."

THOMAS GRAY
1716-1771

Gosse's
Gray.
*

"In one of Philip Gray's fits of extravagance he seems to have had a full-length of his son painted about this time, by the fashionable portrait-painter of the day, Jonathan Richardson the elder. This picture is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge.[Pg 117] The head is good in colour and modelling; a broad pale brow, sharp nose and chin, large eyes, and a pert expression, give a lively idea of the precocious and not very healthy young gentleman of thirteen. He is dressed in a blue satin coat, lined with pale shot silk, and crosses his stockinged legs so as to display dapper slippers of russet leather."—1729.

Warburton's
Horace Walpole

and his
contemporaries.
*

"Gray, judging from his portrait by Echardt, lately at Strawberry Hill, was eminently the poet and the scholar in his appearance. A delicate frame, a pale complexion, an expansive forehead, clear eyes, a small mouth, and regular features, bearing the general impression of thoughtfulness and melancholy, surrounded by his own hair, worn long, prepossessed the spectator in his favour, and charmed those who were already his admirers."

Gosse's
Gray.

"Mr. Gray's singular niceness in the choice of his acquaintance makes him appear fastidious in a great degree to all who are not[Pg 118] acquainted with his manner. He is of a fastidious and recluse distance of carriage, rather averse to all sociability, but of the graver turn, nice and elegant in his person, dress, and behaviour, even to a degree of finicality and effeminacy."—1770.

HENRY HALLAM
1777-1859

S. C. Hall's
Memories of
Great Men.

"Hallam was a tall and remarkably handsome man, very stately in look and manner. His countenance was thoughtful and intelligent, yet by no means stern. On the contrary, he was kindly and condescending. I had once occasion to apply to him for information. He gave it graciously and gracefully, and appeared as if he had received instead of conferred a compliment."

George Ticknor's
Life.

"Mr. Hallam is, I suppose, about sixty[Pg 119] years old, gray-headed, hesitates a little in his speech, is lame, and has a shy manner which makes him blush frequently, when he expresses as decided an opinion as his temperament constantly leads him to entertain. Except his lameness, he has a fine dignified person, and talked pleasantly, with that air of kindness which is always so welcome to a stranger.... He is a wise man,

a little nervous in his manner and a little fidgety, yet of a sound and quiet judgment."—1838.

Jerdan's
Men I have
known.

"A statue of him by Mr. Theed was sculptured for St. Paul's Cathedral, and a good copy was exhibited at the last National Exhibition, though I was not altogether satisfied with the likeness, nor thought the accessories well chosen and happy; for a standing figure, nevertheless, it has the great merit of simplicity.

"Though habitually rather grave, the pleasant smile best became his features, and[Pg 120] I do not think he was often guilty of audible laughter."

WILLIAM HAZLITT
1778-1830

Patmore's
Personal
Recollections.

"The truth is, that for depth, force, and variety of intellectual expression, a finer head and face than Hazlitt's were never seen. I speak of them when his countenance was not dimmed and obscured by illness, or clouded and deformed by those fearful indications of internal passion which he never even attempted to conceal. The expression of Hazlitt's face, when anything was said in his presence that seriously offended him, or when any peculiarly painful recollection passed across his mind, was truly awful, more so than can be conceived as within the capacity of the human countenance; except, perhaps, by those who have witnessed Edmund Kean's last scene of 'Sir[Pg 121] Giles Overreach' from the front of the pit. But when he was in good health, and in a tolerable humour with himself and the world, his face was more truly and entirely answerable to the intellect that spoke through it, than any other I ever saw, either in life or on canvas; and its crowning portion—the brow and forehead—was, to my thinking, quite unequalled for mingled capacity and beauty.

"For those who desire a more particular description, I will add that Hazlitt's features, though not cast in any received classical mould, were regular in their formation, perfectly consonant with each other, and so finely 'chiseled' (as the phrase is), that they produced a much more prominent and striking effect than their scale of size

might have led one to expect. The forehead, as I have hinted, was magnificent; the nose precisely that (combining strength with lightness and elegance) which physiognomists have assigned as evidence of a fine and highly cultivated taste, though there was a peculiar character[Pg 122] about the nostrils like that observable in those of a fiery and unruly horse. The mouth, from its ever-changing form and character, could scarcely be described, except as to its astonishingly varied power of expression, which was equal to, and greatly resembled, that of Edmund Kean. His eyes, I should say, were not good. They were never brilliant, and there was a furtive and at times a sinister look about them, as they glanced suspiciously from under their overhanging brows, that conveyed a very unpleasant impression to those who did not know him. And they were seldom directed frankly and fairly towards you, as if he were afraid that you might read in them what was passing in his mind concerning you. His head was nobly formed and placed, with (until the last few years of his life) a profusion of coal-black hair, richly curled; and his person was of middle height, rather slight, but well formed and put together."

Bryan Procter's
Recollections of
Men of Letters.

"My first meeting with Mr. Hazlitt took[Pg 123] place at the house of Leigh Hunt, where I met him at supper. I expected to see a severe, defiant-looking being. I met a grave man, diffident, almost awkward in manner, whose appearance did not impress me with much respect. He had a quick, restless eye, however, which opened eagerly when any good or bright observation was made; and I found at the conclusion of the evening, that when any question arose, the most sensible reply always came from him.... Hazlitt was of the middle size, with eager, expressive eyes, near which his black hair, sprinkled sparely with gray, curled round in a wiry, resolute manner. His gray eyes, not remarkable in colour, expanded into great expression when occasion demanded it. Being very shy, however, they often evaded your steadfast look. They never (as has been asserted by some one) had a sinister expression, but they sometimes flamed with indignant glances when their owner was moved to anger, like the eyes of other angry[Pg 124] men. At home, his style of dress (or undress) was perhaps slovenly, because there was no one to please; but he always presented a very neat and clean appearance when he went abroad. His mode of walking was loose, weak, and unsteady, although his arms displayed strength, which he used to put forth when he played at racquets with Martin Burney and others."

The Cowden
Clarkes'

Recollections
of Writers.

“The painting ... was standing on an old-fashioned couch in one corner of the room leaning against the wall, and we remained opposite to it for some time, while Hazlitt stood by holding the candle high up so as to throw the light well on to the picture, descanting enthusiastically on the merits of the original. The beam from the candle falling on his own finely intellectual head, with its iron-gray hair, its square potential forehead, its massive mouth and chin, and eyes full of earnest fire, formed a glorious picture in itself, and remains a luminous vision for ever upon our memories.”—About 1829.

[Pg 125]

FELICIA HEMANS
1794-1835

Hughes’s
Memoir of
Mrs. Hemans.

“The young poetess was then only fifteen; in the full glow of that radiant beauty which was destined to fade so early. The mantling bloom of her cheeks was shaded by a profusion of natural ringlets, of a rich golden brown, and the ever-varying expression of her brilliant eyes gave a changeful play to her countenance, which would have made it impossible for any painter to do justice to it. The recollection of what she was at that time, irresistibly suggests a quotation from Wordsworth’s graceful poetic picture:—

‘She was a Phantom of delight,

When first she gleamed upon my sight;

A lovely Apparition, sent

To be a moment’s ornament.

* * * *

A dancing Shape, an Image gay,

To haunt, to startle, and waylay.’”

1809.

Moir's
Memoirs of
Mrs. Hemans.

[Pg 126]"Mrs. Hemans was about the middle height, and rather slenderly made than otherwise. To a countenance of great intelligence and expression, she united manners alike unassuming and playful, and with a trust arising out of the purity of her own character—which was beyond the meanness of suspicion in others—she remained untainted by the breath of worldly guile."

Rossetti's
Notice of
Mrs. Hemans.
*

"An engraved portrait of her by the American artist William E. West—one of three which he painted in 1827, shows us that Mrs. Hemans, at the age of thirty-four, was eminently pleasing and good-looking, with an air of amiability and sprightly gentleness, and of confiding candour which, while none the less perfectly womanly, might almost be termed childlike in its limpid depth. The features are correct and harmonious; the eyes full; and the contour amply and elegantly rounded. In height she was neither tall nor short. A[Pg 127] sufficient wealth of naturally clustering hair, golden in early youth, but by this time of a rich auburn, shades the capacious but not over-developed forehead, and the lightly pencilled eyebrows. The bust and form have the fulness of a mature period of life; and it would appear that Mrs. Hemans was somewhat short-necked and high-shouldered, partly detracting from delicacy of proportion, and of general aspect of impression on the eye. We would rather judge of her by this portrait (which her sister pronounces a good likeness) than by another engraved in Mr. Chorley's Memorials. This latter was executed in Dublin in 1831, by a young artist named Edward Robinson. It makes Mrs. Hemans look younger than in the earlier portrait by West, and may on that ground alone be surmised unfaithful, and, though younger, it also makes her heavier and less refined."

[Pg 128]

JAMES HOGG
1770-1835

Lockhart's
Peter's Letters.

“Although for some time past he has spent a considerable portion of every year in excellent, even in refined society, the external appearance of the man can have undergone but very little change since he was ‘a herd on Yarrow.’ His face and hands are still as brown as if he had lived entirely *sub dio*. His very hair has a coarse stringiness about it, which proves beyond dispute its utter ignorance of all the arts of the *friseur*, and hangs in playful whips and cords about his ears, in a style of the most perfect innocence imaginable. His mouth which, when he smiles, nearly cuts the totality of his face in twain, is an object that would make the Chevalier Ruspini die with indignation; for his teeth have been allowed to grow where they listed,[Pg 129] and as they listed, presenting more resemblance, in arrangement (and colour too), to a body of crouching sharp-shooters, than to any more regular species of array. The effect of a forehead, towering with a true poetic grandeur above such features as these, and of an eye that illuminates their surface with genuine lightenings of genius … these are things which I cannot so easily transfer to my paper.”—1819.

S. C. Hall’s
Memories of
Great Men.

“The Rev. Mr. Thomson, his biographer, thus pictures him:—‘In height he was five feet ten inches and a half; his broad chest and square shoulders indicated health and strength; while a well-rounded leg, and small ankle and foot, showed the active shepherd who could outstrip the runaway sheep.’ His hair in his younger days was auburn, slightly inclining to yellow, which afterwards became dark brown, mixed with gray; his eyes, which were dark blue, were bright and intelligent. His features were irregular, while his eye[Pg 130] and ample forehead redeemed the countenance from every charge of common-place homeliness.”

Froude’s
Life of Carlyle.

“Hogg is a little red-skinned stiff sack of a body, with quite the common air of an Ettrick shepherd, except that he has a highish though sloping brow (among his yellow grizzled hair), and two clear little beads of blue or gray eyes that sparkle, if not with thought, yet with animation. Behaves himself quite easily and well; speaks Scotch, and mostly narrative absurdity (or even obscenity) therewith…. His vanity seems to be immense, but also his good-nature.”—1832.

THOMAS HOOD
1798-1845

The Gentleman's Magazine, 1872.

"As he entered the room my first impression was that of slight disappointment.[Pg 131] I had not then seen any portrait of him, and my imagination had depicted a man of the under size, with a humorous and mobile mouth, and with sharp, twinkling, and investigating eyes. When, therefore, a rather tall and attenuated figure presented itself before me, with grave aspect and dressed in black, and when, after scrutinising his features, I noticed those dark, sad eyes set in that pale and pain-worn yet tranquil face, and saw the expression of that suffering mouth, telling how sickness with its stern plough had driven its silent share through that slender frame, all the long train of quaint and curious fancies, ludicrous imageries, oddly-combined contrasts, humorous distortions, strange and uncouth associations, myriad word-twistings, ridiculous miseries, grave trifles, and trifling gravities—all these came before me like the rushing event of a dream, and I asked myself, 'Can this be the man that has so often made me roll with laughter at his humour, chuckle at his wit,[Pg 132] and wonder while I threaded the maze of his inexhaustible puns?' When he began to converse in bland and placid tones about Germany, where he had for some time lived, I became more reconciled to him."

S. C. Hall's
Memories of Great Men.

"In person Hood was of middle height, slender and sickly-looking, of sallow complexion and pale features, quiet in expression, and very rarely excited so as to give indication of either the pathos or the humour that must ever have been working in his soul. His was, indeed, a countenance rather of melancholy than mirth; there was something calm, even to solemnity, in the upper portion of the face, seldom relieved, in society, by the eloquent play of the mouth, or the sparkle of an observant eye. In conversation he was by no means brilliant. When inclined to pun, which was not often, it seemed as if his wit was the issue of thought, and not an instinctive produce, such as I have noticed in other men who have thus become famous,[Pg 133] who are admirable in crowds, whose animation is like that of the sounding-board, which makes a great noise at a small touch, when listeners are many and applause is sure."

Rossetti's
Memoir of Hood.
*

"The face of Hood is best known by two busts and an oil-portrait, which have both been engraved from. It is the sort of face to which apparently a bust does more than justice, yet less than right,—the features, being mostly by no means bad ones, look better when thus reduced to the more simple and abstract contour than they probably showed in reality, for no one supposed Hood to be a fine-looking man; on the other hand, the *value* of the face must have been in its shifting expression—keen, playful, or subtle—and this can be but barely suggested by the sculptor. The poet's visage was pallid, his figure slight, his voice feeble; he always dressed in black, and is generally spoken of as presenting a generally clerical appearance."

[Pg 134]

THEODORE HOOK
1788-1841

Leigh Hunt's
Autobiography.

"I remember, one day at Sydenham, Mr. Theodore Hook coming in unexpectedly to dinner, and amusing us very much with his talent at extempore verse. He was then a youth, tall, dark, and of a good person, with small eyes, and features more round than weak; a face that had character and humour, but no refinement."—1809.

S. C. Hall's
Memories of
Great Men.

"When I first saw him, he was above the middle height, robust of frame, and broad of chest; well-proportioned, with evidence of great physical capacity; his complexion dark, as were his eyes. There was nothing fine or elevated in his expression; indeed, his features when in repose were heavy; it was otherwise when animated; yet his manners were those of[Pg 135] a gentleman, less, perhaps, from inherent faculty than the polish which refined society ever gives."—1828.

Barham's
Life of Hook.

“In person Theodore Hook was above the middle height, his frame was robust and well-proportioned, possessing a breadth and depth of chest which, joined to a constitution naturally of the strongest order, would have seemed, under ordinary care, to hold out promise of a long and healthy life. His countenance was fine and commanding, his features when in repose settling into a somewhat stern and heavy expression, but all alive and alight with genius the instant his lips were opened. His eyes were dark, large, and full—to the epithet [Greek: boôpis] he, not less justly than the venerable goddess, was entitled. His voice was rich, deep, and melodious.”

[Pg 136]

DAVID HUME
1711-1776

Chambers’s
Eminent
Scotsmen.

“Lord Charlemont, who at this period met with Mr. Hume at Turin, has given the following account of his habits and appearance, penned apparently with a greater aim at effect than at truth, yet somewhat characteristic of the philosopher: ‘Nature, I believe, never formed any man more unlike his real character than David Hume. The powers of physiognomy were baffled by his countenance; neither could the most skilful in the science pretend to discover the smallest trace of the faculties of his mind in the unmeaning features of his visage. His face was broad and fat, his mouth wide, and without any other expression than that of imbecility. His eyes vacant and spiritless; and the corpulence of his whole person was far better fitted to communicate the idea of[Pg 137] a turtle-eating alderman than of a refined philosopher. His speech in English was rendered ridiculous by the broadest Scotch accent, and his French was, if possible, still more laughable, so that wisdom most certainly never disguised herself before in so uncouth a garb.’”

Lockhart’s
Peter’s Letters.

“The prints of David Hume are, most of them, I believe, taken from the very portrait I have seen; but of course the style and effect of the features are much more thoroughly to be understood when one has an opportunity of observing them expanded in their natural proportions. The face is far from being in any respect a classical one. The forehead is chiefly remarkable for its prominence from the ear, and

not so much for its height. This gives him a lowering sort of look forwards, expressive of great inquisitiveness into matters of fact and the consequences to be deduced from them. His eyes are singularly prominent, which, according to the Gallic system,[Pg 138] would indicate an extraordinary development of the organ of language behind them. His nose is too low between the eyes, and not well or boldly formed in any other respect. The lips, although not handsome, have in their fleshy and massy outlines abundant marks of habitual reflection and intellectual occupation. The whole had a fine expression of intellectual dignity, candour, and serenity. The want of elevation, however, which I have already noticed, injures very much the effect even of the structure of the lower part of the head.... It is to be regretted that he wore powder, for this prevents us from having the advantage of seeing what was the natural style of his hair—or, indeed, of ascertaining the form of any part of his head beyond the forehead."

David Hume's
Life.

"To conclude historically with my own character. I am, or rather was (for that is the style which I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiment);[Pg 139] I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame—my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them."

LEIGH HUNT
1784-1859

Son's preface to
Autobiography
of Leigh Hunt.

"It was at this period of his life" (*as a young man*) "that his appearance was most characteristic, and none of the portraits of him adequately conveyed the idea of it. One of[Pg 140] the best, a half-length chalk drawing, by an artist named Wildman, perished. The miniature by Severn was only a sketch on a small scale, but it suggested

the kindness and animation of his countenance. In other cases, the artists knew too little of their sitter to catch the most familiar traits of his aspect. He was rather tall, as straight as an arrow, and looked slenderer than he really was. His hair was black and shining, and slightly inclined to wave; his head was high, his forehead straight and white, his eyes black and sparkling, his general complexion dark.... Few men were so attractive 'in society,' whether in a large company or over the fireside. His manners were peculiarly animated; his conversation varied, ranging over a great field of subjects, was moved and called forth by the response of his companion, be that companion philosopher or student, sage or boy, man or woman; and he was equally ready for the most lively topics or for the gravest[Pg 141] reflections—his expression easily adapting itself to the tone of his companion's mind. With much freedom of manners, he combined a spontaneous courtesy that never failed, and a considerateness derived from a ceaseless kindness of heart that invariably fascinated even strangers."

Bryan Procter's
Recollections of
Men of Letters.

"Hunt was a little above the middle size, thin and lithe. His countenance was very genial and pleasant. His hair was black; his eyes were very dark, but he was short-sighted, and therefore, perhaps, it was that they had nothing of that fierce glance which black eyes so frequently possess. His mouth was expressive, but protruding, as is sometimes seen in half-caste Americans."—1817.

Haydon's
Autobiography.

"I afterwards met Hunt, and reminded him of Wilkie's intention, and Hunt, with a frankness I liked much, became quite at home, and as I was just as easily acquainted in five minutes as himself, we began to talk, and he to hold forth,[Pg 142] and I thought him, with his black bushy hair, black eyes, pale face, and 'nose of taste,' as fine a specimen of a London editor as could be imagined; assuming yet moderate, sarcastic yet genial, with a smattering of everything and a mastery of nothing, affecting the dictator, the poet, the politician, the critic, and the sceptic, whichever would, at the moment, give him the air, to inferior minds, of being a very superior man. I listened with something of curiosity to his republican independence, though hating his effeminacy and cockney peculiarities. The fearless honesty of his opinions, the unscrupulous sacrifice of his own interests, the unselfish perseverance of his attacks on all abuses, whether royal or religious, noble or democratic, ancient or modern, so

gratified my mind, that I suffered this singular young man to gain such an ascendancy in my heart, as justified the perpetual caution of Wilkie against my great tendency to become acquainted too soon with strangers, and like Canning's German, to[Pg 143] swear eternal friendship with any spirited talented fellow after a couple of hours of witty talk or able repartee."

ELIZABETH INCHBALD
1753-1821

Kavanagh's
English Women
of Letters.
*

"Miss Simpson ... was ... tall and slender, with hair of a golden auburn, and lovely hazel eyes, perfect features, and an enchanting countenance."—1771.

Mrs. Inchbald's
Memoirs.

"Description of Me.

Age.—Between 30 and 40, which, in the register of a lady's birth, means a little turned of 30.

Height.—Above the middle size, and rather tall.

Figure.—Handsome, and striking in its general air, but a little too stiff and erect.

[Pg 144]*Shape.*—Rather too fond of sharp angles.

Skin.—By nature fair, though a little freckled, and with a tinge of sand, which is the colour of her eyelashes, but made coarse by ill-treatment upon her cheeks and arms.

Bosom.—None; or so diminutive, that it's like a needle in a bottle of hay.

Hair.—Of a sandy auburn, and rather too straight as well as thin.

Face.—Beautiful in effect, and beautiful in every feature.

Countenance.—Full of spirit and sweetness; excessively interesting, and, without indelicacy, voluptuous.

Dress.—Always becoming; and very seldom worth so much as *eightpence*."—About 1788.

FRANCIS, LORD JEFFREY
1773-1850

Geo.
Ticknor's
Life.

"You are to imagine then, before you, a short, stout little gentleman, about five and[Pg 145] a half feet high, with a very red face, black hair and black eyes. You are to suppose him to possess a very gay and animated countenance, and you are to see in him all the restlessness of a will-o'-wisp, and all that fitful irregularity in his movements which you have heretofore appropriated to the pasteboard Merry Andrews whose limbs are jerked about with a wire. These you are to interpret as the natural indications of the impetuous and impatient character which a farther acquaintance developes. He enters the room with a countenance so satisfied and a step so light and almost fantastic, that all your previous impressions of the dignity and severity of the *Edinburgh Review* are immediately put to flight, and, passing at once to the opposite extreme, you might, perhaps, imagine him to be frivolous, vain, and supercilious. He accosts you too, with a freedom and familiarity which may, perhaps, put you at your ease and render conversation unceremonious;[Pg 146] but which, as I observed in several instances, were not very tolerable to those who had always been accustomed to the delicacy and decorum of refined society."—1814.

Lockhart's
Peter's Letters.

"I had not been long in the room, however, when I heard Mr. J—— announced, and as I had not seen him for some time, resolved to stay, and if possible, enjoy a little of his conversation in some corner.... I have seldom seen a man more nice in his exterior than Mr. J—— now seemed to be. His little person looked very neat in the way he had now adorned it. He had a very well-cut blue coat,—evidently not after the design of any Edinburgh artist,—light kerseymere breeches and ribbed silk stockings, a pair of elegant buckles, white kid gloves, and a tricolour watch-ribbon. He held his hat under his arm in a very *dégagée* manner—and altogether he was certainly one of the last men in the assembly, whom a stranger[Pg 147] would have guessed to be either a

great lawyer or a great reviewer. In short, he was more of a dandy than any great author I ever saw—always excepting Tom Moore and David Williams."

New Monthly
Magazine,
1831.

"He is of low stature, but his figure is elegant and well proportioned. The face is rather elongated, the chin deficient, the mouth well formed, with a mingled expression of determination, sentiment, and arch mockery; the nose is slightly curved; the eye is the most peculiar feature of the countenance; it is large and sparkling. He has two tones in his voice—the one harsh and grating, the other rich and clear."—1831.

DOUGLAS JERROLD
1803-1857

Hodder's
Personal
Reminiscences.

"To my great delight, ... I had not been in the room many minutes before I was[Pg 148] introduced to Douglas Jerrold, who was flitting about with that peculiar restlessness of eye, speech, and demeanour, which was amongst his most marked characteristics. I confess I was not surprised to find him a man of small stature, as I had heard before that his proportions were rather those of Tydeus than of Alcides; but I was a little astonished when I saw in the author of *Black-eyed Susan*, *The Rent Day*, and *The Wedding Gown*, (all of which pieces and many others he had then produced), an amount of boyish gaiety and a rapidity of movement which one could hardly expect from a writer who had risen to high rank as a moralist and censor."

W. B. Jerrold's
Life of Douglas
Jerrold.

"He had none of the airs of success or reputation, none of the affectations, either personal or social, which are rife everywhere. He was manly and natural; free and off-handed to the verge of eccentricity. Independence and marked character seemed to breathe from[Pg 149] the little, rather bowed figure, crowned with a lion-like head and falling light hair—to glow in the keen, eager, blue eyes glancing on either side as he

walked along. Nothing could be less commonplace, nothing less conventional, than his appearance in a room or in the streets."

S. C. Hall's
Memories of
Great Men.

"He was a very short man, but with breadth enough, and a back excessively bent—bowed almost to deformity; very gray hair, and a face and expression of remarkable briskness and intelligence. His profile came out pretty boldly, and his eyes had the prominence that indicates, I believe, volubility of speech; nor did he fail to talk from the instant of his appearance; and in the tone of his voice, and in his glance, and in the whole man, there was something racy—a flavour of the humourist. His step was that of an aged man, and he put his stick down very decidedly at every foot-fall; though, as he afterwards told me, he was only fifty-two,[Pg 150] he need not yet have been infirm."—1856.

SAMUEL JOHNSON
1709-1784

Boswell's
Life of
Dr. Johnson.

"Miss Porter told me, that when he was first introduced to her mother, his appearance was very forbidding; he was then lean and lank, so that his immense structure of bones was hideously striking to the eye, and the scars of the scrofula were deeply visible. He also wore his hair, which was straight and stiff, and separated behind; and he often had, seemingly, convulsive starts and odd gesticulations, which tended to excite at once surprise and ridicule. Mrs. Porter was so much engaged by his conversation that she overlooked all these external disadvantages, and said to her daughter, 'This is the most sensible man that I ever saw in my life.'"—1731.

Boswell's
Life of
Dr. Johnson.

[Pg 151]"His chambers were on the first floor of No. 1 Inner Temple Lane.... He received me very courteously; but it must be confessed that his apartment and furniture and morning dress was sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of clothes looked

very rusty; he had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt neck and knees of his breeches were loose, his black worsted stockings ill drawn up, and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly peculiarities were forgotten the moment he began to talk."—1763.

Croker's
Johnsoniana.

"The day after I wrote my last letter to you I was introduced to Mr. Johnson by a friend. We passed through three very dirty rooms to a little one that looked like an old counting-house, where this great man was sat at breakfast.... I was very much struck with Mr. Johnson's appearance, and could hardly help thinking him a[Pg 152] madman for some time, as he sat waving over his breakfast like a lunatic. He is a very large man, and was dressed in a dirty brown coat and waistcoat, with breeches that were brown also (although they had been crimson), and an old black wig; his shirt collar and sleeves were unbuttoned; his stockings were down about his feet, which had on them, by way of slippers, an old pair of shoes.... We had been with him some time before he began to talk, but at length he began, and, faith, to some purpose; everything he says is as *correct* as a *second edition*; 'tis almost impossible to argue with him, he is so sententious and so knowing."—1764.

BEN JONSON
1574-1637

Aubrey's *Lives*
of Eminent
Persons.
*

"He was (or rather had been) of a clear and faire skin, his habit was very plaine. I have[Pg 153] heard Mr. Lacy, the player, say that he was wont to weare a coate like a coach-man's coate with slitts under the arme-pitts. He would many times exceed in drinke. Canarie was his beloved liquer.... Ben Jonson had one eie lower than t'other and bigger, like Clun, the player."

Anderson's
Poets of
Great Britain.
*

“The character of Jonson, like that of most celebrated wits, has been drawn with great diversity of lights and shades, according as affection or envy guided the pencil. His person, as he has himself told us, was corpulent and large. His disposition seems to have been reserved and saturnine, and sometimes not a little oppressed with the gloom of a splenetic imagination.... Stern and rigid as his virtue was, he was easy and social in the convivial meetings of his friends; and the laws of his *Symposia*, inscribed over the chimney of the Apollo, a room in the Devil Tavern, near Temple Bar, where he[Pg 154] kept his club, show that he was neither averse to the pleasures of conversation, nor ignorant of what would render it agreeable and improving.”

Lafond, *Notice*
sur Ben Jonson.
*

“Il est clair pour nous que Ben Jonson avait une nature violente dans un corps robuste et athlétique; son portrait nous le montre avec une énorme face, une vigoureuse mâchoire, des yeux profonds et durs, un cou de taureau. Sa peau avait été, de bonne heure, couturée par le scorbut; et lui-même dit quelque part qu’il eut, dans le milieu de sa vie, une montagne pour ventre et un dandinement disgracieux pour démarche. Tous ses traits fortement accentués, anguleux ou carrés, dénoncent l’énergie, l’orgueil et l’amour des luttes de toute nature. Il aimait la bonne chère et le vin; sa prédilection pour le vin des Canaries avait, disait il, pour excuse la nécessité de sa constitution scorbutique. Il avait l’esprit semblable au corps; malgré ses études classiques, il était loin d’être un Athénien,[Pg 155] c’était un Anglo-Saxon enté sur un Romain de la décadence. Généreux, libéral, prodigue, il tint toujours table ouverte, même lorsque la misère était devenue l’hôte de son foyer.”

JOHN KEATS
1795-1821

Bryan Procter’s
Recollections of
Men of Letters.

“I was first introduced to him (Keats), by Leigh Hunt, and found him very pleasant, and free from all affectation in manner and opinion. Indeed it would be difficult to discover a man with a more bright and open countenance.... I can only say that I never encountered a more manly and simple young man. In person he was short, and had

eyes large and wonderfully luminous, and a resolute bearing, not defiant but well sustained."

Monckton
Milnes's *Life of*
Keats.

"His eyes were large and blue, his hair auburn, he wore it divided down the centre,[Pg 156] and it fell in rich masses on each side his face, his mouth was full, and less intellectual than his other features. His countenance lives in my mind as one of singular beauty and brightness,—it had an expression as if he had been looking on some glorious sight. The shape of his face had not the squareness of a man's, but more like some women's faces I have seen—it was so wide over the forehead, and so small at the chin. He seemed in perfect health, and with life offering all things that were precious to him."—1818.

The Cowden
Clarkes'
Recollections
of Writers.

In reviewing this portrait, Mrs. Cowden Clarke, while admitting that much of it is "excellent" *and* "true," *goes on to add these words*: "But when our artist pronounces that 'his eyes were large and *blue*,' and that 'his hair was *auburn*,' I am naturally reminded of the 'Chameleon' fable—'they were *brown*, ma'am—*brown*, I assure you!'... Reader, alter, in your copy of the *Life of Keats*, vol. i. page[Pg 157] 103, 'eyes' light hazel, 'hair' *lightish brown and wavy*."

Leigh Hunt's
Autobiography.

"Keats, when he died, had just completed his four and twentieth year. He was under the middle height, and his lower limbs were small in comparison with the upper, but neat and well-turned. His shoulders were very broad for his size; he had a face in which energy and sensibility were remarkably mixed up; an eager power, checked and made patient by ill-health. Every feature was at once strongly cut, and delicately alive. If there was any faulty expression, it was in the mouth, which was not without something of a character of pugnacity. His face was rather long than otherwise; the upper lip projected a little over the under; the chin was bold, the cheeks sunken; the eyes are mellow and glowing, large, dark, and sensitive. At the recital of a noble action, or a beautiful thought, they would suffuse with tears, and his mouth trembled.

In this there was ill-health as[Pg 158] well as imagination, for he did not like these betrayals of emotion; and he had great personal as well as moral courage. He once chastised a butcher, who had been insolent, by a regular stand-up fight. His hair, of a brown colour, was fine, and hung in natural ringlets. The head was a puzzle for the phrenologists, being remarkably small in the skull—a singularity which he had in common with Byron and Shelley, whose hats I could not get on. Keats was sensible of the disproportion above noticed between his upper and lower extremities, and he would look at his hand, which was faded, and swollen in the veins, and say it was the hand of a man of fifty."—1826.

JOHN KEBLE
1792-1866

J. Coleridge's
Memoir of the
Rev. John Keble.

"To me both the portraits are full of deep interest" (*these portraits of Keble, the one in*[Pg 159] *the prime of manhood and the other in old age, were drawn by Richmond*), "the earlier and the later both—each brings him back to me as he was; in the earlier, he has some of the merry defiance he could assume in argument; in the latter, I see the sad tenderness of his advanced years. Keble had not regular features; he could not be called a handsome man, but he was one to be noticed anywhere, and remembered long; his forehead and hair beautiful in all ages; his eyes, full of play, intelligence, and emotion, followed you while you spoke; and they lighted up, especially with pleasure, or indignation, as it might be, when he answered you. The most pleasing photograph is one in which he is standing by Mrs. Keble's side; she is sitting with a book in her hand. The later photographs are to me very unpleasant. I will attempt no more particular description, for I feel how little definite I can convey in writing."

The Christian
Observer, 1871.

[Pg 160]"Mr. Keble greeted us, emerging from his little study, the door of which, as I afterwards noticed, oftener than not, stood open.... His features, indeed, were familiar to us, as to most people, from the engraving of Richmond's first portrait of him, taken in middle life for Sir John Coleridge. Now the original stood before me, and I saw at a glance that face and figure had been faithfully portrayed. The forehead was

pale and serene, the hair silvery; doubtless this token of advancing years must have helped to give softness and refinement to the features; eyebrows, sprinkled with white, shaded eyes of singular brilliancy and depth of expression, as ready (I afterwards well knew) to light up with mirth and mischief while playful talk was going on, as they were to melt into mournful earnestness when graver topics were broached. He habitually wore glasses, but used often to take them off and hold them in his hand when conversing with animation. A dear[Pg 161] and old friend of his has told me that he 'looked almost boyish till about fifty, and after that rapidly aged in personal appearance.' At this time he was in his sixty-first year, healthy and strong and active.... In appearance he was quite one's ideal of an old-fashioned country clergyman, but of one whose Oxford days were still fresh in his mind; there was a touch of *vieille cour* in his manner, which added, I think, to its charm. His voice in speaking was rather low, and especially so when the subject of conversation was very near his heart. It often struck me, when listening to him, that without the slightest effort or aim at effect, he always hit upon the most suitable and telling words, (and the shortest), in which to clothe his ideas. This unconscious beauty of language, coupled with the originality and wisdom of the ideas themselves, riveted them in one's memory; the look, too, with which they were uttered, could not be forgotten, and rises as vividly before my mind's eye 'through the[Pg 162] golden mist of years' as though it belonged to the present, instead of the 'long ago.'"—1852.

L. A. Huntingford:
private
letter.

"People who went to look at Mr. Keble as a 'lion' were, I think, disappointed to see a very simple old-fashioned clerical gentleman, with very little manner, and so completely unconscious of self that as he talked of common things, they were inclined to think as little of him as he thought of himself. He used to come down early and stand writing at a side-table till it was quite time for prayers and breakfast, and then sit down anywhere and, with a little peculiar jerk of the head and shoulders, read a short 'Instruction,' almost as if he were reading it to himself. Certain people even called his reading bad, for his voice was weak, and he had a slight cough which never wholly left him; but he brought out the meaning of Holy Scripture in a manner which I never heard surpassed. Mr. Keble was of middle height, very thin, with a splendid forehead, bright eyes which[Pg 163] were rather hidden by his spectacles, and a sweet merry smile. Those who knew him well must remember the way in which he used to pull himself together, as if he were a boy obeying a well-known rule to 'hold up his head.' His manner was nervous, so much so that people who were not intimately

acquainted with him were rarely quite at their ease when in his presence. The two pictures of Mr. Keble by Richmond are both good likenesses; but the lithograph of the head which was taken from the then-unfinished picture which, in its completed form, now hangs in Keble College, Oxford, has caught the peculiar intelligence of the eyes when lighted up with the eager brightness his friends knew so well. He had the unusual power of being able to write upon one subject and listen to the discussion of another at the same time; and he would often glance up from the paper in which he was apparently immersed, and pushing up his spectacles join eagerly in the conversation."

[Pg 164]

CHARLES KINGSLEY
1812-1875

Caroline Fox's
Journals and
Letters.

"Torquay, *January 30th*.—Charles Kingsley called, but we missed him.

"*February 3d*.—We paid him and his wife a very happy call; he fraternising at once, and stuttering pleasant and discriminating things concerning F. D. Maurice, Coleridge and others. He looks sunburnt with dredging all the morning, has a piercing eye under an overhanging brow, and his voice is most melodious and his pronunciation exquisite. He is strangely attractive."—1854.

The Galaxy,
1872.

"I was present at a meeting not long since where Mr. Kingsley was one of the principal speakers. The meeting was held in London, the audience was a peculiarly Cockney audience, and Charles Kingsley is personally little known to the[Pg 165] public of the metropolis. Therefore when he began to speak there was quite a little thrill of wonder and something like incredulity through the listening benches. Could that, people near me asked, really be Charles Kingsley, the novelist, the poet, the scholar, the aristocrat, the gentleman, the pulpit-orator, the 'soldier—priest,' the apostle of muscular Christianity? Yes, that was indeed he. Rather tall, very angular, surprisingly awkward, with thin staggering legs, a hatchet face adorned with scraggy gray whiskers, a faculty for falling into the most ungainly attitudes, and making the most hideous contortions

of visage and frame; with a rough provincial accent and an uncouth way of speaking which would be set down for absurd caricature on the boards of a comic theatre. Such was the appearance which the author of *Glaucus* and *Hypatia* presented to his startled audience. Since Brougham's time nothing so ungainly, odd, and ludicrous had been displayed upon an English platform.[Pg 166] Needless to say, Charles Kingsley has not the eloquence of Brougham. But he has a robust and energetic plain-speaking which soon struck home to the heart of the meeting. He conquered his audience. Those who at first could hardly keep from laughing, those who, not knowing the speaker, wondered whether he was not mad or in liquor, those who heartily disliked his general principles and his public attitude, were alike won over, long before he had finished, by his bluff and blunt earnestness and his transparent sincerity."

Fraser's
Magazine, 1877.

"For nine years the portrait of Kingsley, close to that of John Parker, has looked down from the wall of the room in which I write. It is a large photograph, taken, while he was on a visit to the house, by an amateur of extraordinary ability, the late Dr. Adamson of St. Andrews. It is the best and most lifelike portrait of Kingsley known to me. It has the stern expression, which came partly of the effort,[Pg 167] never quite ceasing, to express himself through that characteristic stammer which quite left him in public speaking, and which in private added to the effect of his wonderful talk. Photography caught him easily. Those who look at the portrait prefixed to Volume I. of the *Life* see the man as he lived. Mr. Woolner's bust, shown at the beginning of Volume II., shows him aged and shrunken, not more than he was but more than he ought to have been; and the removal of all hair from the face is a marked difference from the fact in life; yet the likeness is perfect too. That somewhat severe face belied one of the kindest hearts that ever beat: yet the handsome and chivalrous features unworthily expressed one of the truest, bravest, and noblest of souls. Kingsley could not have done a mean or false thing: by his make it was as impossible as that water should run uphill."

[Pg 168]

CHARLES LAMB
1775-1834

de Quincey's
Life and
Writings.

“Lamb, at this period of his life, then passed regularly, after taking wine, under a brief eclipse of sleep. It descended upon him as soft as a shadow. In a gross person laden with superfluous flesh, and sleeping heavily, this would have been disagreeable; but in Lamb, thin even to meagreness, spare and wiry as an Arab of the desert, or as Thomas Aquinas, wasted by scholastic vigils, the affection of sleep seemed rather a net-work of aerial gossamer than of earthly cobweb,—more like a golden haze falling upon him gently from the heavens than a cloud exhaling upwards from the flesh. Motionless in his chair as a bust, breathing so gently as scarcely to seem entirely alive, he presented the image of repose midway between life and death like[Pg 169] the repose of sculpture, and to one who knew his history, a repose contrasting with the calamities and internal storms of his life. I have heard more persons than I can now distinctly recall, observe of Lamb when sleeping, that his countenance in that state assumed an expression almost seraphic, from its intellectual beauty of outline, its childlike simplicity, and its benignity. It could not be called a transfiguration that sleep worked in his face; for the features wore essentially the same expression when waking; but sleep spiritualised that expression, exalted it, and also harmonised it. Much of the change lay in that last process. The eyes it was that disturbed the unity of effect in Lamb’s waking face. They gave a restlessness to the character of his intellect, shifting, like northern lights, through every mode of combination with fantastic playfulness; and sometimes by fiery gleams obliterating for the moment that pure light of benignity which was the predominant reading on his features.”—1822.

Froude’s
Life of Carlyle.

[Pg 170]“He was the leanest of mankind; tiny black breeches buttoned to the knee-cap and no further, surmounting spindle-legs also in black, face and head fineish, black, bony, lean, and of a Jew type rather; in the eyes a kind of smoky brightness, or confused sharpness; spoke with a stutter; in walking tottered and shuffled, emblem of imbecility, bodily and spiritual (something of real insanity, I have understood), and yet something, too, of human, ingenuous, pathetic, sportfully much enduring. Poor Lamb! he was infinitely astonished at my wife, and her quiet encounter of his too ghastly London wit by a cheerful native ditto. Adieu! poor Lamb!”

Talfourd’s
Reminiscence of
Charles Lamb.

“Methinks I see him before me now, as he appeared then, and as he continued with scarcely any perceptible alteration to me, during the twenty years of intimacy which

followed, and were closed by his death. A light frame, so fragile that it seemed as if a breath would overthrow it, clad in clerklike black, was[Pg 171] surmounted by a head of form and expression the most noble and sweet. His black hair curled crisply about an expanded forehead; his eyes, softly brown, twinkled with varying expression, though the prevalent feeling was sad; and the nose slightly curved, and delicately carved at the nostril, with the lower outline of the face regularly oval, completed a head which was finely placed on the shoulders, and gave importance and even dignity to a diminutive and shadowy stem. Who shall describe his countenance, catch its quivering sweetness, and fix it for ever in words? There are none, alas, to answer the vain desire of friendship. Deep thought striving with humour, the lines of suffering wreathed into cordial mirth, and a smile of painful sweetness, present an image to the mind it can as little describe as lose. His personal appearance and manner are not unfitly characterised by what he himself says in one of his letters to Manning, of Braham, 'a compound of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel.'"—*Written shortly after Lamb's death*.

[Pg 172]

LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON
1802-1838

Crabb Robinson's
Diary.

"... Miss Landon, a young poetess—a starling—the L. E. L. of the *Gazette*, with a gay good-humoured face, which gave me a favourable impression."—1826.

Blanchard's
Life of L. E. L.

"Her hair was 'darkly brown,' very soft and beautiful, and always tastefully arranged; her figure, as before remarked, slight, but well-formed and graceful; her feet small, but her hands especially so, and faultlessly white and finely shaped; her fingers were fairy fingers; her ears also were observably little. Her face, though not regular in 'every feature,' became beautiful by expression,—every flash of thought, every change and colour of feeling lightened over it as she spoke,—when she spoke earnestly. The forehead was not[Pg 173] high, but broad and full; the eyes had no overpowering brilliancy, but their clear intellectual light penetrated by its exquisite softness; her mouth was not less marked by character, and, besides the glorious faculty of uttering the pearls and diamonds of fancy and wit, knew how to express scorn, or anger, or

pride, as well as it knew how to smile winningly, or to pour forth those short, quick, ringing laughs which, not excepting even her *bon-mots* and aphorisms, were the most delightful things that issued from it."—1832.

S. C. Hall's
Retrospect of a
Long Life.

"Small of person, but well formed. Her dark silken hair braided back over a small, but what phrenologists would call a well-developed head; her forehead full and open, but the hair grew low upon it; the eyebrows perfect in arch and form; the eyes round—soft or flashing as might be—gray, well formed, and beautifully set; the lashes long and black, the under lashes turning down with delicate[Pg 174] curve, and forming a soft relief upon the tint of her cheek, which, when she enjoyed good health, was bright and blushing; her complexion was delicately fair; her skin soft and transparent; her nose small (*retroussé*), slightly curved, but capable of scornful expression, which she did not appear to have the power of repressing, even though she gave her thoughts no words, when any despicable action was alluded to."—About 1835.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR
1775-1864

Crabb Robinson's
Diary.

"He was a man of florid complexion, with large full eyes, and altogether a *leonine* man, and with a fierceness of tone well suited to his name; his decisions being confident, and on all subjects, whether of taste or life, unqualified, each standing for itself, not caring whether it was[Pg 175] in harmony with what had gone before or would follow from the same oracular lips. But why should I trouble myself to describe him? He is painted by a master hand in Dickens's novel *Bleak House*, now in course of publication, where he figures as Mr. Boythorn. The combination of superficial ferocity and inherent tenderness, so admirably portrayed in *Bleak House*, still at first strikes every stranger,—for twenty-two years have not materially changed him,—no less than his perfect frankness and reckless indifference to what he says."—1830.

S. C. Hall's
Retrospect of a
Long Life.

"... He was at that time sixty years of age, although he did not look so old; his form and features were essentially masculine; he was not tall, but stalwart; of a robust constitution, and was proud even to arrogance of his physical and intellectual strength. He was a man to whom passers-by would have looked back and asked, 'Who is that?' His forehead was high, but retreated, showing remarkable[Pg 176] absence of the organs of benevolence and veneration. It was a large head, fullest at the back, where the animal propensities predominate; it was a powerful, but not a good head, the expression the opposite of genial. In short, physiognomists and phrenologists would have selected it,—each to illustrate his theory."—1836.

Harriet
Martineau's
Biographical
Sketches.

"His tall, broad, muscular, active frame was characteristic, and so was his head, with the strange elevation of the eyebrows which expresses self-will as strongly in some cases as astonishment in others. Those eyebrows, mounting up until they comprehend a good portion of the forehead, have been observed in many more paradoxical persons than one. Then there was the retreating but broad forehead, showing the deficiency of reasoning and speculative power, with the preponderance of imagination and a huge passion for destruction. The massive self-love and self-will carried up his head to something[Pg 177] more than a dignified bearing—even to one of arrogance. His vivid and quick eye, and the thoughtful mouth, were fine, and his whole air was that of a man distinguished in his own eyes certainly, but also in those of others. Tradition reports he was handsome in his youth. In age he was more."

CHARLES LEVER
1806-1872

Fitz-Patrick's
Life of Lever.

"I found him seated at an open window, a bottle of claret at his right hand, and the proof-sheets of *Lord Kilgobbin* before him.... At the date of our visit he looked a hale, hearty, laughter-loving man of sixty. There was mirth in his gray eye, joviality in the wink that twittered on his eyelid, saucy humour in his smile, and *bon-mot*, wit, repartee, and rejoinder in every movement of his lips. His[Pg 178] hair very thin, but of a silky brown, fell across his forehead, and when it curtained his eyes he would jerk back his

head—this, too, at some telling crisis in a narrative, when the particular action was just the exact finish required to make the story perfect. Mr. Lever's teeth were all his own and very brilliant, and whether from accident or habit, he flashed them on us in conjunction with his wonderful eyes, a battery at once powerful and irresistible.... Mr. Lever made great use of his hands, which were small and white and delicate as those of a woman. He made play with them, threw them up in ecstasy, or wrung them in mournfulness, just as the action of the moment demanded. He did not require eyes or teeth with such a voice and such hands; they could tell and illustrate the workings of his brain. He was somewhat careless in his dress, but clung to the traditional high shirt-collar, merely compromising the unswerving stock of the Brummell period."

[Pg 179]

MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS
1775-1818

The Southern
Literary
Messenger,
1849.

"In person, Mat Lewis (as his intimate friends at first termed him) was quite ordinary; his stature was rather diminutive; his face was almost an ellipse, looking upon it from the side, and his features though pleasant were not to be regarded as handsome. His forehead, however, was high and his eyes very lustrous."

Jeaffreson's
Novels and
Novelists.

"Lewis's personal appearance was not prepossessing. He describes himself as

'Of passions strong, of hasty nature,

Of graceless form and dwarfish stature.'

He had, moreover, large gray eyes, thick features, and an inexpressive countenance. When he talked he had an insufferable habit of drawing the fore-finger of his right hand across his eyelid, and in conversation he was[Pg 180] guilty of the absurd affectation of a drawling tone such as was popular with dandies."

New Monthly
Magazine, 1848.

“Matthew Gregory Lewis. Of this gentleman I knew but little, not having encountered him half a dozen times after my introduction to him at the house of Nat Middleton, the banker. With a short thick-set figure, unintellectual features, and a disagreeable habit of peering, being very short-sighted, his aspect was by no means prepossessing; but as he had ‘that within which passeth show,’ he recovered the ground lost at starting as rapidly as Wilkes could have done.”

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART
1794-1854

The Times,
9th Dec. 1854.

“Endowed with the very highest order of manly beauty, both of features and expression, he retained the brilliancy of youth and a stately[Pg 181] strength of person comparatively unimpaired in ripened life; and then, though sorrow and sickness suddenly brought on a premature old age which none could witness unmoved, yet the beauty of the head and of the bearing so far gained in melancholy loftiness of expression what they lost in animation, that the last phase, whether to the eye of painter or of anxious friend, seemed always the finest.”

SIR RICHARD LOVELACE
1618-1658

Anthony Wood’s
Athenæ
Oxonienses.

“Richard Lovelace ... became a gent-commoner of Glo’cester Hall in the beginning of the year 1634, and in that of his age 16, being then accounted the most amiable and beautiful person that ever eye beheld, a person also of innate modesty, virtue, and courtly deportment,[Pg 182] which made him then, but especially after, when he retired to the great city, much admired and adored by the female sex.... Accounted by all those that well knew him, to have been a person well vers’d in the Greek and Latin poets, in music, whether practical or theoretical, instrumental or vocal, and in other things befitting a gentleman. Some of the said persons have also added in my hearing,

that his common discourse was not only significant and witty, but incomparably graceful, which drew respect from all men and women."—1634 and 1658.

The Gentleman's
Magazine, 1884.
*

"The personal attractions of Richard Lovelace have been much extolled by his contemporaries; nor is this matter for wonder. A picture of the poet by an unknown painter, preserved in the old college at Dulwich, to which it was bequeathed by Cartwright the actor, in 1687, represents him as a very handsome man. The face is oval, the hair, worn Cavalier fashion, long, is of a dark brown colour and[Pg 183] falls down in abundant masses, while the mustachios are small and thin. The small, well-formed mouth is perhaps a trifle voluptuous, but is nevertheless suggestive of firmness of character. The eyes are large and dark, and the well-arched and delicately pencilled eyebrows are unusually far apart; the general expression of the face is singularly sweet and winning. The hand is small, well formed and aristocratic. Lovelace is attired in armour, with a white collar, and across the breast is thrown a red scarf. The picture is inscribed 'Col. Lovelace.'"

EDWARD, LORD LYTTON
1803-1873

S. C. Hall's
Retrospect of a
long Life.

"A young man whose features, though of a somewhat effeminate cast, were remarkably handsome. His bearing had that aristocratic something bordering on hauteur, which clung to[Pg 184] him during his life. I never saw the famous writer without being reminded of the passage, 'Stand back; I am holier than thou.'—1826.

"The last time I saw him was in his then residence, No. 12 Grosvenor Square. It was growing towards fifty years since first we had met, and there were more changes in him than those that time usually brings. His once handsome face had assumed the desolation without the dignity of age. His locks, once brown, inclining to auburn, were shaggy and grizzled; his mouth, seldom smiling even in youth, was close shut; his whole aspect had something in it at once painful and unpleasant."—About 1872.

Appleton's
Journal, 1873.

"Bulwer is described as having been, at this period of his first brilliant triumph, rather taller than the middle height, with a graceful, slender figure, well-proportioned limbs, and a countenance stamped with distinctly aristocratic features and expression. His dark-brown, curly hair, his large and bright blue eye, his decided,[Pg 185] though delicately-formed aquiline nose, his rather full and handsome mouth, his patrician, almost haughty pose and manner, as seen at that time, are dwelt on, with true feminine enthusiasm, by a lady who frequented the circles of which he was regarded as one of the most shining ornaments."—1828.

Appleton's
Journal, 1873.

"It was my fortune to see Bulwer in the House of Commons in 1863 and 1865, and in the House of Lords, to which he had recently risen, in 1868. He then had the appearance of being a man of some fifty years, tallish, straight, stiff, and proudly sedate. His long, sombre face was no longer 'fair,' but was yellow and wrinkled, while the almost cadaverous aspect of his features added to the really far from proportionate prominence of his long, aquiline nose. He now wore a moustache with his 'heavy red whiskers,' which had themselves become a dull brown, plentifully sprinkled with gray; and upon his chin he grew an imperial. His hair was still thick, but no[Pg 186] trace of its rich auburn hue of youth remained; it was a heavy gray in colour. Spectacles partially concealed the large but now dulled and glassy blue eyes; and the whole appearance was far from prepossessing. On the former occasion referred to, I heard him address the House in an eloquent and evidently carefully-prepared speech of half an hour. His manner was quiet and subdued, his voice no longer 'lover-like and sweet,' but rather harsh and grating, and his declamation humdrum; occasionally a spark of the old animation appeared, when he drew himself up to the full height, and, for the moment seemed a very orator in motion as in speech; but the spark soon vanished, and he was again Pelham grown old, the exhausted and melancholy beau and wit of the past, struggling through an imposed task.... His dress was conspicuously plain, almost stiff and ministerial; though there was something about the attire of the neck which seemed a suspicion of a relic of dandyism."

[Pg 187]

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY
1800-1859

Trevelyan's *Life*
and Letters of
Lord Macaulay.

"Macaulay's outward man was never better described than in two sentences of Praed's Introduction to Knight's *Quarterly Magazine*. 'There came up a short manly figure, marvellously upright, with a bad neckcloth, and one hand in his waistcoat pocket. Of regular beauty he had little to boast; but in faces where there is an expression of great power, or of great good-humour, or both, you do not regret its absence.' This picture, in which every touch is correct, tells all that there is to be told. He had a massive head, and features of a powerful and rugged cast, but so constantly lit up by every joyful and ennobling emotion that it mattered little if, when absolutely quiescent, his face was rather homely than handsome. While conversing at table no one[Pg 188] thought him otherwise than good-looking; but, when he rose, he was seen to be short and stout in figure. 'At Holland House, the other day,' writes his sister Margaret in September 1831, 'Tom met Lady Lyndhurst for the first time. She said to him: "Mr. Macaulay, you are so different to what I had expected. I thought you were dark and thin, but you are fair, and really, Mr. Macaulay, you are fat!"' He at all times sat and stood straight, full, and square; and in this respect Woolner, in the fine statue at Cambridge, has missed what was undoubtedly the most marked fact in his personal appearance. He dressed badly, but not cheaply. His clothes, though ill put on, were good, and his wardrobe was always enormously overstocked."—1822 and 1831.

Crabb Robinson's
Diary.

"I went to James Stephen, and drove with him to his house at Hendon. A dinner-party. I had a most interesting companion in young Macaulay, one of the most promising of the rising generation[Pg 189] I have seen for a long time. He has a good face,—not the delicate features of a man of genius and sensibility, but the strong lines and well-knit limbs of a man sturdy in body and mind. Very eloquent and cheerful. Overflowing with words, and not poor in thought. Liberal in opinion, but no radical. He seems a correct as well as a full man. He showed a minute knowledge of subjects not introduced by himself."—1826.

S. C. Hall's
Retrospect of a
long Life.

"I never heard Macaulay speak in the House, where, although by no means an orator, he always made a strong impression. He spoke as he wrote,—eloquently in the choicest diction,—smooth, easy, graceful, and ever to the purpose, striving to convince rather than persuade, and grudging no toil of preparation to sustain an argument or enforce a truth. His person was in his favour; in form as in mind he was robust, with a remarkably intelligent expression, aided by deep blue eyes that seemed to sparkle, and a mouth[Pg 190] remarkably flexible. His countenance was certainly well calculated to impress on his audience the classical language ever at his command—so faithfully did it mirror the high intelligence of the speaker.... I found him—as the world has found him—a man of rare intelligence, deep research, and untiring energy in pursuit of facts: also a kind, courteous, and unaffected gentleman. His memory is to me one of the pleasantest I can recall."

WILLIAM MAGINN
1793-1842

William
Maginn's *Miscellanies*.

"All were standing, all were listening to some one who sat in the middle of a group. A low-seated man, short in stature, was uttering pleasantries and scattering witticisms about him with the careless glee of his country. His articulation was impeded by a stutter, yet the[Pg 191] sentences he stammered forth were brilliant repartees uttered without sharpness, and edged rather with humour than with satire. His countenance was rather agreeable than striking; its expression sweet rather than bright; the gray hair, coming straight over his forehead, gave a singular appearance to a face still bearing the attributes of youth. He was thirty or thereabouts, but his thoughtful brow, his hair, and the paleness of his complexion, gave him many of the attributes of age. His conversation was careless and off-hand, and, but for the impediment of speech, would have had the charm of a rich comedy. His choice of words was such as I have rarely met with in any of my contemporaries."—1824.

Bentley's Miscellany,
1842.

“I dined to-day at the Salopian with Dr. Maginn. He is a most remarkable fellow. His flow of ideas is incredibly quick, and his articulation so rapid, that it is difficult to follow him. He is altogether a person of vast acuteness, celerity[Pg 192] of apprehension, and indefatigable activity both of body and mind. His is about my own height; but I could allow him an inch round the chest. His forehead is very finely developed, his organ of language and ideality large, and his reasoning faculties excellent. His hair is quite gray, although he does not look more than forty. I imagined he was much older looking, and that he wore a wig. While conversing his eye is never a moment at rest: in fact his whole body is in motion, and he keeps scrawling grotesque figures upon the paper before him, and rubbing them out again as fast as he draws them. He and Gifford are, as you know, joint editors of the *Standard*.”

The Dublin
University
Magazine, 1844.

“Well does the writer of this notice recollect the feelings with which he first wended to the residence of his late friend. He was then but a mere boy, fresh from the university.... He went, and was shown upstairs; the doctor was not at home, but was[Pg 193] momentarily expected.... Suddenly, when his heart almost sank within him, a light step was heard ascending the stairs—it could not be a man’s foot—no, it was too delicate for that; it must, certainly, be the nursery-maid. The step was arrested at the door, a brief interval, and Maginn entered. The spell vanished like lightning, and the visitor took heart in a moment. No formal-looking personage, in customary suit of solemn black, stood before him, but a slight, boyish, careless figure, with a blue eye, the mildest ever seen—hair, not exactly white, but of a sunned snow colour—an easy, familiar smile—and a countenance that you would be more inclined to laugh with than feel terror from. He bounded across the room with a most unscholar-like eagerness, and warmly welcomed the visitor, asking him a thousand questions, and putting him at ease with himself in a moment. Then, taking his arm, both sallied forth into the street, where, for a long time, the visitor was in doubt whether it was[Pg 194] Maginn to whom he was really talking as familiarly as if he were his brother, or whether the whole was a dream. And such, indeed, was the impression generally made on the minds of all strangers—but, as in the present case, it was dispelled instantly the living original appeared. Then was to be seen the kindness and gentleness of heart which tinged every word and gesture with sweetness; the suavity and mildness, so strongly the reverse of what was to be expected from the most galling satirest of the day; the openness of soul and countenance, that disarmed even the bitterest of his opponents; the utter absence of anything like prejudice and bigotry

from him the ablest and most devoted champion of the Church and State. No pedantry in his language, no stateliness of style, no forced metaphors, no inappropriate anecdote, no overweening confidence—all easy, simple, agreeable, and unzoned."

[Pg 195]

FRANCIS MAHONY
(Father Prout)
1805-1866

The works of
Father Prout.

"Stooping his short and spare but thick-set figure as he walked, wearing his ill-brushed hat upon the extreme back of his head, clothed in the slovenliest way in a semi-clerical dress of the shabbiest character, he sauntered by with his right arm habitually clasped behind him in his left hand,—altogether presenting to view so distinctly the appearance of a member of one of the mendicant orders, that upon one occasion, in the Rue de Rivoli, an intimate friend of his found it impossible to resist the impulse of slipping a sou into the open palm of his right hand, with the apologetic remark, 'You *do* look so like a beggar.' Apart, however, from his threadbare garb and shambling gait, there were personal traits of character about him which caught the attention almost at[Pg 196] a glance, and piqued the curiosity of even the least observant wayfarer. The 'roguish Hibernian mouth,' noted in his regard by Mr. Gruneisen, and the gray piercing eyes, that looked up at you so keenly over his spectacles, won your interest in him even upon a first introduction. From the mocking lips soon afterwards, if you fell into conversation with him, came the 'loud snappish laugh,' with which, as Mr. Blanchard Jerrold remarks, the Father so frequently evinced his appreciation of a casual witticism—uproarious fits of merriment signalising at other moments one of his own ironical successes, outbursts of fun followed during his later years by the racking cough with which he was too often then tormented."

Blanchard
Jerrold's *Final*
Reliques of
Father Prout.

"The Rev. Francis Mahony, or Father Prout, trudging along the Boulevards with his arms clasped behind him, his nose in the air, his hat worn as French caricaturists

insist all Englishmen wear hat or cap; his quick, clear,[Pg 197] deep-seeking eye wandering sharply to the right or left, and sarcasm—not of the sourest kind—playing like Jack-o'-lantern in the corners of his mouth, Father Prout was as much a character of the French capital as the learned Armenian of the Imperial Library only a few years ago.... It was difficult to meet Father Prout. He was an odd, uncomfortable, uncertain man. His moods changed like April skies. Light little thoughts were busy in his brain, lively and frisking as 'troutlets in a pool.' He was impatient of interruption, and shambled forward talking in an undertone to himself, with now and then a bubble or two of laughter, or one short sharp laugh almost like a bark, like that of the marksman when the arrow quivers in the bull's-eye. He would pass you with a nod that meant 'Hold off—not to-day!'... He was very impatient if any injudicious friend or passing acquaintance (who took him to be usually as accessible as any *flâneur* on the macadam),[Pg 198] thrust himself forward and would have his hand and agree with him that it was a fine day, but would possibly rain shortly. A sharp answer, and an unceremonious plunge forward without bow or good-day, would put an end to the interruption. Of course the Father was called a bear by shallow-pates who could not see that there was something extra in the little man talking to himself and shuffling, with his hands behind him, through the *fines fleurs* and *grandes dames* of the Italian Boulevard."

A personal
friend.

"In recalling the Rev. Francis Mahony, I am forcibly reminded of a few lines at the beginning of old Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*: 'Democritus, as he is described by Hippocrates, and Laërtius, was a little wearish old man, very melancholy by nature, averse from company in his latter dayes, and much given to solitariness, a famous philosopher in his age, ... wholly addicted to his studies at the last, and to a private life; writ many excellent[Pg 199] workes.' Substituting Father Prout's name for that of Democritus, the words are equally descriptive of the quaint little Irishman. He was a small spare man, with a pale deeply-lined face; badly dressed; with gray unkempt whiskers, and a certain waspish expression on his thin face which was utterly at variance, not only with the good Father's writings,—which for 'real larky fun,' as James Hannay expressed it, are unsurpassed,—but also with the really kind nature of the man. His eyes were by far the best feature of his face. Keen, bright, and piercing, they were eyes that held you. Their glance was very rapid and eager, and instantly prepossessed you in his favour."

FREDERICK MARRYAT
1792-1848

F. Marryat's
Life and Letters
of Captain
Marryat.

"Although not handsome, Captain Marryat's personal appearance was very prepossessing.[Pg 200] In figure he was upright, and broad-shouldered for his height, which measured five feet ten inches. His hands, without being under-sized, were remarkably perfect in form, and modelled by a sculptor at Rome on account of their symmetry. The character of his mind was borne out by his features, the most salient expression of which was the frankness of an open heart. The firm decisive mouth and massive thoughtful forehead were redeemed from heaviness by the humorous light that twinkled in his deep-set gray eyes, which, bright as diamonds, positively flashed out their fun, or their reciprocation of the fun of others. As a young man, dark crisp curls covered his head; but, later in life, when, having exchanged the sword for the pen and the ploughshare, he affected a soberer and more patriarchal style of dress and manner, he wore his gray hair long, and almost down to his shoulders. His eyebrows were not alike, one being higher up and more[Pg 201] arched than the other, which peculiarity gave his face a look of inquiry, even in repose. In the upper lip was a deep cleft, and in his chin as deep a dimple—a pitfall for the razor, which, from the ready growth of his dark beard, he was often compelled to use twice a day."

The Cornhill,
1876.

"He was not a tall man—five feet ten—but I think intended by nature to be six feet, only having gone to sea when still almost a child, at a time when the between-decks were very low-pitched, he had, he himself declared, had his growth unnaturally stopped. His immensely powerful build and massive chest, which measured considerably over forty inches round, would incline one to this belief. He had never been handsome, as far as features went, but the irregularity of his features might easily be forgotten by those who looked at the intellect shown in his magnificent forehead. His forehead and his hands were his two strong points. The latter were models of[Pg 202] symmetry. Indeed, while resident at Rome, at an earlier period of his life, he had been requested by a sculptor to allow his hand to be modelled. At the time I now speak of him he was fifty-two years of age, but looked considerably younger. His face was clean-shaved, and his hair so long that it reached almost to his

shoulders, curly in light loose locks like those of a woman. It was slightly gray. He was dressed in anything but evening costume on the present occasion, having on a short velveteen shooting-jacket and coloured trousers. I could not help smiling as I glanced at his dress—recalling to my mind what a dandy he had been as a young man."—1844.

HARRIET MARTINEAU
1802-1876

H. Martineau's
Autobiography.

"She was graver and laughed more rarely than any young person I ever knew. Her[Pg 203] face was plain, and (you will scarcely believe it) she had *no* light in the countenance, no expression to redeem the features. The low brow and rather large under lip increased the effect of her natural seriousness of look, and did her much injustice. I used to be asked occasionally, 'What has offended Harriet that she looks so glum?'—I, who understood her, used to answer, 'Nothing; she is not offended, it is only her look,'"—1818.

James Payn's
Literary
Recollections.

"In the porch stood Miss Martineau herself. A lady of middle height, 'inclined' as the novelists say 'to *embonpoint*,' with a smile on her kindly face and her trumpet at her ear. She was at that time, I suppose, about fifty years of age; her brown hair had a little grey in it, and was arranged with peculiar flatness over a low but broad forehead. I don't think she could ever have been pretty, but her features were not uncomely, and their expression was gentle and motherly."—1852.

H. Martineau's
Autobiography.

[Pg 204]"... I saw Miss Martineau a few weeks since. She is a large, robust, elderly woman, and plainly dressed; but withal she has so kind, cheerful, and intelligent a face, that she is pleasanter to look at than most beauties. Her hair is of a decided gray, and she does not shrink from calling herself old. She is the most continual talker I ever heard; it is really like the babbling of a brook; and very lively and sensible too; and all the while she talks she moves the bowl of her ear-trumpet from one auditor to another, so that it becomes quite an organ of intelligence and sympathy between her

and yourself.... All her talk was about herself and her affairs; but it did not seem like egotism, because it was so cheerful and free from morbidness."—About 1856.

[Pg 205]

FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE
1805-1872

F. Maurice's
Life of
F. D. Maurice.

"He was distinctly below the middle height, not above five feet seven inches, but he had a certain dignity of carriage, despite the entire absence of any self-assertion of manner, which in the pulpit, where only his head and shoulders were observable, removed the impression of small stature.... His hair was now of a silvery white, very ample in quantity, fine and soft as silk. The rush of his start for a walk had gone. His movements had, like his life, become quiet and measured. At no time had there been so much beauty about his face and figure. There was now—partly from manner, partly from face, partly from a character that seemed expressed in all,—beauty which seemed to shine round him, and was very commonly observed by those[Pg 206] amongst whom he was. It made undergraduates, not specially impressionable, stop and watch him.... Servants and poor people whom he visited often spoke of him as 'beautiful.'"—1866.

The Spectator,
1872.

"Yet though Mr. Maurice's voice seemed to be the essential part of him as a religious teacher, his face, if you ever looked at it, was quite in keeping with his voice. His eye was full of sweetness, but fixed, and, as it were, fascinated on some ideal point. His countenance expressed nervous, high-strung tension, as though all the various play of feelings in ordinary human nature converged, in him, towards a single focus, the declaration of the divine purpose. Yet this tension, this peremptoriness, this convergence of his whole nature on a single point, never gave the effect of a dictatorial air for a moment. There was a quiver in his voice, a tremulousness in the strong deep lines of his face, a tenderness in his eye, which assured you at once that nothing[Pg 207] of the hard crystallising character of a dogmatic belief in the Absolute had conquered his heart, and most men recognised this, for the hardest and most business-like voices took a tender and almost caressing tone in addressing him."

JOHN MILTON
1608-1674

D'Israeli's
Curiosities of
Literature.

"Salmasius sometimes reproaches Milton as being but a puny piece of man, an homunculus, a dwarf deprived of the human figure, a bloodless being composed of nothing but skin and bone, a contemptible pedagogue, fit only to flog his boys; and rising into a poetic frenzy applies to him the words of Virgil: '*Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum*.' Our great poet thought this senseless declamation merited a serious refutation;[Pg 208] perhaps he did not wish to appear despicable in the eyes of the ladies; and he would not be silent on the subject, he says, lest any one should consider him as the credulous Spaniards are made to believe by their priests, that a heretic is a kind of rhinoceros or a dog-headed monster. Milton says that he does not think any one ever considered him as unbeautiful; that his size rather approaches mediocrity than the diminutive; that he still felt the same courage and the same strength which he possessed when young, when, with his sword, he felt no difficulty to combat with men more robust than himself; that his face, far from being pale, emaciated, and wrinkled, was sufficiently creditable to him: for though he had passed his fortieth year, he was in all other respects ten years younger. And very pathetically he adds, 'That even his eyes, blind as they are, are unblemished in their appearance; in this instance alone, and much against my inclination, I am a deceiver!'"

Aubrey's
Lives of
Eminent
Persons.

[Pg 209]"He was scarce as tall as I am.[5] He had light browne hayre. His complexion exceeding fayre. Ovall face, his eie a darke gray. His widowe has his picture drawne very well and like, when a Cambridge scollar. She has his picture when a Cambridge scollar, which ought to be engraven; for the pictures before his books are not at all like him.... He was a spare man.... Extreme pleasant in his conversation, and at dinner, supper, etc., but satyricall. He pronounced the letter *r* very hard. He had a delicate tuneable voice, and had good skill. His harmonicall and ingeniose soul did lodge in a

beautiful and well-proportioned body:—'In toto nusquam corpore menda fuit.'—Ovid."

Keightley's
Life of Milton.
*

"In his person Milton was rather under the middle size, well built and muscular. 'His deportment,' says Wood, 'was affable, and his gait erect and manly, bespeaking courage and undauntedness.'[Pg 210] He was skilled in the use of the small sword, and, though he certainly would not have engaged in a duel, he had strength, skill, and courage to repel the attack of any adversary. His hair, which never fell off, was of a light-brown hue, and he wore it parted on his forehead as it is represented in his portraits. His eyes were gray, and, as the cause of his blindness was internal, they suffered no change of appearance from it. His face was oval, and his complexion was so fine in his youth that at Cambridge he was, as we are told by Aubrey, called the Lady of his College; even in his later days his cheeks retained a ruddy tinge. He had a fine ear for music, and was well skilled in that delightful science; he used to perform on the organ and bass-viol. His voice was sweet and musical, and we may presume that his singing showed both taste and science."

[Pg 211]

MARY RUSSELL MITFORD
1786-1855

S. C. Hall's
Memories of
Great Men.

"I certainly was disappointed when a stout little lady, tightened up in a shawl, rolled into the parlour of Newman Street, and Mrs. Holland announced her as Miss Mitford; her short petticoats showing wonderfully stout leather boots, her shawl *bundled* on, and a little black coal-scuttle bonnet—when bonnets were expanding—added to the effect of her natural shortness and rotundity; but her manner was that of a cordial country gentlewoman; the pressure of her 'fat' little hands (for she extended both) was warm; her eyes, both soft and bright, looked kindly and frankly into mine; and her pretty rosy mouth dimpled with smiles that were always sweet and friendly.... She was always pleasant to look at, and had her face not been cast in so broad—so 'out-spread'—[Pg 212]a mould, she would have been handsome; even with that

disadvantage, if her figure had been tall enough to carry her head with dignity, she would have been so; but she was most vexatiously ‘dumpy.’ Miss Landon ‘hit off’ her appearance when she whispered, the first time she saw her (and it was at our house), ‘Sancho Panza in petticoats!’ but when Miss Mitford spoke, the awkward effect vanished,—her pleasant voice, her beaming eyes and smiles, made you forget the wide expanse of face; and the roley-poley figure, when seated, did not appear really short.”—1828.

James Payn’s
Literary
Recollections.

“I can never forget the little figure rolled up in two chairs in the little Swallowfield room, packed round with books up to the ceiling, on to the floor—the little figure with clothes on of course, but of no recognised or recognisable pattern; and somewhere out of the upper end of the heap, gleaming under a great deep, globular brow, two such eyes as I never,[Pg 213] perhaps, saw in any other Englishwoman—though I believe she must have had French blood in her veins, to breed such eyes, and such a tongue, for the beautiful speech which came out of that ugly (it was that) face, and the glitter and depth too of the eyes, like live coals—perfectly honest the while, both lips and eyes—these seemed to me to be attributes of the highest French, or rather Gallic, not of the highest English, woman. In any case, she was a triumph of mind over matter, of spirit over flesh, which gave the lie to all materialism, and puts Professor Bain out of court—at least out of court with those who use fair induction about the men and women whom they meet and know.”—About 1851.

James Payn’s
Literary
Recollections.

“I seem to see the dear little old lady now, looking like a venerable fairy, with bright sparkling eyes, a clear, incisive voice, and a laugh that carried you away with it. I never saw a woman with such an enjoyment of—I was about to say a joke, but the word is too[Pg 214] coarse for her—of a pleasantry. She was the warmest of friends, and with all her love of fun never alluded to their weaknesses.... I well remember our first interview. I expected to find the authoress of *Our Village* in a most picturesque residence, overgrown with honeysuckle and roses, and set in an old-fashioned garden. Her little cottage at Swallowfield, near Reading, did not answer this picture at all. It was a cottage, but not a pretty one, placed where three roads met, with only a piece of green before it. But if the dwelling disappointed me, the owner did not. I was

ushered upstairs (for at that time, crippled by rheumatism, she was unable to leave her room) into a small apartment, lined with books from floor to ceiling, and fragrant with flowers; its tenant rose from her arm-chair with difficulty, but with a sunny smile and a charming manner bade me welcome. My father had been an old friend of hers, and she spoke of my home and belongings as only a woman can speak of such[Pg 215] things. Then we plunged, *in medias res*, into men and books."—1852.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU
1690-1762

Horace
Walpole's
Letters.

"I went last night to visit her. I give you my word of honour, and you who know her will believe me without it, the following is a faithful description: I found her in a little miserable bedchamber of a ready furnished house, with two tallow candles and a bureau covered with pots and pans. On her head, in full of all accounts, she had an old black-laced hood wrapped entirely round so as to conceal all hair, or want of hair; no handkerchief, but instead of it a kind of horseman's riding-coat, calling itself a *pet-en-l'air*, made of a dark green brocade, with coloured and silver flowers, and lined with furs; bodice laced;[Pg 216] a full dimity petticoat, sprigged; velvet muffetees on her arms; gray stockings and slippers. Her face less changed in twenty years than I would have imagined. I told her so, and she was not so tolerable twenty years ago that she should have taken it for flattery, but she did, and literally gave me a box on the ears. She is very lively, all her senses perfect, her language as imperfect as ever, her avarice greater."

Horace
Walpole's
Letters.

"Did I tell you that Lady Mary Wortley is here? She laughs at my Lady Walpole, scolds my Lady Pomfret, and is laughed at by the whole town. Her dress, her avarice, and her impudence must amaze any one that never heard her name. She wears a foul mob, that does not cover her greasy black locks, that hang loose, never combed or curled; an old mazarine blue wrapper, that gapes open and discovers a canvas petticoat. Her face swelled violently on one side with the remains of a ——, partly covered with a[Pg 217] plaister, and partly with white paint, which for cheapness she has bought so

coarse that you would not use it to wash a chimney.—In three words I will give you her picture as we drew it in the ‘Sortes Virgilianae’—

‘Insanam vatem aspicies.’

I give you my honour we did not choose it; but Gray, Mr. Coke, Sir Francis Dashwood, and I, and several others, drew it fairly amongst a thousand for different people, most of which did not hit as you may imagine.”—1740.

THOMAS MOORE
1779-1852

Leigh Hunt’s
Autobiography.

“Moore’s forehead was bony and full of character, with ‘bumps’ of wit, large and radiant enough to transport a phrenologist. Sterne had such another. His eyes were as dark and fine as you would wish to see under a set of vine-leaves;[Pg 218] his mouth generous and good-humoured, with dimples; and his manner was as bright as his talk, full of the wish to please and be pleased. He sang, and played with great taste on the pianoforte, as might be supposed from his musical compositions. His voice, which was a little hoarse in speaking (at least I used to think so), softened into a breath, like that of a flute, when singing. In speaking he was emphatic in rolling the letter *r*, perhaps out of a despair of being able to get rid of the national peculiarity.”

S. C. Hall’s
Memories of
Great Men.

“His eyes sparkle like a champagne bubble; there is a kind of wintry red, of the tinge of an October leaf, that seems enamelled on his cheek; his lips are delicately cut, slight, and changeable as an aspen; the slightly-turned nose confirms the fun of the expression; and altogether it is a face that sparkles, beams, and radiates—

‘The light that surrounds him is all from within.’”

1835.

S. C. Hall’s
Retrospect of
a Long Life.

[Pg 219]“I recall him at this moment—his small form and intellectual face rich in expression, and that expression the sweetest, the most gentle, and the kindliest. He had still in age the same bright and clear eye, the same gracious smile, the same suave and winning manner I had noticed as the attributes of what might in comparison be styled his youth (I have stated I knew him as long ago as 1821); a forehead not remarkably broad or high, but singularly impressive, firm, and full, with the organs of music and gaiety large, and those of benevolence and veneration greatly preponderating; the nose, as observed in all his portraits, was somewhat upturned. Standing or sitting, his head was invariably upraised, owing, perhaps, mainly to his shortness of stature. He had so much bodily activity as to give him the attribute of restlessness, and no doubt that usual accompaniment of genius was eminently a characteristic of his. His hair was, at the time I speak of, thin and very gray, and he[Pg 220] wore his hat with the jaunty air that has been often remarked as a peculiarity of the Irish. In dress, although far from slovenly, he was by no means precise. He had but little voice, yet he sang with a depth of sweetness that charmed all hearers; it was true melody, and told upon the heart as well as the ear. No doubt much of this charm was derived from association, for it was only his own melodies he sang.”—1845.

HANNAH MORE
1745-1833

Memoir of
Mrs. Hannah
More.

“I was much struck by the air of affectionate kindness with which the old lady welcomed me to Barley Wood—there was something of courtliness about it, at the same time the courtliness of the *vieille cour*, which one reads of, but so seldom sees. Her dress was of light green[Pg 221] Venetian silk; a yellow, richly embroidered crape shawl enveloped her shoulders; and a pretty net cap, tied under her chin with white satin riband, completed the costume. Her figure is singularly *petite*; but to have any idea of the expression of her countenance, you must imagine the small withered face of a woman in her seventy-seventh year; and, imagine also (shaded, but not obscured, by long and perfectly white eyelashes) eyes dark, brilliant, flashing, and penetrating, sparkling from object to object, with all the fire and energy of youth, and smiling welcome on all around.”—1820.

S. C. Hall's
Memories of
Great Men.

"Her form was small and slight: her features wrinkled with age; but the burden of eighty years had not impaired her gracious smile, nor lessened the fire of her eyes, the clearest, the brightest, and the most searching I have ever seen—they were singularly dark—positively black they seemed as they looked forth among carefully-trained tresses of her[Pg 222] own white hair; and absolutely sparkled while she spoke of those of whom she was the venerated link between the present and the long past. Her manner on entering the room, while conversing, and at our departure, was positively sprightly; she tripped about from console to console, from window to window, to show us some gift that bore a name immortal, some cherished reminder of other days—almost of another world, certainly of another age; for they were memories of those whose deaths were registered before the present century had birth.... She was clad, I well remember, in a dress of rich pea-green silk. It was an odd whim, and contrasted somewhat oddly with her patriarchal age and venerable countenance, yet was in harmony with the youth of her step, and her unceasing vivacity as she laughed and chatted, chatted and laughed, her voice strong and clear as that of a girl, and her animation as full of life and vigour as it might have been in her spring-time."—1825.

A. M. Hall's
Pilgrimages
to English
Shrines.

[Pg 223]"Her brow was full and well sustained, rather than what would be called *fine*: from the manner in which her hair was dressed, its formation was distinctly visible; and though her eyes were half-closed, her countenance was more tranquil, more sweet, more holy—for it *had* a holy expression—than when those deep intense eyes were looking you through and through. Small, and shrunk, and aged as she was, she conveyed to us no idea of feebleness. She looked, even then, a woman whose character, combining sufficient thought and wisdom, as well as dignity and spirit, could analyse and exhibit, in language suited to the intellect of the people of England, the evils and dangers of revolutionary principles. Her voice had a pleasant tone, and her manner was quite devoid of affectation or dictation; she spoke as one expecting a reply, and by no means like an oracle. And those bright immortal eyes of hers—not wearied by looking at the[Pg 224] world for more than eighty years, but clear and far-seeing then—laughing, too, when she spoke cheerfully, not as authors are believed to speak—

‘In measured pompous tones,’—

but like a dear matronly dame, who had especial care and tenderness towards young women. It is impossible to remember how it occurred, but in reference to some observation I had made she turned briskly round and exclaimed, ‘Controversy hardens the heart, and sours the temper: never dispute with your husband, young lady; tell him what you think, and leave it to time to fructify.’”

SIR THOMAS MORE
1480-1535

More’s
Life of Sir
Thomas More.

“He was of a meane stature, well proportioned, his complexion tending to the phlegmaticke, his colour white and pale, his[Pg 225] hayre neither black nor yellow, but betweene both; his eies gray, his countenance amiable and chearefull, his voyce neither bigg nor shrill, but speaking plainely and distinctly; it was not very tunable, though he delighted much in musike, his bodie reasonably healthfull, only that towards his latter ende by using much writing, he complained much of the ache of his breaste. In his youth he drunke much water, wine he only tasted of, when he pledged others; he loved salte meates, especially powdered beefe, milke, cheese, eggs and fruite, and usually he eate of corse browne bread, which it may be he rather used to punish his taste, than from anie love he had thereto. For he was singularly wise to deceave the world with mortifications, only contenting himselfe with the knowledge which God had of his actions: et pater ejus, qui erat in abscondito reddidit ei.”

Campbell’s
Lives of the
Lord Chancellors.
*

“Holbein’s portrait of More has made his features familiar to all Englishmen. According[Pg 226] to his great-grandson, he was of ‘a middle stature, well proportioned, of a pale complexion; his hair of a chestnut colour, his eyes gray, his countenance mild and cheerful; his voice not very musical, but clear and distinct; his constitution, which was good originally, was never impaired by his way of living, otherwise than by too much study. His diet was simple and abstemious, never

drinking any wine but when he pledged those who drank to him, and rather mortifying than indulging his appetite in what he ate.'

Life of Sir
Thomas More.
*

"He is rather below than above the middle size; his countenance of an agreeable and friendly cheerfulness, with somewhat of an habitual inclination to smile; and appears more adapted to pleasantry than to gravity or dignity, though perfectly remote from vulgarity or silliness."

[Pg 227]

CAROLINE NORTON
1808-1877

Kemble's
Records of
a Girlhood.

"When I first knew Caroline Sheridan she had not long been married to the Hon. George Norton. She was splendidly handsome, of an un-English character of beauty, her rather large and heavy head and features recalling the grandest Grecian and Italian models, to the latter of whom her rich colouring and blue-black braids of hair gave her an additional resemblance. Though neither as perfectly lovely as the Duchess of Somerset, nor as perfectly charming as Lady Dufferin, she produced a far more striking impression than either of them, by the combination of the poetical genius with which she alone, of the three, was gifted, with the brilliant power of repartee which they (especially Lady Dufferin) possessed in common with her,[Pg 228] united to the exceptional beauty with which they were all three endowed. Mrs. Norton was exceedingly epigrammatic in her talk, and comically dramatic in her manner of relating things.... She was no musician, but had a deep, sweet contralto voice, precisely the same in which she always spoke, and which, combined with her always lowered eyelids ('downy eyelids' with sweeping silken fringes), gave such incomparably comic effect to her sharp retorts and ludicrous stories.... I admired her extremely.—1827.

"The next time ... was at an evening party at my sister's house, where her appearance struck me more than it had ever done. Her dress had something to do with this effect,

no doubt. She had a rich gold-coloured silk on, shaded and softened all over with black lace draperies, and her splendid head, neck, and arms, were adorned with magnificently simple Etruscan ornaments, which she had brought from Rome, whence she had just returned, and where the fashion of that[Pg 229] famous antique jewellery had lately been revived. She was still ‘une beauté triomphante à faire voir aux ambassadeurs.’”

A personal
friend.

“The most beautiful of ‘the beautiful Sheridans,’ Caroline Norton will also live in the memory of her friends as one of the most fascinating of women. Her voice was exceedingly sweet and musical, her movements wonderfully graceful, and, with the solitary exception of Theodore Hook, whose rough, coarse wit spared no one, her queenly bearing won her general adulation and deference. Her face was a pure oval, her head was crowned by heavy braids of the darkest hair, while the warmth and light which suffused her expressive countenance gave her a somewhat un-English appearance. Her eyes were dark; black curly lashes swept over the warmly-tinted cheek; the lips were of geranium red; the teeth, dazzlingly white. Altogether she was a vivid piece of colouring, and as she was always very beautifully dressed, it[Pg 230] did not require her literary reputation to make her at all times sought after and admired.”

S. C. Hall’s
Retrospect of
a long Life.

“It seems but yesterday—it is not so very long ago certainly—that I saw for the last time the Hon. Mrs. Norton. Her radiant beauty was then faded, but her stately form had been little impaired by years, and she had retained much of the grace that made her early womanhood so surpassingly attractive. She combined, in a singular degree, feminine delicacy with masculine vigour; though essentially womanly, she seemed to have the force of character of man. Remarkably handsome she perhaps excited admiration rather than affection. I can easily imagine greater love to be given to a far plainer woman. She had, in more than full measure, the traditional beauty of her family, and no doubt inherited with it some of the waywardness that is associated with the name of Sheridan.”

[Pg 231]

THOMAS OTWAY
1651-1685

Gentleman's
Magazine, 1745.

"You'll be glad to know any trifling circumstance concerning Otway. His person was of the middle size, about five feet seven inches in height, inclinable to fatness. He had a thoughtful speaking eye, and that was all. He gave himself up early to drinking, and, like the unhappy wits of that age, passed his days between rioting and fasting, ranting jollity and abject penitence, carousing one week with Lord Pl——th, and then starving a month in low company at an ale-house on Tower Hill."

Sir Walter
Scott's *Memoir*
of Mrs. Radcliffe.
*

"Otway, heavy, squalid, unhappy; yet tender countenance, but not so squalid as one we formerly saw; full-speaking, black eyes; it seems as if dissolute habits had overcome all his finer feelings, and left him little of[Pg 232] mind, except a sense of sorrow." *On a picture*.

SAMUEL PEPYS
1632-1703

The Cornhill
Magazine, 1874.
*

"Pepys spent part of a certain winter Sunday, when he had taken physic, composing 'a song in praise of a liberal genius (such as I take my own to be) to all studies and pleasures.' The song was successful, but the diary is, in a sense, the very song that he was seeking; and his portrait by Hales, so admirably reproduced in Mynors Bright's edition, is a confirmation of the diary. Hales, it would appear, had known his business, and though he put his sitter to a deal of trouble, almost breaking his neck 'to have the portrait full of shadows,' and draping him in an Indian gown hired expressly for the purpose, he was preoccupied about no merely picturesque effects, but to[Pg 233] portray the essence of the man. Whether we read the picture by the diary, or the diary by the picture, we shall at least agree, that Hales was among the numbers of

those who can ‘surprise the manners in a face.’ Here we have a mouth pouting, moist with desires; eyes greedy, protuberant, and yet apt for weeping too; a nose great alike in character and dimensions, and altogether a most fleshly, melting countenance. The face is attractive by its promise of reciprocity. I have used the word *greedy*, but the reader must not suppose that he can change it for that closely kindred one of *hungry*, for there is here no aspiration, no waiting for better things, but an animal joy in all that comes. It could never be the face of an artist; it is the face of a *viveur*—kindly, pleased, and pleasing, protected from excess and upheld in contentment by the shifting versatility of his desires. For a single desire is more rightly to be called a lust; but there is health in a variety, where one may balance and control another.”

[Pg 234]

ALEXANDER POPE
1688-1744

The Guardian,
1713.

“Dick Distich ... we have elected president, not only as he is the shortest of us all, but because he has entertained so just a sense of his stature as to go generally in black, that he may appear yet less. Nay, to that perfection is he arrived, that he stoops as he walks. The figure of the man is odd enough; he is a lively little creature, with long arms and legs: a spider is no ill emblem of him. He has been taken at a distance for a small windmill.”—1713.

Johnson’s *Life*
of Pope.

“The person of Pope is well known not to have been formed on the nicest model. He has, in his account of the Little Club, compared himself to a spider, and, by another, is described as protuberant behind and before. He is said to[Pg 235] have been beautiful in his infancy; but he was of a constitution originally feeble and weak; and, as bodies of a tender frame are easily distorted, his deformity was, probably, in part the effect of his application. His stature was so low, that to bring him on a level with common tables it was necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid.... His dress of ceremony was black, with a tie-wig and a little sword.... He sometimes condescended to be jocular with servants or inferiors; but by no merriment, either of others or of his own, was he ever seen excited to laughter.”

Tyer's *Historical rhapsody on Mr. Pope*.

"Pope, as Lord Clarendon says of (the ever memorable) Hales of Eaton, was one of the least men in the kingdom; who adds of Chillingworth, that he was of a stature little superior to him, and that it was an age in which there were many great and wonderful men of that size.... He inherited his deformity from his[Pg 236] father, who turns out at last, from the information of Mrs. Racket his relation, to have been a linen-draper in the Strand.

'My friend, this shape which you and I will admire,

Came not from Ammon's son, but from my sire,'

as he expresses himself in his first epistle to Arbuthnot. He was protuberant behind and before, in the words of his last biographer. But he carried a mind in his face, as a reverend person once expressed himself of a singular countenance. He had a brilliant eye, which pervaded everything at a glance."

BRYAN WALLER PROCTER
1787-1874

Froude's *Life of Carlyle*.

"I have also seen and scraped acquaintance with Procter—Barry Cornwall. He is a slender, rough-faced, palish, gentle, languid-looking man, of three or four and thirty. There is a dreamy mildness[Pg 237] in his eye; he is kind and good in his manners and, I understand, in his conduct. He is a poet by the ear and the fancy, but his heart and intellect are not strong."—1824.

S. C. Hall's *Retrospect of a long Life*.

"A decidedly rather pretty little fellow, Procter, bodily and spiritually: manners prepossessing, slightly London-elegant, not unpleasant; clear judgment in him, though of narrow field; a sound, honourable morality, and airy friendly ways; of slight, neat figure, vigorous for his size; fine genially rugged little face, fine head; something curiously dreamy in the eyes of him, lids drooping at the *outer* ends into a cordially

meditative and drooping expression; would break out suddenly now and then into opera attitude and a *Là ci darem là mano* for a moment; had something of real fun, though in London style."

Fields's
Yesterdays
with Authors.

"The poet's figure was short and full, and his voice had a low, veiled tone habitually in it, which made it sometimes difficult to hear distinctly what he was[Pg 238] saying. When he spoke in conversation, he liked to be very near his listener, and thus stand, as it were, on confidential grounds with him. His turn of thought was apt to be cheerful among his friends, and he entered readily into a vein of wit and nimble expression. Verbal facility seemed natural to him, and his epithets, evidently unprepared, were always perfect. He disliked cant and hard ways of judging character. He praised easily. He impressed every one who came near him as a born gentleman, chivalrous and generous in a high degree."

THOMAS DE QUINCEY
1786-1859

Masson's
de Quincey.

"In addition to the general impression of his diminutiveness and fragility, one was struck with the peculiar beauty of his head and forehead, rising disproportionately high over his small,[Pg 239] wrinkly visage and gentle, deep-set eyes. His talk was in the form of really harmonious and considerate colloquy, and not at all in that of monologue.... That evening passed, and though I saw him once or twice again, it is the last sight I remember best. It must have been, I think, in 1846, on a summer afternoon. A friend, a stranger in Edinburgh, was walking with me in one of the pleasant, quiet, country lanes near Edinburgh. Meeting us, and the sole living thing in the lane beside ourselves, came a small figure, not untidily dressed, but with his hat pushed far up in front of his forehead, and hanging on his hindhead, so that the back rim must have been resting on his coat-collar. At a little distance I recognised it to be De Quincey; but, not considering myself entitled to interrupt his meditations, I only whispered the information to my friend, that he might not miss what the look at such a celebrity was worth. So we passed him, giving him the wall. Not unnaturally, however, after[Pg 240] we passed, we turned round for the pleasure of a back view of the wee,

intellectual wizard. Whether my whisper and our glance had alarmed him, as a ticket-of-leave man might be rendered uneasy in his solitary walk by the scrutiny of two passing strangers, or whether he had some recollection of me (which was likely enough, as he seemed to forget nothing), I do not know, but we found that he, too, had stopped, and was looking round at us. Apparently scared at being caught doing so, he immediately wheeled round again, and hurried his face towards a side-turning in the lane, into which he disappeared, his hat still hanging on the back of his head. That was my last sight of De Quincey."—1846.

Page's
de Quincey.

"Pale he was, with a head of wonderful size, which served to make more apparent the inferior dimensions of his body, and a face which lived the sculptured past in every lineament from brow to chin. One seeing him would surely be tempted to ask who he was that took off his hat with[Pg 241] such grave politeness, remaining uncovered if a lady were passing almost until she was out of sight, and would get for an answer likely enough, 'Oh, that is little De Quincey, who hears strange sounds and eats opium. Did you ever see such a little man?' Little he was, indeed, like Dickens and Jeffrey, the latter of whom had so little flesh that it was said that his intellect was indecently exposed."

James Payn's
Literary
Recollections.

"In the ensuing summer, after the publication of another volume of poems, I visited Edinburgh, and called upon De Quincey, to whom I had a letter of introduction from Miss Mitford. He was at that time residing at Lasswade, a few miles from the town, and I went thither by coach. He lived a secluded life, and even at that date had become to the world a name rather than a real personage; but it was a great name. Considerable alarm agitated my youthful heart as I drew near the house: I felt like Burns on the occasion when he was first about 'to dinner wi' a Lord.'... My[Pg 242] apprehensions, however, proved to be utterly groundless, for a more gracious and genial personage I never met. Picture to yourself a very diminutive man, carelessly—very carelessly—dressed; a face lined, careworn, and so expressionless that it reminded one of 'that chill changeless brow, where cold Obstruction's apathy appals the gazing mourners heart'—a face like death in life. The instant he began to speak, however, it lit up as though by electric light; this came from his marvellous eyes, brighter and more intelligent (though by fits) than I have ever seen in any other mortal. They seemed to

me to glow with eloquence. He spoke of my introducer, of Cambridge, of the Lake Country, and of English poets. Each theme was interesting to me, but made infinitely more so by some apt personal reminiscence. As for the last-named subject, it was like talking of the Olympian gods to one not only cradled in their creed, but who had mingled with them, himself half an immortal."

[Pg 243]

ANN RADCLIFFE
1764-1823

Kavanagh's
English Women
of Letters.
*

"Ann Ward's education was plain and somewhat formal. She was shy; she showed no extraordinary genius, and the times were not propitious to the development of female intellect. The young girl's person was probably more admired than her mind. She was short, but exquisitely proportioned; she had a lovely complexion, fine eyes and eyebrows, and a beautiful mouth. She had a sweet voice too, and sang with feeling and taste."

Scott's *Memoir*
of Ann Radcliffe.

"This admirable writer, whom I remember from about the time of her twentieth year, was, in her youth, of a figure exquisitely proportioned, while she resembled her father and his brother and sister in being low of stature. Her complexion was beautiful, as was her whole[Pg 244] countenance, especially her eye, eyebrows, and mouth."

Memoir of Mrs.
Ann Radcliffe.

"Mrs. Radcliffe, though a giant in intellect, was low in stature, and of a slender form, but exquisitely proportioned: her countenance was beautiful and expressive."

SIR WALTER RALEIGH
1552-1618

The Nineteenth Century, 1881.

*

"In appearance what manner of man was Raleigh when in Ireland? There was much change, of course, from the dashing captain of eight and twenty, when he was putting the unarmed men to the sword and hanging the women in Dingle Bay, to the admiral of sixty-five who, between the Tower and the scaffold, visited his old haunts in the county of Cork for the last time in the three summer months of 1617.

"But all accounts agree in giving him a[Pg 245] commanding presence, a handsome and well-compacted figure, a forehead rather too high; the lower part of his face, though partly hidden by the moustache and peaked beard, showing rare resolution. His portrait, a life-sized head, painted when he was Major of Youghal, was recently presented to the owner of his house, where it had been years ago, by the senior member for the county of Waterford; and another original picture of him when in Ireland is in the possession of the Rev. Pierce W. Drew of Youghal. Both these Irish pictures show the same lofty brow and firm lips. There is an old and much-prized engraving by Vander Werff of Amsterdam that seems to combine all his characteristic features—the extraordinarily high forehead, the moustache and peaked beard, ill-concealing a too determined mouth. The likeness is most striking."

Aubrey's *Lives of Eminent Persons*.

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"He was a tall, handsome, and bold man; but his *næve* was, that he was damnably proud.... In the great parlour at Downton,[Pg 246] at Mr. Ralegh's, is a good piece (an originall) of Sir W. in a white sattin doublet, all embroidered with rich pearles, and a mighty rich chaine of great pearles about his neck. The old servants have told me that the pearles were neer as big as the painted ones. He had a most remarkable aspect, an exceedingly high forehead, long-faced, and sourlie-bidded, a kind of pigge-eie.... He spake broad Devonshire to his dye-ing day. His voice was small, as likewise were my schoolfellowes, his gr. nephews."

Publications of the Prince Society.

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"In all the pictures we have of him, there is almost nothing to suggest the typical Englishman. Burly and robust. About six feet in height, he is rather thin than corpulent,

and in the vivacity of expression and the nervous cast of his features he resembles rather the modern New-Englander than the old-time Englishman. He was nineteen years younger than Elizabeth, and had, as Naunton describes him, ‘a good presence in a handsome and well-compacted[Pg 247] person.’ Fuller has already told us that at the time of his entrance at the court his clothes made a ‘considerable part of his estate.’ He seems to have had an innate love for the luxury and splendour of dress. He lived at a period when gentlemen as well as ladies indulged in all the glory of gay colours. Edwards, describing some of the more noted pictures of him, says: ‘In another full-length, which long remained in the possession of his descendants, he is apparelled in a white satin pinked vest, close sleeved to the wrists with a brown doublet finely flowered and embroidered with pearls, and a sword, also brown and similarly decorated. Over the right hip is seen the jewelled pommel of his dagger. He wears his hat, in which is a black feather with a ruby and pearl drop. His trunk hose and fringed garters appear to be of white satin. His buff-coloured shoes are tied with white ribbons.’”

[Pg 248]

CHARLES READE
1814-1884

Coleman’s
Personal Reminiscences.

“On arriving at Bolton Row I was shown into a large room littered over with books, MSS. agenda, newspapers of every description from the *Times* and the *New York Herald* down to the *Police News*. Before me stood a stately and imposing man of fifty or fifty-one, over six feet high, a massive chest, herculean limbs, a bearded and leonine face, giving traces of a manly beauty which ripened into majesty as he grew older. Large brown eyes which could at times become exceedingly fierce, a fine head, quite bald on the top but covered at the sides with soft brown hair, a head strangely disproportioned to the bulk of the body; in fact I could never understand how so large a brain could be confined in so small a skull. On the desk before him lay a huge[Pg 249] sheet of drab paper on which he had been writing—it was about the size of two sheets of ordinary foolscap; in his hand one of Gillott’s double-barrelled pens. (Before I left the room he told me he sent Gillott his books, and Gillott sent him his pens.)

“His voice, though very pleasant, was very penetrating. He was rather deaf, but I don’t think quite so deaf as he pretended to be. This deafness gave him an advantage in

conversation; it afforded him time to take stock of the situation, and either to seek refuge in silence or to request his interlocutor to propound his proposal afresh. At first he was very cold, but at last, carried away by the ardour of my admiration for his works, he thawed, and in half an hour he was eager, excited, delighted and delightful."—1856.

The Contemporary Review, 1884.

"The man in truth justified Lavater, for his physiognomy was noble, and his body the perfection of symmetry and grace. Nature gave him a forehead as high as Shakespeare's, but[Pg 250] broader; the mild, pensive ox-eye so dear to the old Greek æsthetes; a marble skin, a mouth that was sarcasm itself. His personal attractiveness was phenomenal. In any roomful of people, however illustrious, he became involuntarily—for he was as little self-asserting off his paper as he was dogmatic on it—the centre. Living immersed in Bohemianism, and in the society of a large-hearted, yet not very cultured woman, he never parted company with his Ipsden breeding, and his natural bearing was that of one born to command."

Eclectic Magazine, 1880.

"In personal appearance Mr. Reade is tall, erect, of a commanding presence, with a full, expressive brown eye and a noble brow. His manner is singularly dignified without being arrogant, and in society he sustains an enviable reputation as a conversationalist."

[Pg 251]

SAMUEL RICHARDSON
1689-1761

Barbauld's *Life of Richardson*.

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"Richardson was, in person, below the middle stature, and inclined to corpulency; of a round, rather than oval face, with a fair, ruddy complexion. His features, says one who speaks from recollection, bore the stamp of good nature, and were characteristic

of his placid and amiable disposition. He was slow in speech, and, to strangers at least, spoke with reserve and deliberation; but in his manners was affable, courteous, and engaging, and when surrounded with the social circle he loved to draw around him, his eye sparkled with pleasure, and often expressed that particular spirit of archness which we see in some of his characters, and which gave, at times, a vivacity to his conversation not expected from his general taciturnity and quiet manners."

Richardson's
Correspondence.

[Pg 252]"Short, rather plump, about five feet five inches, fair wig, one hand generally in his bosom, the other a cane in it, which he leans upon under the skirts of his coat, that it may imperceptibly serve him as a support when attacked by sudden tremors or dizziness; of a light brown complexion; teeth not yet failing him. Looking directly foreright as passengers would imagine, but observing all that stirs on either hand of him, without moving his short neck; a regular even pace, stealing away ground rather than seeming to rid it; a gray eye, too often overclouded by mistiness from the head, by chance lively, very lively, if he sees any he loves; if he approaches a lady, his eye is never fixed first on her face, but on her feet, and rears it up by degrees, seeming to set her down as so and so."—1749.

Stephen's
Richardson.
*

"He looks like a plump white mouse in a wig, with an air at once vivacious and timid, a quick excitable nature, taking refuge in the[Pg 253] outside of a smug, portly tradesman. Two coloured engravings in Mrs. Barbauld's volumes give us Richardson amidst his surroundings.... One introduces us to Richardson at home. Half a dozen ladies and gentlemen are sitting by the open window in his bare parlour looking out into the garden. There is only one spindle-legged table, and a set of uncompromising wooden chairs, just enough to accommodate the party.... Miss Highmore, whose hoop can scarcely be squeezed into her straight-backed chair, is quietly sketching the memorable scene. We are truly grateful to her, for there sits the little idol of the party in his usual morning dress, a nondescript brown dressing-gown with a cap on his head of the same materials. His plump little frame fills the chair, and he is apparently raising one foot for an emphatic stamp, as he reads a passage of *Sir Charles Grandison*. We can see that as he concludes he will be applauded with deferential gasps of heartfelt admiration."

[Pg 254]

SAMUEL ROGERS
1763-1855

S. C Hall's
Memories of
Great Men.

"His countenance was the theme of continual jokes. It was 'ugly,' if not repulsive. The expression was in no way, nor under any circumstances, good; he had a drooping eye and a thick underlip; his forehead was broad, his head large—out of proportion indeed to his form; but it was without the organs of benevolence and veneration, although preponderating in that of ideality. His features were 'cadaverous.' Lord Dudley once asked him why, now that he could afford it, he did not set up his hearse; and it is said that Sydney Smith gave him mortal offence by recommending him, 'when he sat for his portrait, to be drawn saying his prayers, with his face hidden by his hands.'"

Jerdan's *Men I*
have known.

"His personal appearance was extraordinary,[Pg 255] or rather his countenance was unique. His skull and facial expression bore so striking a likeness to the skeleton pictures which we sometimes see of Death, that the facetious Sydney Smith (at one of the dressed evening parties ...) entitled him the 'Death dandy.' And it was told (probably with truth), that the same satirical wag inscribed upon the capital portrait in his breakfast-room, 'Painted in his lifetime.'"

Mackay's
Forty Years'
Recollections.

"My first look at the poet, then in his seventy-eighth year, was an agreeable surprise, and a protest in my mind against the malignant injustice which had been done him. As a young man he might have been uncomely, if not as ugly as his revilers had painted him, but as an old man there was an intellectual charm in his countenance, and a fascination in his manner which more than atoned for any deficiency of personal beauty."—1840.

[Pg 256]

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
1828-1882

William Sharp's
Dante Gabriel
Rossetti.

"According to a sketch by Mr. Eyre Crowe, dated about this time, Rossetti must have had anything but a robust appearance, being very thin and even somewhat haggard in expression. He went about in a long swallow-tailed coat of what was even in 1848 an antique pattern. That his appearance in his twentieth and some subsequent years was that of an ascetic I have been told by several, including himself, and in addition to such pen-and-ink sketches as the above, and of himself sitting to Miss Siddall (his future wife) for his portrait, there are the perhaps more reliable portraitures in Mr. Millais's *Isabella* (painted in 1849), and Mr. Deverell's *Viola*. On the other hand, a beautifully-executed pencil head of himself in boyhood shows him much removed[Pg 257] from the ascetic type of later years, not unlike and strongly suggestive of a young Keats or Chatterton; while in maturer age he carefully drew his portrait from his mirrored image, the result being a highly-finished pen-and-ink likeness. While speaking of portraits, I may state that Rossetti was twice photographed, once in Newcastle (which is the one publicly known, and upon which all other illustrations have been based), and once standing arm-in-arm with Mr. Ruskin, the latter being the best likeness of the poet-artist as he was a quarter of a century ago. There is also an etching by Mr. Menpes, which, however, is only founded on the well-known photograph; and, finally, there is a portrait taken shortly after death by Mr. Frederick Shields."

Hall Caine's
Recollections of
Rossetti.

"Very soon Rossetti came to me through the doorway in front, which proved to be the entrance to his studio. Holding forth both hands and crying, 'Hulloa!' he gave me that[Pg 258] cheery hearty greeting which I came to recognise as his alone, perhaps, in warmth and unfailing geniality among all the men of our circle. It was Italian in its spontaneity, and yet it was English in its manly reserve, and I remember with much tenderness of feeling that never to the last (not even when sickness saddened him, or after an absence of a few days or even hours), did it fail him when meeting with those friends to whom to the last he was really attached. Leading the way to the studio, he introduced me to his brother, who was there upon one of the evening visits, which at

intervals of a week he was at that time making with unfailing regularity. I should have described Rossetti, at this time, as a man who looked quite ten years older than his actual age, which was fifty-two, of full middle height and inclining to corpulence, with a round face that ought, one thought, to be ruddy but was pale, large gray eyes with a steady introspecting look, surmounted by broad protrusive brows and a[Pg 259] clearly-pencilled ridge over the nose, which was well cut and had large breathing nostrils. The mouth and chin were hidden beneath a heavy moustache and abundant beard, which grew up to the ears, and had been of a mixed black-brown and auburn, and were now streaked with gray. The forehead was large, round, without protuberances, and very gently receding to where thin black curls, that had once been redundant, began to tumble down to the ears. The entire configuration of the head and face seemed to me singularly noble, and from the eyes upwards full of beauty. He wore a pair of spectacles, and, in reading, a second pair over the first: but these took little from the sense of power conveyed by those steady eyes, and that 'bar of Michael Angelo.' His dress was not conspicuous, being however rather negligent than otherwise, and noticeable, if at all, only for a straight sack-coat buttoned at the throat, descending at least to the knees, and having large pockets cut into it perpendicularly[Pg 260] at the sides. This garment was, I afterwards found, one of the articles of various kinds made to the author's own design. When he spoke, even in exchanging the preliminary courtesies of an opening conversation, I thought his voice the richest I had ever known any one to possess. It was a full deep baritone, capable of easy modulation, and with undertones of infinite softness and sweetness, yet, as I afterwards found, with almost illimitable compass, and with every gradation of tone at command, for the recitation or reading of poetry."—1880.

William Sharp's
Dante Gabriel
Rossetti

"As to the personality of Dante Gabriel Rossetti much has been written since his death, and it is now widely known that he was a man who exercised an almost irresistible charm over most with whom he was brought in contact. His manner could be peculiarly winning, especially with those much younger than himself, and his voice was alike notable for its sonorous beauty and for a magnetic[Pg 261] quality that made the ear alert, whether the speaker was engaged in conversation, recitation, or reading. I have heard him read, some of them over and over again, all the poems in the *Ballads and Sonnets*; and especially in such productions as *The Cloud Confines* was his voice as stirring as a trumpet tone; but where he excelled was in some of the pathetic portions of the *Vita Nuova*, or the terrible and sonorous passages of *L'Inferno*, when

the music of the Italian language found full expression indeed. His conversational powers I am unable adequately to describe, for during the four or five years of my intimacy with him he suffered too much from ill-health to be a consistently brilliant talker, but again and again I have seen instances of those marvellous gifts that made him at one time a Sydney Smith in wit, and a Coleridge in eloquence. In appearance he was, if anything, rather over middle height, and, especially latterly, somewhat stout; his forehead was[Pg 262] of splendid proportions, recalling instantaneously to most strangers the Stratford bust of Shakespeare; and his gray blue eyes were clear and piercing, and characterised by that rapid penetrative gaze so noticeable in Emerson. He seemed always to me an unmistakable Englishman, yet the Italian element was frequently recognisable. As far as his own opinion is concerned, he was wholly English."—1878.

RICHARD SAVAGE
1697-1743

Dublin University,
Magazine, 1858.
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"His companion, Who is he? He looks a little older, and is a great deal slenderer, and very much better dressed; that is, his clothes are well made, but alas! they are also well worn. He has an air of faded fashion about him. There is decision in every line of the lank,[Pg 263] and long, and melancholy visage; it is a veritable Quixotic face. Meagre and proud, and high and pale. An exceeding 'woeful countenance,' which sadness and scorn alternately cloud and corrugate. It is mixed up with extreme diversities. The brow and eye are intellectual and bright, while the lower features are sensual and coarse: humour and passion both lurk in the mouth, yet few smiles expand those lips from which laughter seems altogether banished, while the voice is sweet, soft, and lute-like; the pace is slow, and the gait has a certain pretension to importance, which ill harmonises with the rest of his appearance. This person is Richard Savage, a man whose rare talents might have brought him poetic immortality, and a lofty pedestal in the muse's temple, had not his coarser vices, together with his pride and his ingratitude, dragged him down to the lowest moral depth, and buried the many bright things he had in brain and bosom, head and heart, in the same mud-heap."

Johnson's *Life*
of Savage.

[Pg 264]“He was of a middle stature, of a thin habit of body, a long visage, coarse features, and melancholy aspect; of a grave and manly deportment, a solemn dignity of mien, but which, upon a nearer acquaintance, softened into an engaging easiness of manners. His walk was slow, and his voice tremulous and mournful. He was easily excited to smiles, but very seldom provoked to laughter.”

SIR WALTER SCOTT
1771-1832

Lockhart’s *Life of Scott*.

“His personal appearance at this time was not unengaging. A lady of high rank, who remembers him in the Old Assembly Rooms, says, ‘Young Walter Scott was a comely creature.’ He had outgrown the sallowness of early ill-health, and had a fresh, brilliant complexion.[Pg 265] His eyes were clear, open, and well set, with a changeful radiance, to which teeth of the most perfect regularity and whiteness lent their assistance, while the noble expanse and elevation of the brow gave to the whole aspect a dignity far above the charm of mere features. His smile was always delightful; and I can easily fancy the peculiar intermixture of tenderness and gravity, with playful innocent hilarity and humour in the expression, as being well calculated to fix a fair lady’s eye. His figure, excepting the blemish in one limb, must in those days have been eminently handsome; tall, much above the usual standard, it was cast in the very mould of a young Hercules; the head set on with singular grace, the throat and chest after the truest model of the antique, the hands delicately finished; the whole outline that of extraordinary vigour, without as yet a touch of clumsiness. When he had acquired a little facility of manner, his conversation must have been such as could have dispensed with any[Pg 266] exterior advantages, and certainly brought swift forgiveness for the one unkindness of nature. I have heard him, in talking of this part of his life, say, with an arch simplicity of look and tone which those who were familiar with him can fill in for themselves—‘It was a proud night with me when I first found that a pretty young woman could think it worth her while to sit and talk with me, hour after hour, in a corner of the ball-room, while all the world were capering in our view.’”—1790.

Froude’s *Life of Carlyle*.

"I never spoke with Scott.... Have a hundred times seen him, from of old, writing in the Courts, or hobbling with stout speed along the streets of Edinburgh; a large man, pale, shaggy face, fine, deep-browed gray eyes, an expression of strong homely intelligence, of humour and good-humour, and, perhaps (in later years amongst the wrinkles), of sadness or weariness.... He has played his part, and left *none like* or second to him. *Plaudite!*"

Sir John Bowring's
Autobiographical
Recollections.

[Pg 267]"More eloquent men I have known, I think, but I never knew any one so attractive. The variety of his conversation is stupendous, while it overflows with the most agreeable anecdotes, and almost every person who has figured in modern times has in some way or other been connected with him. His manner of talking is without the smallest pretence, and is gentle and humorous. His eye has a constant play upon it, and around it. His dress is that of a substantial farmer,—a short green coat with steel buttons, striped waistcoat and pantaloons, and he put on light gaiters when we sallied forth."

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
1564-1616

E. T. Craig's
Portraits of
Shakespeare.
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"The portrait of Martin Droeshout" (*published with the first folio edition of Shakespeare's*[Pg 268] *works in 1623*) "has a greater claim to attention, as it was engraved by a well-known artist at the time when published by Shakespeare's contemporaries, Heminge and Condell, and has the additional testimony of the poet's friend, Ben Jonson, in its favour, in the following lines inscribed opposite to the engraving of the portrait:—

'This figure, that thou here seest put,

It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;

Wherein the graver had a strife

With Nature, to out-doo the life.

O, could he but have drawne his wit

As well in brasse as he hath hit

His face, the print would then surpasse

All that was ever writ in brasse;

But since he cannot, reader, looke

Not on his picture, but his booke.'

These lines would indicate that the portrait of the face was represented with some degree of truth. It may be observed here that until within the last few years artists were less exact and minute in the delineation of the[Pg 269] head than the face; and the head appears unusually high for its breadth, and impresses you with the semblance of a form more like Scott than Byron, of Canova than Chantrey.

"The features of Droeshout's engraving bear a closer resemblance to the plaster cast than to the Stratford bust. The nose has the same flowing outline, well defined, prominent, yet finely chiselled, and the nostrils rather large. There is the same long upper lip, and a general correspondence with the mouth of the cast. The eye is large and round, and in life would be mild and lustrous. The hair is thin and not curled, and the head is high but comparatively narrow. There would be moderate secretiveness, less destructiveness, small constructiveness, and little acquisitiveness. There is an ample endowment of the higher sentiments. The imaginative and imitative faculties are represented as very large. Ideality, wonder, wit, imitation, benevolence, and veneration, comparison and causality, are all very large. The[Pg 270] perceptive region is scarcely sufficiently indicated for the powers of mind possessed by Shakespeare, in his vast and ready command of view over the range of natural objects so evident in his works. This may be the fault of the engraver. It is the opposite in this respect to the cast from the face. There is one feature in the portrait which harmonises with Milton's praise and Jonson's worship and Spenser's admiration,—his large benevolence, veneration and ideality, and his small destructiveness and acquisitiveness, leading to the control over his feelings and generous sympathy with others, manifested by his quiet manner and gentle nature. Men of strong passions like Jonson and Byron have very different heads to this portrait, which presents a great contrast both to the bust and the Chandos portrait" (*said to be painted by Burbage, a player contemporary with Shakespeare*). "The physical proportions of the Droeshout figure harmonise better

with a fine temperament[Pg 271] and an intellectual head than the Stratford bust with Shakespeare's mental activity."

Halliwell-Phillipps's
Outlines
of the Life
of Shakespeare.
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"The exact time at which the monument was erected in the church" (*Stratford-on-Avon*) "is unknown, but it is alluded to by Leonard Digges as being there in the year 1623. The bust must, therefore, have been submitted to the approval of the Halls, who could hardly have been satisfied with a mere fanciful image. There is, however, no doubt that it was an authentic representation of the great dramatist, but it has unfortunately been so tampered with in modern times that much of the absorbing interest with which it would otherwise have been surrounded has evaporated. It was originally painted in imitation of life, the face and hands of the usual flesh colour, the eyes a light hazel, and the hair and beard auburn. The realisation of the costume was similarly attempted by the use of scarlet for the doublet, black for the loose gown, and white for the collar and wristbands."

E. T. Craig's
Portraits of
Shakespeare.
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[Pg 272]"It only remains to examine the cast from the face of Shakespeare. The documentary statements published by Mr. Friswell tend to establish a claim to attention. It was left in the possession of Professor Owen by Dr. Becher, the enterprising botanist, who fell a victim to his zeal in the unfortunate Australian expedition under Burke. The cast, it appears, originally belonged to a German nobleman at the Court of James I., whose descendants kept it as an heirloom till the last of the race died, when his effects were sold. Mr. Friswell observes that 'the cast bears some resemblance to the more refined portraits of the poet. It is not unlike the ideal head of Roubillac, and bears a very great resemblance to a fine portrait of the poet in the possession of Mr. Challis.' It has some of the characteristics of Jansen's portrait. The mask has a mournful aspect, and sensitive persons are affected when they look at it.... There are indications visible ... of wrinkles and 'crow's[Pg 273] feet' at the corners of the eyes. It is utterly destitute of the jovial physiognomy of the Stratford bust and portrait. It is certainly the impress from one who was gifted with great

sensibility, great range of perceptive power, a ready memory, great facility of expression, varied power of enjoyment, and great depth of feeling. The year 1616, when Shakespeare died, is recorded on the back of the cast. Hairs of the moustache, eyelashes, and beard still adhere to the plaster, of a reddish brown or auburn colour, corresponding with several portraits and the Stratford bust.... The cast presents to view finely formed features, strongly marked, yet regular. The forehead is well developed in the region of the perceptive powers; but scarcely so high as the Droeshout, and the coronal region is much lower than in that of the Felton head. The sides of the head are well developed, and there is a large mass of brain in the front. The moustache is divided, and falls over the corners of the mouth, and the[Pg 274] beard, or imperial, is a full tuft on the chin, which, as well as the moustache, appears to be marked with a tool since taken. The face is a sharp oval, that of the bust is a blunt or round one. The chin is rather narrow and pointed, yet firm; that of the bust well rounded. The cheeks are thin and fallen; in those of the bust full, fat, and coarse, as if 'good digestion waited on appetite,' without thought, fancy, or feeling, troubling either. The mask has a moderate-sized upper lip, the bust a very large one, although Sir Walter Scott lost his wager in asserting that it was longer than his own. The lips of the cast are thin and well marked; those of the bust present a rude opening for the mouth. The nostrils are drawn up, and this feature is exaggerated in the bust. The nose of the cast is large, finely marked, aquiline, and delicately formed. That of the bust is short, mean, straight, and small. In their physiognomy and phrenology they are utterly different. The cast indicates the man of[Pg 275] thought, emotion, and suffering; the bust, of ease, enjoyment, and self-satisfaction. If the bust is to represent the living image of the dead poet, the answer is, death does not immediately alter the language once written on the ivory gate at the temple of thought. It has been said by John Bell that the Stratford bust was cut from a mask, but by a clumsy sculptor, who modified his work. A monument, erected as a memorial of Shakespeare, should therefore avoid the evident discrepancies that already exist, and perpetrate no repetition of forms inconsistent with nature, truth, and beauty."

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY
1798-1851

Anecdote Biography
of P.
B. Shelley.

"... At the time I am speaking of, Mrs. Shelley was twenty-four. Such a rare pedigree of genius was enough to interest me in her,[Pg 276] irrespective of her own merits as an authoress. The most striking feature in her face was her calm gray eyes; she was rather under the English standard of woman's height, very fair and light-haired, witty, social, and animated in the society of friends, though mournful in solitude."—1821.

The Cowden
Clarkes' *Recollections*
of Writers.

"Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley, with her well-shaped, golden-haired head, almost always a little bent and drooping; her marble-white shoulders and arms statuesquely visible in the perfectly plain black velvet dress, which the customs of that time allowed to be cut low, and which her own taste adopted; ... her thoughtful, earnest eyes; her short upper lip and intellectually curved mouth, with a certain close compressed and decisive expression while she listened, and a relaxation into fuller redness and mobility when speaking; her exquisitely formed, white, dimpled, small hands, with rosy[Pg 277] palms, and plumply commencing fingers, that tapered into tips as slender and delicate as those in a Vandyck portrait,—all remain palpably present to memory."—About 1824.

The Cornhill,
1875.

"Shelley's second love, who was five years his junior, is described as 'rather short, remarkably fair, and light-haired with brownish gray eyes, a great forehead, striking features, and a noticeable air of sedateness.' One writer has compared her with the classic bust of Clytie."

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
1792-1822

Stoddard's
Anecdote Biography
of Percy
Bysshe Shelley.

"As I felt in truth but a slight interest in the subject of his conversation, I had leisure to examine, and, I may add, admire the appearance of my very extraordinary guest. It was a sum[Pg 278] of many contradictions. His figure was slight and fragile, and yet

his bones and joints were large and strong. He was tall, but he stooped so much that he seemed of a low stature. His clothes were expensive, and made according to the most approved mode of the day; but they were tumbled, rumpled, unbrushed. His gestures were abrupt and sometimes violent, occasionally even awkward. His complexion was delicate and almost feminine, of the purest red and white; yet he was tanned and freckled by exposure to the sun, having passed the autumn, as he said, in shooting. His features, his whole face, and particularly his head, were, in fact, unusually small; yet the last *appeared* of a remarkable bulk, for his hair was long and bushy, and in fits of absence, and in the agonies (if I may use the word) of anxious thought, he often rubbed it fiercely with his hands, or passed his fingers quickly through his locks unconsciously, so that it was singularly wild and rough. In times[Pg 279] when it was the mode to imitate stage-coachmen as closely as possible in costume, and when the hair was invariably cropped, like that of our soldiers, this eccentricity was very striking. His features were not symmetrical (the mouth, perhaps, excepted), yet was the effect of the whole extremely powerful. They breathed an animation, a fire, an enthusiasm, a vivid and preternatural intelligence, that I never met with in any other countenance."—1810.

The Cowden
Clarke's *Recollections*
of Writers.

"Shelley's figure was a little above the middle height, slender, and of delicate construction, which appeared the rather from a lounging or waving manner in his gait, as though his frame was compounded barely of muscle and tendon; and that the power of walking was an achievement with him and not a natural habit. Yet I should suppose that he was not a valetudinarian, although that has been said of him on account of his spare and vegetable diet; for I have the remembrance of his[Pg 280] scampering and bounding over the gorse-bushes on Hampstead Heath late one night—now close upon us, and now shouting from the height like a wild school-boy. He was both an active and an enduring walker,—feats which do not accompany an ailing and feeble constitution. His face was round, flat, pale, with small features; mouth beautifully shaped; hair bright brown and wavy; and such a pair of eyes as are rarely in the human or any other head,—intensely blue, with a gentle and lambent expression, yet wonderfully alert and engrossing; nothing appeared to escape his knowledge."

Leigh Hunt's
Autobiography.

“Shelley, when he died, was in his thirtieth year. His figure was tall and slight, and his constitution consumptive. He was subject to violent spasmodic pains, which would sometimes force him to lie on the ground until they were over; but he had always a kind word to give to those about him when his pangs allowed him to speak. In this organisation,[Pg 281] as well as in some other respects, he resembled the German poet Schiller. Though well-turned, his shoulders were bent a little, owing to premature thought and trouble. The same causes had touched his hair with gray; and though his habits of temperance and exercise gave him a remarkable degree of strength, it is not supposed that he could have lived many years. He used to say that he had lived three times as long as the calendar gave out; which he would prove, between jest and earnest, by some remarks on Time,

‘That would have puzzled that stout Stagyrite.’

Like the Stagyrites, his voice was high and weak. His eyes were large and animated, with a dash of wildness in them; his face small, but well shaped, particularly the mouth and chin, the turn of which was very sensitive and graceful. His complexion was naturally fair and delicate, with a colour in the cheeks. He had brown hair, which, though tinged[Pg 282] with gray, surmounted his face well, being in considerable quantity, and tending to a curl. His side face, upon the whole, was deficient in strength, and his features would not have told well in a bust; but when fronting and looking at you attentively, his aspect had a certain seraphical character that would have suited a portrait of John the Baptist, or the angel whom Milton describes as holding a reed ‘tipt with fire.’”—1822.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN
1751-1816

Moore’s *Life of Sheridan*.

“It has been seen, by a letter of his sister already given, that, when young, he was generally accounted handsome; but in later years his eyes were the only testimonials of beauty which remained to him. It was, indeed, in the upper part of his face that the spirit of the man[Pg 283] chiefly reigned; the dominion of the world and the senses being rather strongly marked out in the lower. In his person, he was above the middle size, and his general make was, as I have already said, robust and well-proportioned. It is remarkable that his arms, though of powerful strength, were thin, and appeared by no means muscular. His hands were small and delicate; and the following couplet,

written on the cast of one of them, very livelily enumerates both its physical and moral qualities:—

‘Good at a fight, better at a Play,

God-like in giving, but—the Devil to pay!’”

Jerdan’s
Men I have
known.

“I have seen his large beautiful eyes speak sadly, even while his brilliant tongue was rehearsing the gayest sentiments and the finest wit.... What a portrait to pronounce of intellect is that by Sir Joshua! The head so fine, the expression so brilliant, and the lower part of the countenance, in the prime of life, without the sensuous encroachment of luxurious indulgence[Pg 284] upon later years. And how light-hearted the look.”

Gantter’s
Standard Poets of
Great Britain.

“Sheridan was above the middle size, and of a make robust and well-proportioned. In his youth, his family said, he had been handsome; but in his latter years he had nothing left to show for it but his eyes. ‘It was, indeed, in the upper part of his face,’ says Mr. Moore, ‘that the spirit of the man chiefly reigned; the dominion of the world and the senses being rather strongly marked out in the lower.’”

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY
1554-1587-8

Aubrey’s *Lives*
of Eminent
Persons.
*

“He was not only an excellent witt, but extremely beautiful; he much resembled his sister but his haire was not red, but a little inclining; viz., a darke amber colour. If I were[Pg 285] to find a fault in it, methinkes ’tis not masculine enough; yett he is a person of great courage.... My great-uncle Mr. T. Browne, remembered him, and sayd that he was wont to take his table-booke out of his pocket and write downe his notions

as they came into his head, when he was writing his *Arcadia* (which was never finished by him) as he was hunting on our pleasant plaines."

The Worthie Sir
Phillip Sidney,
Knight, his
Epitaph.

"A man made out of goodliest mould

As shape in ware were wrought,

Or Picture stoode in stampe of gold

To please each gazer's thought....

... His silent lookes sayd wisdome great

Did lodge in loftie brow:

His patient heart (in chollers heate)

Suppress all passion's throw.

... A portly presence passing fine

With beautie furnisht well,

Where vertues buds and grace divine

And daintie gifts did dwell."

The Edinburgh
Review, 1876.
*

"He was tall, shapely, and muscular, with large blue-gray eyes, a long aquiline nose, hair of a dark auburn tint, and full sensitive lips, the slightly[Pg 286] pensive expression of which was relieved by the decision of the jaw and chin."

HORACE SMITH
1779-1849

Leigh Hunt's
Autobiography.

“Horace was delicious.... A finer nature than Horace Smith’s, except in the single instance of Shelley, I never met with in man; nor even in that instance, all circumstances considered, have I a right to say that those who knew him as intimately as I did the other, would not have had the same reasons to love him.... The personal appearance of Horace Smith, like that of most of the individuals I have met with, was highly indicative of his character. His figure was good and manly, inclining to the robust; and his countenance extremely frank and cordial; sweet without weakness. I have been told he was irascible. If so, it[Pg 287] must have been no common offence that could have irritated him. He had not a jot of it in his appearance.”—1809.

SYDNEY SMITH
1771-1845

Duycknick’s
Memoir of
Sydney Smith.
*

“In person, Sydney Smith, as he has been described to us by those who knew him, was of the medium height; plethoric in habit though of great activity, of a dense brown complexion, a dark expressive eye, an open countenance, indicative of shrewdness, humour, and benevolence. There is a look too, in the English engraved portraits, of a thoughtful seriousness. His ‘sense, wit, and clumsiness,’ said a college companion, gave ‘the idea of an Athenian carter.’”

Reid’s *Life and*
Times of Sydney
Smith.
*

“Strangers entering St. Paul’s ... would have witnessed a burly but active-looking[Pg 288] man of sixty-three, of medium height, with a dark complexion and iron-gray hair, ascend the pulpit. When he stood up to preach, the shapely and well-carried head, the fine eyes, with their quick and penetrating glance, the expression of thorough benevolence which lit up the sensitive yet boldly chiselled features of the strong and intellectual face, would all contribute to heighten favourably the first general impression concerning a man whose every movement suggested intelligence, determination, and kindliness.”—1834.

Reid's *Life and Times of Sydney Smith*.

"Very distinctly do I recall the portly figure of Sydney Smith seated in his large yellow chariot—then a fashionable style of carriage—the full-sized head, the face indicative, as it now presents itself to my mind's eye, of mental power, of kindliness, and of the spirit of humour which possessed him.... This brilliant man was not brilliant only; there was in his character, as I conceive, an unusually[Pg 289] substantial basis of sound common sense."

TOBIAS SMOLLETT
1721-1771

Chalmers's *Life of Smollett*.

"The person of Smollett was stout and well-proportioned, his countenance engaging, his manner reserved, with a certain air of dignity that seemed to indicate that he was not unconscious of his own powers."

Anderson's *Poets of Great Britain*.
*

"In his person he was graceful and handsome, and in his air and manner there was a certain dignity which commanded respect. He possessed a loftiness and elevation of sentiment and character, without pride or haughtiness, for to his equals and inferiors he was ever polite, friendly and generous."

Chambers's *Eminent Scotsmen*.
*

"Smollett, who thus died prematurely in the fifty-first year of his age, and the bloom[Pg 290] of his mental faculties, was tall and handsome, with a most prepossessing carriage and address, and the marks and manners of a gentleman."

ROBERT SOUTHEY
1774-1843

Froude's *Carlyle*.

"A man towards well up in the fifties; hair gray, not yet hoary, well setting off his fine clear brown complexion, head and face both smallish, as indeed the figure was while seated; features finely cut; eyes, brow, mouth, good in their kind—expressive all, and even vehemently so, but betokening rather keenness than depth either of intellect or character; a serious, human, honest, but sharp, almost fierce-looking thin man, with very much of the militant in his aspect,—in the eyes especially was visible a mixture of sorrow and of anger, or of angry contempt,[Pg 291] as if his indignant fight with the world had not yet ended in victory, but also never should in defeat."—1835.

Southey's Life and Correspondence.

"The personal appearance and demeanour of Southey at this time (he was then aged sixty-two) was striking and peculiar. The only thing in art which brings him exactly before me is the monument by Lough, the sculptor. Like many other young men of the time who had read Byron with great admiration, I had imbibed rather a prejudice against the Laureate. This was weakened by his appearance, and wholly removed by his frank conversation. He was calm, mild, and gentlemanly; full of quiet, subdued humour; the reverse of ascetic in his manner, speech, or actions. His bearing was rather that of a scholar than that of a man much accustomed to mingle in general society.... In any place Southey would have been pointed at as 'a noticeable man.' He was tall, slight, and well made. His features were striking, and Byron truly[Pg 292] described him as 'with a hook nose and a hawk's eye.' Certainly his eyes were peculiar,—at once keen and mild. The brow was rather high than square, and the lines well defined. His hair was tinged with gray, but his head was as well covered with it—wavy and flowing—as it could have been in youth. He by no means looked his age; simple habits, pure thoughts, the quietude of a happy hearth, the friendship of the wise and good, the self-consciousness of acting for the best purposes, a separation from the personal irritations which men of letters are so often subjected to in the world; and health, which to that time had been so generally unbroken, had kept Southey from many of the cares of life, and their usually harrowing effect on mind and body. It is one of my most pleasant recollections that I enjoyed his friendship and regard."—1836.

S. C. Hall's
Memories of
Great Men.

"His height was five feet eleven inches. 'His forehead was very broad; his complexion rather dark; the eyebrows large and[Pg 293] arched; the eye well shaped, and dark brown; the mouth somewhat prominent, muscular, and very variously expressive; the chin small in proportion to the upper features of the face.' So writes his son, who adds that 'many thought him a handsomer man in age than in youth,' when his hair had become white, continuing abundant, and flowing in thick curls over his brow. Byron, who saw him but twice, once at Holland House, and once at one of Rogers' breakfasts, said, 'To have that man's head and shoulders, I would almost have written his sapphics.' That was in 1813, when Southey was in his prime."

EDMUND SPENSER
1553-1599

Grosart's *Life*
of Spenser.
*

"But of Edmund Spenser we have inestimable portraits. In the first rank must be[Pg 294] placed the miniature now in the inherited possession of Lord Fitzhardinge. It was a gift to the Lady Elizabeth Carey (Althorp Spenser), heiress of the Hunsdons, to whom it was left by Queen Elizabeth. It thus came with an indisputable lineage through the marriage of a Berkeley to Lady Elizabeth Carey. It is an exquisitely beautiful face. The brow is ample, the lips thin but mobile, the eyes a grayish-blue, the hair and beard a golden red (as of 'red monie' of the ballads) or goldenly chestnut, the nose with semi-transparent nostril and keen, the chin firm-poised, the expression refined and delicate. Altogether just such 'presentment,' of the Poet of Beauty *par excellence* as one would have imagined. To be placed next is the older face of the Dowager Countess of Chesterfield. It is identically the same face. But there is more roundness of chin, more fulness or ripening of the lips (especially the under), more restfulness. There is not the 'fragile' look of the[Pg 295] Fitzhardinge miniature. Hair and eyes agree with the miniature. The only other with a pedigree or sufficiently authenticated,—not mere 'copies,' such as those at Pembroke College,—is the very remarkable one that came down as a Devonshire heirloom to the Rev. S. Baring Gould, M.A., with a companion of Sir Walter Raleigh.

“Both have been in the family beyond record. This shows the poet in the full strength of manhood. It is a kind of three-quarter profile, and as one studies it, it seems to vindicate itself as ‘our sage and serious Spenser.’ Again, hair and eyes agree with the others. The Spaniard’s haughty face, for long engraved and re-engraved, ought never to have been engraved as Spenser. There is not a jot or tittle of evidence in its favour. It is an absolutely un-English, and palpably Spanish face, and an impossible portrait of our Poet.”

Payne Collier’s
Life of Spenser.
*

“Several portraits of Spenser are in existence; but it is difficult to settle the degree[Pg 296] of authenticity belonging to them. The late Mr. Rodd, of Newport Street, had a miniature of the poet in his possession in 1845, and perhaps afterwards, which corresponded pretty exactly with the ordinary representations, but what became of it is not known to us. The features were sharp and delicately formed, the nose long, and the mouth refined; but the lower part of the face projected, and the high forehead receded, while the eyes and eyebrows did not very harmoniously range.”

Aubrey’s *Lives of*
Eminent Men.
*

“Mr. Beeston sayes he was a little man, wore short haire, little band, and little cuffs.”

ARTHUR PENRHYN STANLEY
1815-1881

Harper’s
Magazine,
1881.

“He was at that time (and indeed always remained) very slight of his age, of rather[Pg 297] florid complexion, and with a singularly bright, quick, and yet often dreamy expression. He wore his hat rather on the back of his head, and walked with queer little short shuffling paces, rather on his heels, so that you could tell him by his gait at any distance—a singular contrast to the Doctor’s long shambling stride as they walked along at the side of Mrs. Arnold’s gray pony on half-holiday afternoons.”—
1834.

Macmillan,
1881.

“Il n’improvisait jamais; il lisait avec gravité, avec une force réelle qui étonnait, sortant d’un corps si fragile, mais avec une sorte de monotonie. L’action oratoire manquait de variété et d’abandon; c’était toujours la même note. Du reste, personne n’avait l’oreille moins musicale que le doyen.... D’une complexion délicate, de petite taille, son corps semblait n’être qu’un prétexte pour être, et pour retenir son esprit dans le monde visible.”

Temple Bar,
1881.

“Dean Stanley, like so many great men, possessed some strongly-marked personal[Pg 298] characteristics. If he was superintendent in some qualities there were some of which he was almost altogether destitute. He was utterly careless of personal appearance, and of external circumstances. Short and spare in figure, there was a beauty and a dignity about him that made his presence a perpetual pleasure. Those clear-cut features, the beautiful forehead, and the silvery head of hair, will remain photographed on the minds of this generation. When in the performance of any sacred or secular function, the more crowded his auditory, the more he was at ease. There must be many who can remember him as he used to stand at the lectern in the Abbey waiting to read the lesson in one of those crowded services in the nave, with the people clustered even round his feet, and yet unconsciously, as if in his own library, with the old familiar action, passing his hand across his face and ruffling up his head.”

[Pg 299]

SIR RICHARD STEELE
1671-1729

Thackeray’s
English
Humourists.

“Dennis, who ran a-muck at the literary society of his day, falls foul of poor Steele, and thus depicts him: ‘Sir John Edgar, of the County of —— in Ireland, is of a middle stature, broad shoulders, thick legs, a shape like the picture of somebody over a farmer’s chimney; a short chin, a short nose, a short forehead, a broad, flat face, and a dusky countenance. Yet with such a face and such a shape, he discovered at sixty

that he took himself for a beauty, and appeared to be more mortified at being told that he was ugly, than he was by any reflection made upon his honour or understanding.'"

Dublin University
Magazine, 1858.
*

"The interior of a coffee-house at Hyde Park Corner. Here in a room small and meanly furnished, sit two men who have[Pg 300] just arrived in a handsome carriage, which is at this moment driving from the door. One of these is Richard Savage; the other, who is fully twenty years his senior, is a *beau* and a *militaire*, being a Captain in Lord Lucas's regiment of Fusileer Guards. With a somewhat diminutive stature and a long dress sword; he has laced ruffles in abundance on his shirt sleeves and at his bosom, but not a shadow on his smiling face; with an air at that time styled 'genteel,' in these days called *distingué*. Around this gentleman's agreeable face and person there is a brilliant atmosphere of life and animation, for the three Celtic characteristics are his—vivacity, volatility, and versatility,—by turns the curse and advantage, the obstacle and ornament of his nation,—for he is an Irishman, and his name is Sir Richard Steele."

Swift's
Works.

"He has naturally a downcast foreboding aspect, which they of the country hereabouts call a hanging look, and an unseemly manner[Pg 301] of staring, with his mouth wide open, and under-lip propending, especially when any ways disturbed.... He takes a great deal of pains to persuade his neighbours that he has a very short face, and a little flat nose like a diminutive wart in the middle of his visage.... His eyes are large and prominent, too big of all conscience for the conceited narrowness of his phiz.... His back, though not very broad, is well turned, and will bear a great deal; I have seen him myself, more than once, carry a vast load of timber. His legs also are tolerably substantial, and can stride very wide upon occasion; but the best thing about him is a handsome pair of heels, which he takes especial pride to show, not only to his friends, but even to the very worst of his enemies."

[Pg 302]

LAURENCE STERNE
1713-1768

Sir Walter Scott's
Memoir of
Sterne.
*

"We are well acquainted with Sterne's features and personal appearance, to which he himself frequently alludes. He was tall and thin, with a hectic and consumptive appearance. His features, though capable of expressing with peculiar effect the sentimental emotions by which he was often affected, had also a shrewd, humorous, and sarcastic expression, proper to the wit and the satirist. His conversation was as animated as witty, but Johnson complained that it was marked by licence, better suiting the company of the Lord of Crazy Castle than of the great moralist."

Timbs's
Anecdote
Biography.
*

"In the same year (1761) that Reynolds exhibited the large equestrian portrait of Lord Ligonier, now in the National Gallery, he also exhibited the half-length of Sterne,[Pg 303] seated, and leaning on his hand. This portrait was painted for the Earl of Ossary, and afterwards came into the possession of Lord Holland, on whose death in 1840, it was purchased for 500 guineas by the Marquis of Lansdowne. 'This,' says Mrs. Jameson, 'is the most astonishing head for truth of character I ever beheld; I do not except Titian; the character, to be sure, is different: the subtle evanescent expression of satire round the lips, the shrewd significance in the eye, the earnest contemplative attitude,—all convey the strongest impression of the man, of his peculiar genius, and peculiar humour.'"

Memoir
of Sterne.
*

"Speaking of Sterne's physiognomy, Lavater says, 'In this face you discover the arch, satirical Sterne, the shrewd and exquisite observer, more limited in his object, but on that very account more profound,—you discover him, I say, in the eyes, in the space which separates them, in the nose and the mouth of this figure.'"

SIR JOHN SUCKLING
1608-1641

Aubrey's *Lives of Eminent Persons*.

"His picture, which is like him, before his poems, says that he was but twenty-eight years old when he dyed. He was of middle stature and slight strength, brisque round eie, reddish fac't, and red-nosed (ill liver), his head not very big, his hayre a kind of sand colour, his beard turn'd up naturally, so that he had a brisk and graceful looke. He died a batchelour."

W. C. Hazlitt's *Life of Sir John Suckling*.

"He was a man of grave deportment and very comely person: of a fair complexion, with good features and flaxen haire."

W. C. Hazlitt's *Life of Sir John Suckling*.

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"In person he was of a middle size, though but slightly made, with a winning and graceful carriage, and noble features."

[Pg 305]

JONATHAN SWIFT
1667-1745

Scott's *Life of Swift*.

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"Swift was in person tall, strong, and well made, of a dark complexion, but with blue eyes, black and bushy eyebrows, nose somewhat aquiline, and features which remarkably expressed the stern, haughty, and dauntless turn of his mind. He was never known to laugh, and his smiles are happily characterised by the well-known

lines of Shakespeare. Indeed the whole description of Cassius might be applied to Swift:

‘He reads much;

He is a great observer and he looks

Quite through the deeds of men; …

Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,

As if he mock’d himself and scorn’d his spirit

That could be moved to smile at any thing.’

… In youth he was reckoned handsome; Pope observed that though his face had an[Pg 306] expression of dulness, his eyes were very particular. They were as azure, he said, as the heavens, and had an unusual expression of acuteness. In old age the Dean’s countenance conveyed an expression which, though severe, was noble and impressive.”

Johnson’s *Life*
of Swift.
*

“The person of Swift had not many recommendations. He had a kind of muddy complexion which, though he washed himself with oriental scrupulosity, did not look clear. He had a countenance sour and severe, which he seldom softened by an appearance of gaiety. He stubbornly resisted any tendency to laughter.”

Thomas Roscoe’s
Life of
Dean Swift.
*

“Swift was of middle stature, inclining to tall, robust, and manly, with strongly-marked and regular features. He had a high forehead, a handsome nose, and large piercing blue eyes, which retained their lustre to the last. He had an extremely agreeable and expressive countenance, which, in the words of the unfortunate Vanessa, sometimes shone with a divine compassion,—at[Pg 307] others, the most engaging vivacity, indignation, fearful passion, and striking awe. His mouth was pleasing, he had a fine regular set of teeth, a round double chin with a small dimple; his complexion a light olive or pale brown. His voice was sharp, strong, high-toned; but he was a bad reader, especially of verses, and disliked music. His mien was erect, his head firm, and his

whole deportment commanding. There was a sternness and severity in his aspect which wit and gaiety did not entirely remove. When pleased he would smile, but never laughed aloud.... In his person he was neat and clean even to superstition, and appeared regularly dressed in his gown every morning, to receive the visits of his most familiar friends."

[Pg 308]

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY
1811-1863

Theodore
Taylor's
Thackeray.

"As for the man himself who has lectured us, he is a stout, healthful, broad-shouldered specimen of a man, with cropped grayish hair, and keenish gray eyes, peering very sharply through a pair of spectacles that have a very satiric focus. He seems to stand strongly on his own feet, as if he would not be easily blown about or upset, either by praise or pugilists; a man of good digestion, who takes the world easy, and scents all shams and humours (straightening them between his thumb and forefinger) as he would a pinch of snuff."—1852.

Stoddard's
Anecdote
Biography of
Thackeray.

"Good portraits of Thackeray are so common, and so many of your readers saw him in the lecture-room, that I need not describe his person. The misshaped nose, so broad at the bridge and so stubby at the[Pg 309] end, was the effect of an early accident. His near-sightedness, unless hereditary, must have had, I think, a similar origin, for no man had less the appearance of a student who had weakened his sight by application to books. In his gestures—especially in the act of bowing to a lady—there was a certain awkwardness, made more conspicuous by his tall, well-proportioned, and really commanding figure. His hair, at forty, was already gray, but abundant and massy; the cheeks had a ruddy tinge, and there was no sallowness in the complexion; the eyes, keen and kindly even when they bore a sarcastic expression, twinkled through and sometimes over the spectacles. What I should call the predominant expression of the countenance was courage—a readiness to face the world on its own

terms, without either bawling or whining, asking no favour, yielding, if at all, from magnanimity. I have seen but two faces on which this expression, coupled with that of high and intellectual[Pg 310] power, was equally striking—those of Daniel Webster and Thomas Carlyle. But the former had a saturnine gloom even in its animation, and the latter a variety and intensity of expression which was absent from Thackeray's."

Watts's
Great
Novelists.

"In stature he was tall and commanding, and he walked erect. With gray eyes—not over luminous—and a noble brow, his appearance was confident, but never conceited or aggressive. He wore long hair, and, but for a small whisker, shaved clean. His features, if anything, were immobile; the nose, which had been fractured in youth at the Charterhouse, was, like Milton's, 'a thoughtful one,' and the nostrils were full and wide, as are those of all men of genius, according to Balzac."

[Pg 311]

JAMES THOMSON
1700-1748

Johnson's *Life*
of Thomson.

"Thomson was of stature above the middle size, and 'more fat than bard beseems,' of a dull countenance, and a gross, unanimated, uninviting appearance; silent in mingled company, but cheerful among select friends, and by his friends very tenderly and warmly beloved."

Murdoch's
Thomson.

"Our author himself hints, somewhere in his works, that his exterior was not the most promising—his make being rather robust than graceful, though it is known that in his youth he had been thought handsome. His worst appearance was when you saw him walking alone in a thoughtful mood, but let a friend accost him and enter into conversation, he would instantly brighten into a most amiable aspect, his features no longer the same, and his eye darting a[Pg 312] peculiar animating fire. The case was much alike in company, where, if it was mixed or very numerous, he made but an indifferent figure, but with a few select friends he was open, sprightly, and

entertaining. His wit flowed freely but pertinently, and at due intervals leaving room for every one to contribute his share. Such was his extreme sensibility, so perfect the harmony of his organs with the sentiments of his mind, that his looks always announced and half expressed what he was about to say, and his voice corresponded exactly to the manner and degree in which he was affected."

Rossetti's
Memoir of
Thomson.
*

"Thomson was above the middle size, of a fat and bulky form, with a face that might almost be called dull, and an uninviting heavy look, although in his early youth he had even been counted handsome, and his eyes were expressive. He was mostly taciturn, save in the company of his familiar friends; with them he was[Pg 313] cheerful and pleasant, and he secured their attachment in an eminent degree."

ANTHONY TROLLOPE
1815-1882

A personal
friend.

"I remember a man hitting off a very good description of Trollope's manner, by remarking that 'he came in at the door like a frantic windmill.' The bell would peal, the knocker begin thundering, the door be burst open, and the next minute the house be filled by the big resonant voice inquiring who was at home. I should say he had naturally a sweet voice, which through eagerness he had spoilt by holloing. He was a big man, and the most noticeable thing about his dress was a black handkerchief which he wore tied *twice* round his neck. A trick of his was to put the end of a silk pocket-handkerchief in his mouth and to[Pg 314] keep gnawing at it—often biting it into holes in the excess of his energy; and a favourite attitude was to stand with his thumbs tucked into the armholes of his waistcoat. He was a full-coloured man, and joking and playful when at his ease. Unless with his intimates, he rarely laughed, but he had a funny way of putting things, and was usually voted good company."

A personal
friend.

“Trollope said his height was five feet ten, but most people would have thought him taller. He was a stout man, large of limb, and always held himself upright without effort. His manner was bluff, hearty, and genial, and he possessed to the full the great charm of giving his undivided attention to the matter in hand. He was always enthusiastic and energetic in whatever he did. He was of an eager disposition, and doing nothing was a pain to him. In early manhood he became bald; in his latter life his full and bushy beard naturally grew to be gray. He had thick eyebrows, and[Pg 315] his open nostrils gave a look of determination to his strong capable face. His eyes were grayish-blue, but he was rarely seen without spectacles, though of late years he used to take them off whenever he was reading. From a boy he had always been short-sighted.”

A personal
friend.

“Standing with his back to the fire, with his hands clasped behind him and his feet planted somewhat apart, the appearance of Anthony Trollope, as I recall him now, was that of a thorough Englishman in a thoroughly English attitude. He was then, perhaps, nearing sixty, and had far more the look of a country gentleman than of a man of letters. Tall, broad-shouldered, and dressed in a careless though not slovenly fashion, it seemed more fitting that he should break into a vivid description of the latest run with the hounds than launch into book-talk. Either subject, however, and for the matter of that I might add *any* subject, was attacked by him with equal energy. In[Pg 316] writing of the man, this, indeed, is the chief impression I recall—his energy, his thoroughness. While he talked to me, I and my interests might have been the only things for which he cared; and any passing topic of conversation was, for the moment, the one and absorbing topic in the world. Being short-sighted, he had a habit of peering through his glasses which contracted his brows and gave him the appearance of a perpetual frown, and, indeed, his expression when in repose was decidedly severe. This, however, vanished when he spoke. He talked well, and had generally a great deal to say; but his talk was disjointed, and he but rarely laughed. In manner he was brusque, and one of his most striking peculiarities was his voice, which was of an extraordinarily large compass.”—1873.

[Pg 317]

EDMUND WALLER
1605-1687

Aubrey's *Lives of Eminent Persons*.

"His intellectuals are very good yet; but he growes feeble. He is somewhat above a middle stature, thin body, not at all robust: fine thin skin, his face somewhat of an olivaster; his hayre frized, of a brownish colour, full eie, popping out and working; ovall faced, his forehead high and full of wrinkles. His head but small, braine very hott, and apt to be cholerique. *Quarto doctior, eo iracundior.*—Cic. He is somewhat magisteriall, and hath received a great mastership of the English language. He is of admirable elocution, and gracefull, and exceeding ready."—1680.

Life of Edmund Waller.

*

"Waller's person was handsome and graceful. That delicacy of soul which produces instinctive propriety, gave him an easy manner, which was[Pg 318] improved and finished by a polite education, and by a familiar intercourse with the Great. The symmetry of his features was dignified with a manly aspect, and his eye was animated with sentiment and poetry. His elocution, like his verse, was musical and flowing. In the senate, indeed, it often assumed a vigorous and majestick tone, which, it must be owned, is not a leading characteristick of his numbers.... His conversation was chatised by politeness, enriched by learning, and brightened by wit."

An account of the life of Mr. Edmund Waller.

*

"'Twas the politeness of his manners, as well as the excellence of his genius, which endeared him to these foreign wits. All the world knows Mr. St. Evremond was polite almost to a fault, for ev'ry virtue has its opposite vice, and this has affectation; and yet writing to my Lord St. Albans he says, 'Mr. Waller vous garde une conversation délicieuse, je ne suis pas si vain de vous *parleur* de mienne.'... We shall close what we intend to say of[Pg 319] his manners and personal endowments with the Earl of Clarendon's short character of him: 'There was of the House of Commons one Mr. Waller, and a gentleman of very good fortune and estate, and of admirable parts and faculty of wit, and of an intimate conversation with those who had that reputation.' This, and what has been taken out of his lordship's history which has respect to Mr. Waller's qualities, confirm the judgment we endeavour to form of him that he was one

of the most polite, the most gallant, and the most witty men of his time, and he supported that character above half a century."

HORACE WALPOLE
1717-1797

Walpoliana.

"The person of Horace Walpole was short and slender, but compact and neatly formed. When viewed from behind he had[Pg 320] somewhat of a boyish appearance, owing to the form of his person, and the simplicity of his dress. His features may be seen in many portraits; but none can express the placid goodness of his eyes, which would often sparkle with sudden rays of wit, or dart forth flashes of the most keen and intuitive intelligence. His laugh was forced and uncouth, and even his smile not the most pleasing. His walk was enfeebled by the gout; which, if the editor's memory do not deceive, he mentioned he had been tormented with since the age of twenty-five.... This painful complaint not only affected his feet, but attacked his hands to such a degree that his fingers were always swelled and deformed.... His engaging manners and gentle endearing affability to his friends exceed all praise."

Cunningham's
Letters of
Walpole.
*

"The person of Horace Walpole[6] was short and slender, but compact, and neatly[Pg 321] formed. When viewed from behind he had, from the simplicity of his dress, somewhat of a boyish appearance: fifty years ago, he says, 'Mr. Winnington told me I ran along like a pewet.' His forehead was high and pale. His eyes remarkably bright and penetrating. His laugh was forced and uncouth, and his smile not the most pleasing. His walk, for more than half his life, was enfeebled by the gout, which not only affected his feet, but attacked his hands. Latterly his fingers were swelled and deformed, having, as he would say, more chalk-stones than joints in them, and adding with a smile, that he must set up an inn, for he could chalk a score with more ease and rapidity than any man in England.... His entrance into a room was in that style of affected delicacy which fashion had made almost natural—*chapeau bras* between his hands as if he wished to compress it, or under his arm, knees bent, and feet on tiptoe, as if afraid of a wet floor. His summer dress of[Pg 322] ceremony was usually a lavender suit, the waistcoat embroidered with a little silver, or of white silk worked in

the tambour, partridge silk stockings, gold buckles, ruffles, and lace frills. In winter he wore powder. He disliked hats, and in his grounds at Strawberry would even in winter walk without one. The same antipathy, Cole tells us, extended to a greatcoat."

Hawkins's
Memoirs.

"His figure was not merely tall, but more properly long and slender to excess; his complexion, and particularly his hands, of a most unhealthy paleness. His eyes were remarkably bright and penetrating, very dark and lively: his voice was not strong, but his tones were exceedingly pleasant, and if I may say so, highly gentlemanly. I do not remember his common gait; he always entered a room in that style of affected delicacy which fashion had then made almost natural—*chapeau bras* between his hands, as if he wished to compress it, or under his arm, knees bent, and feet on tiptoe, as if afraid of[Pg 323] a wet floor. His dress in visiting was most usually, in summer, when I most saw him, a lavender suit, the waistcoat embroidered with a little silver, or of white silk worked in the tambour, partridge silk stockings, and gold buckles, ruffles and frill generally lace. I remember, when a child, thinking him very much under-dressed, if at any time, except in mourning, he wore hemmed cambric. In summer, no powder, but his wig combed straight, and showing his very smooth, pale forehead, and queued behind; in winter, powder."

IZAAC WALTON
1593-1683

Zouch's *Memoir*
of Izaac Walton.
*

"The features of the countenance often enable us to form a judgment, not very fallible, of the disposition of the mind. In few portraits can this discovery be more successfully pursued than in that of[Pg 324] Izaac Walton. Lavater, the acute master of physiognomy, would, I think, instantly acknowledge in it the decisive traits of the original,—mild complacency, forbearance, mature consideration, calm activity, peace, sound understanding, power of thought, discerning attention, and secretly active friendship. Happy in his unblemished integrity, happy in the approbation and esteem of others, he inwraps himself in his own virtue. The exaltation of a good conscience eminently shines forth in this venerable person—

‘Candida semper
Gaudia, et in vultu curarum ignara voluptas.’”

JOHN WILSON
1785-1854

de Quincey’s
Life and
writings.

“William Wordsworth it was who … did me the favour of making me known to John Wilson…. A man in a sailor’s dress,[Pg 325] manifestly in robust health, *fervidus juventa*, and wearing upon his countenance a powerful expression of ardour and animated intelligence, mixed with much good nature. ‘Mr. Wilson of Elleray’—delivered as the formula of introduction, in the deep tones of Mr. Wordsworth—at once banished the momentary surprise I felt on finding a stranger where I had expected nobody, and substituted a surprise of another kind; and there was no wonder in his being at Allan Bank, Elleray standing within nine miles; but (as usually happens in such cases) I felt a shock of surprise on seeing a person so little corresponding to the one I had at first half-consciously prefigured. Figure to yourself a tall man about six feet high, within half an inch or so, built with tolerable appearance of strength; but at the date of my description (that is, in the very spring-tide and bloom of youth) wearing, for the predominant character of his person, lightness and agility or (in our[Pg 326] Westmoreland phrase) *lishness*, he seemed framed with an express view to gymnastic exercises of every sort. Ask in one of your public libraries for that little quarto edition of the ‘*Rhetorical Works of Cicero*’ … and you will there see … a reduced whole-length of Cicero from the antique, which in the mouth and chin, and indeed generally, if I do not greatly forget, will give you a lively representation of the contour and expression of Professor Wilson’s face. Of all this array of personal features, however, I then saw nothing at all, my attention being altogether occupied with Mr. Wilson’s conversation and demeanour, which were in the highest degree agreeable; the points which chiefly struck me, being the humility and gravity with which he spoke of himself, his large expansion of heart, and a certain air of noble frankness which overspread everything he said; he seemed to have an intense enjoyment of life; indeed, being young, rich, healthy, and full of intellectual[Pg 327] activity, it could not be very wonderful that he should feel happy and pleased with himself and others; but it was something unusual to find that so rare an assemblage

of endowments had communicated no tinge of arrogance to his manner, or at all disturbed the general temperance of his mind."—1808.

Harriet Martineau's
Biographical
Sketches.

"If the marvel of his eloquence is not lessened, it is at least accounted for to those who have seen him,—or even his portrait. Such a presence is rarely seen; and more than one person has said that he reminded them of the first man, Adam, so full was that large frame of vitality, force, and sentience. His tread seemed almost to shake the streets, his eye almost saw through stone walls, and as for his voice, there was no heart which could stand before it. He swept away all hearts, whithersoever he would. No less striking was it to see him in a mood of repose, as when he steered the old packet-boat that used to pass between Bowness and Ambleside,[Pg 328] before the steamers were put upon the Lake. Sitting motionless with his hand upon the rudder, in the presence of journey-men and market-women, with his eyes apparently looking beyond everything into nothing, and his mouth closed under his beard, as if he meant never to speak again, he was quite as impressive and immortal an image as he could have been to the students of his class or the comrades of his jovial hours."

Forster's *Life*
of Dickens.

"Walking up and down the hall of the courts of law (which was full of advocates, writers to the signet, clerks, and idlers), was a tall, burly, handsome man of eight and fifty, with a gait like O'Connell's, the bluest eye you can imagine, and long hair—longer than mine—falling down in a wild way under the broad brim of his hat. He had on a surtout coat, a blue checked shirt; the collar standing up, and kept in its place with a wisp of black neckerchief; no waistcoat; and a large pocket-handkerchief[Pg 329] thrust into his breast, which was all broad and open. At his heels followed a wiry, sharp-eyed, shaggy devil of a terrier, dogging his steps as he went slashing up and down, now with one man beside him, now with another, and now quite alone, but always at a fast, rolling pace, with his head in the air, and his eyes as wide open as he could get them. I guessed it was Wilson; and it was. A bright, clear-complexioned, mountain-looking fellow, he looks as though he had just come down from the Highlands and had never in his life taken pen in hand. But he has had an attack of paralysis in his right arm within this month. He winced when I shook hands with him, and once or twice when we were walking up and down slipped as if he had stumbled on a piece of orange-peel. He is a great fellow to look at, and to talk to; and, if you

could divest your mind of the actual Scott, is just the figure you would put in his place."—1841.

[Pg 330]

ELLEN WOOD
(Mrs. Henry Wood)
1814-1887

The Argosy,
1887.

"The face was a pure oval of the most refined description; that perfection of form that is so rarely seen. A small, straight, very delicate and refined nose; teeth of dazzling whiteness, entire to the day of her death; a perfect mouth, revealing at once the sensitiveness and tender sympathy of her nature, and the steadfastness of her disposition. Her eyes were unusually large, dark, and flashing, with a penetrating gaze that seemed to read your inmost thoughts. One felt that everything before her had to be outspoken; for if you uttered only half your thoughts, she would certainly divine the rest.... The head was well set upon the shoulders; a head perfect in form, small except where the intellectual faculties were[Pg 331] developed. Her complexion was dazzling, the most lovely bloom at all times contrasting with the brilliant whiteness of her skin. In hours of animation I have watched the delicate flush come and go a hundred times in as many minutes across her wonderful countenance; and, to record the simile once used by a friend in speaking to me of this peculiar beauty, 'chasing each other like the rosy clouds of sunrise sweeping across a summer sky.' She had a very keen sense of wit and humour. This strange beauty remained with her to the end. Even in hours of illness and suffering it never forsook her. Her face never lost its look of youth. It was absolutely without line or wrinkle or any mark or sign of age. She kept to the last the complexion and freshness of a young girl; that strange radiancy which seemed the reflection of some unseen glory. This was so great that to the last we were unable to realise that death could come to her."

[Pg 332]

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
1770-1850

Leigh Hunt's
Autobiography.

"Mr. Wordsworth ... had a dignified manner, with a deep and roughish but not unpleasing voice, and an exalted mode of speaking. He had a habit of keeping his left hand in the bosom of his waistcoat; and in this attitude, except when he turned round to take one of the subjects of his criticism from the shelves (for his contemporaries were there also), he sat dealing forth his eloquent but hardly catholic judgments.... Walter Scott said that the eyes of Burns were the finest he ever saw. I cannot say the same of Mr. Wordsworth; that is, not in the sense of the beautiful, or even of the profound. But certainly I never beheld eyes which looked so inspired and supernatural. They were like fires half burning, half smouldering with a sort[Pg 333] of acrid fixture of regard, and seated at the further end of two caverns. One might imagine Ezekiel or Isaiah to have had such eyes. The finest eyes, in every sense of the word, which I have ever seen in a man's head (and I have seen many fine ones), are those of Thomas Carlyle."—1815.

S. C. Hall's
Memories of
Great Men.

"His features were large, and not suddenly expressive; they conveyed little idea of the 'poetic fire' usually associated with brilliant imagination. His eyes were mild and up-looking, his mouth coarse rather than refined, his forehead high rather than broad; but every action seemed considerate, and every look self-possessed, while his voice, low in tone, had that persuasive eloquence which invariably 'moves men.'"—1832.

Carlyle's
Reminiscences.

"... He (Wordsworth) talked well in his way; with veracity, easy brevity, and force, as a wise tradesman would of his tools and workshop,—and as no unwise one could. His voice was[Pg 334] good, frank, and sonorous, though practically clear, distinct, and forcible, rather than melodious; the tone of him business-like, sedately confident; no discourtesy, yet no anxiety about being courteous. A fine wholesome rusticity, fresh as his mountain breezes, sat well on the stalwart veteran, and on all he said and did. You would have said he was a usually taciturn man; glad to unlock himself to audience sympathetic and intelligent when such offered itself. His face bore marks of much, not always peaceful, meditation; the look of it not bland or benevolent so much as close, impregnable, and hard: a man *multa tacere loquive paratus*, in a world where he had experienced no lack of contradictions as he strode along! The eyes were not very

brilliant, but they had a quiet clearness; there was enough of brow, and well-shaped; rather too much of cheek ('horse face' I have heard satirists say); face of squarish shape, and decidedly longish, as I think the head itself[Pg 335] was (its 'length' going horizontal); he was large-boned, lean, but still firm-knit, tall, and strong-looking when he stood, a right good old steel-gray figure, with rustic simplicity and dignity about him, and a vivacious strength looking through him which might have suited one of those old steel-gray markgrafs whom Henry the Fowler set up to ward the 'marches' and do battle with the heathen in a stalwart and judicious manner."

SIR HENRY WOTTON
1568-1639

Reliquiæ
Wottoninæ

"He returned out of *Italy* in *England* about the thirtieth year of his age, being then noted by many, both for his person and comportment; for indeed he was of a choice shape, tall of stature, and of a most persuasive behaviour; which was so mixed with sweet Discourse and Civilities, as gained him much love from all Persons with whom he entered into an[Pg 336] acquaintance. And whereas he was noted in his Youth to have a sharp Wit, and apt to jest; that, by Time, Travel, and Conversation, was so polished, and made so useful, that his company seemed to be one of the delights of mankind."—1598.

M. E. W.
*

"An eminently lovable face, albeit there is something in the gravely-set mouth which recalls the old Elizabethan expression '*My Dearest Dread*.' The love of those about him for this tender-worded amourous poet, this gentle student, this courtly gentleman, must have struggled hard for the mastery with that reverence which they must have felt for the learned author, the friend of kings, the diplomatist. Something of all this, I fancy, shows in the face and figure of the man as Jansen has portrayed him in the picture now hanging in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The high square brow from which the hair has been brushed up and back in short silky waves, the strongly-marked eyebrows, the long straight[Pg 337] nose,—they all speak of good brains and an iron will; while there is a suspicion of daintiness in the close-cropped whiskers, trimly-pointed beard, and flowing moustache. The eyes are his finest feature, large and oval, with the eyelid drooping somewhat at the outer edge, which gives him a look

of sadness. So far from bending forward under the orthodox student's-stoop, Sir Henry is tall, straight, and broad-shouldered, for he comes of a fighting race, and there is more of the soldier than of the scholar in his appearance. The hands are strong, nervous, and well shaped; the dress that of a sober-minded gentleman. That word indeed sums up his personal appearance as fully as it does his character: the portrait of Sir Henry Wotton is emphatically that of a gentleman."

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FOOTNOTES:

[1]All wool.

[2]

"Prively a *penner* gan he borwe,
And in a lettre wrote he all his sorwe!"

Marchant's Tale, l. 9753.

[3]A puppet.

[4]Shy, reserved.

[5]*Q. Quot feet I am high? Resp. of middle stature.*

[6]Drawn from Pinkerton, Miss Hawkins, Coles MSS. and his letters.

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