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AC to the Keeper of Manuscripts, British Museum; 16 May 1929; ALS, 2 pp.

16 May, 1929

30 NEW BATTLE TERRACE
EDINBURGH

The Keepers of the MSS. At the British Museum

Dear Sir,

I am sending by registered Post tomorrow a small MS. of Thomas Carlyle's, which he calls “A Tour to the Netherlands,” for the acceptance of the trustees should they approve of the gift.

As I published it in the “Cornhill” for 1922, prefixing a brief description of it, I need not say more of it here. It is a good specimen of Carlyle's writing and extends to twenty-five foolscap pages closely written in his characteristic hand.

This little gift, is intended as a small acknowledgment of my uncle's gratitude to the British Museum for its invaluable services and conveniences it offered him for many years.

Kindly acknowledge receipt

Yours faithf^y

Alex.^r Carlyle.

P.S.

If for any reason the Trustees should not care to accept this MS. please return it to me at the address given above.



TC's Endorsement: Written on the clipped verso of a letter to him from his niece Mary Carlyle Aitken.

{Notes of a 3-days Tour to the
{Netherlands, Aug^t 1842

(written then,—one page sheet of it read now 9 Aug^t 1866!—was in Her box)



The Shortest Tour on Record¹

On Friday, 5th August, 1842, the Hon. Stephen Spring Rice, Commissioner of the Board of Customs, sent me by post an intimation that he meant to indulge himself in a little cruise to Ostend, in one of the Revenue Cutters, at his disposal for that and other purposes; that he meant to set out from the Custom-House on the morrow not later than half past twelve o'clock; and finally that he claimed my quasi-promise, given him some time before, to take part in the adventure. My Wife urging me, my dreary unfeasibilities of Business No-Business (things which must and shall be done, and which cannot, as it were, be done) freely, alas too freely, permitting me,— I resolved to comply.

¹ The editorial conventions for this transcription have been adopted in order to present Carlyle's manuscript as accurately as possible with a minimum of typographical intervention. Underlined, struck-through words, ampersands, and superscript abbreviations have been retained, and dashes have been regularized to em dashes. A series of three question marks (???) denotes illegible excisions, and excisions such as punctuation marks that are difficult to notice with strike-through font are additionally marked with angle brackets (<>).

This precisely on the Friday following (19 August) is the rapid reminiscence of our voyage, committed to paper,—probably soon after committed to fire!

Chelsea Steam brought me to the Custom-House; the Blackwall Railway, in a morning decidedly growing wet, brought us all, Spring Rice namely, and his younger brother Charles, on board of the Margate Steamer, between one and two o'clock. The rain by this time fell in copious floods, the Steamer, a long, narrow, swift-sailing ship, was crowded from stem to stern; lucky he who could get well planted under the awning, with sitting-room or even with standing-room; for elsewhere there was no continuing: I never tried the cabin at all. The people on board seemed "mostly merchants, Mr Carlyle," commercial, many of them opulent-looking City people: going down, as I fancied, to pass the Sunday with their wives now in bathing-quarters about the Thames mouth. We had to put up with one another: silent, perhaps sulky, but outwardly all civil;—the English have decidedly acquired the art of living together without afflicting one another, or with the minimum of affliction. Towards four it ceased raining. But at any rate, we had the resource of a Steward on board; a swift, assiduous, elf-looking little man; close-shaved, trim; with grey, small, anxious, knavish-looking eyes; in short spencer and cap; alive to the fingers' ends; an Ubiquity of a man: sandwiches, biscuits, with soda-water sherry and baser liquids, this herokin plentifully dispensed,—at a rather elevated price, as I considered. We had the shores of the River, not always of mud;—or of mud, as at Purfleet, elevated into striking figure. Men went in front (abaft,² do they call it?), and smoked cigars. No working man, as I think, was on board; but many sundry persons, in the front part, who fled to brandy-and-water after lunch, and one or two who got quite swolⁿ—and red-faced thereby: very ugly to behold. A Mr. Warre and his wife,³ recognised Stephen Sp. Rice, and spoke with him; the wife said to be "an admirer of your writings," laid hold of me to talk: small-eyed, large-bodied,

² AC changes to "*Fore*."

³ AC identifies as "Mr. W——." John Ashley Warre (1787–1860), M.P. for Hastings (1832–34), would come out of retirement to run in 1847, but was defeated. He was elected as a liberal for Ripon in 1857 and served until his death in November 1860.

intelligent, fat and five-and-forty; all for “Christian benevolence,” “charms of Nature” &c: Warre himself, an Ex M.P., had that air of gentlemanhood which you recognise without much reverence, yet rather prefer ~~the~~ to be beside, inasmuch as at least it will not hurt your feelings or needlessly provoke you: one knows these men by their air, by their scrupulously clean nails, by their show of intelligence which is as often a counterfeit as otherwise. This Lady and her Warre were a kind of resource occasionally. They (the Spring Rices) also found a certain “Chapman a Barrister,”⁴ a man in dirty shirt, of clipped enunciation, kind of hamstrung intellect,—not of much significance. Black the Bookseller likewise turned up; stepped forward unexpectedly to light his cigar at mine. Of the scenery, river shores, plays of light and muddy murk, above and below, I shall say nothing whatever. Father Thames, the oozy scoundrel, now dirtier by all the dirt of world-wide traffic, is known, and what in a stagnant damp afternoon he between Gravesend and the North Foreland can bring forth to view.

At Hearne Bay,⁵ greatly to our relief, some four-fifths of our cargo disembogued themselves.⁶ A huge high pier of wood, which seemed to extend on a perfect level almost half a mile to the very Town of Herne Bay,—lowered down upon us a long race-trough of wood, by the side of which at due distances some four men stationing themselves (to on the deck of the ship, on the paddle-boxes, on projections of the pier), the immense mound of “Hearne Bay luggage” was piecemeal projected upwards, each man receiving it deftly, just as the share given by the man below was spent, and again anew, sharing it,⁷ till it reached the pier and was clapt into vans, omnibuses or what else they had,—without one mistake, in the race-trough or elsewhere, that I noticed. We Margaters stood idle the while. All along the wooden pier we could see our late cargo flowing in hungry streams; towards some kind of eating-places, hôtels, lodgings, or what they might try with an eye, evidently, to some speedy

⁴ Unidentified; AC identifies as “C——.”

⁵ AC changes “Hearne” to “Herne” throughout the narrative.

⁶ Carlyle uses the phrase in *The French Revolution*: “Paris disembogues itself once more, to witness, ‘with grim looks,’ the *Séance Royale*” (1.5.2). AC changes to “disembarked.”

⁷ AC transcribes as “shove” and “shoving.”

repast. Hearne Bay town seemed to me the mournfullest spot I had ever on this Earth or its shores beheld. A bare, bluish, not so much green as livid-coloured coast, with flat shallow shore, which at low-water must become expanses of muddy sand: this in itself one could have tolerated, nay with its poor fisher-huts in the loop of it coming down for humble shelter there, one might have loved it: but this with the fisher-huts all swept away, with nothing but a block of London Gin-palaces and more ginger-bread Cockneyism in the loop of it,—alas. I for one felt that I had rather live in a high garret in St. Giles's than there. And yet why detest it? No, I do not detest it; I pity it, and if you like love it; for men too live there, and make the most they can of this scanty planet of ours! Towards six o'clock we were passing the Reculvers, two conspicuous elevations, old church towers, I think,⁸ which stand at the southern town promontory of Hearne Bay, where the land turns round to Margate: here Spring Rice began anxiously to look out for his "Vigilant" Revenue Cutter, and announced to me gladly that he discerned it "all night." They too on the outlook discerned us; and at the moment when the Steamer reached her moorings, a boat reached her; a long, swift, Royal-navy kind of boat; into which we and our luggage, rapidly let down, shot away straight and swift, and leaving only a salute for Mrs Warre who had come to the ship's side for us, were out of the Margate Steamer forever and a day (one hopes)! I lighted a cigar; looked at our boat's crew, six stalwart, clean-washed, silent men, in little turn-up strawhats covered with tarpaulin or black waxcloth and "Vigilant" printed on each, gilt-lettered on the brow of each,—these were they; and the Vigilant herself< > rocked at small distance on the mirror sea, a trim white-sailed ship, ready to receive us

The cutter Vigilant, which rocked here upon the waters, is a smart trim little ship of some 250 tons, rigged, fitted[,] kept, and navigated in the highest style of English sea-craft, made every way for sailing fast, that she may catch smugglers; which function, we were informed, had for the last year, such was the prowess of her, and the terror of her inspired by her, had reduced itself almost entirely to overawing smugglers, and

⁸ TC refers to the twin towers of St. Mary's Church in the village of Reculver, founded by the Romans in the second century and later a seat of Anglo-Saxon kings. AC notes the allusion to George Keats's *Sketches from Nature* (1779).

frightening them from work on those shores.⁹ Outside and inside, in furniture, equipment, action, and look, she seemed a model; clean all as a lady's work-box; seaworthy, workworthy at in all points whatever. Her jib sail, of extraordinary magnitude, a very field of canvas, was the main thing that struck you in her rigging. We understood it was made with thin pliable cloth, so that in all degrees of wind[,] even the highest degree, it might be able to bag itself, (where coarser sails would only flap), and make itself available for motion. The crew consisted of some 19; all picked men; ~~the chief, as we learned afterwards.~~ A Captain in a blue laced coat, in blue laced cap and white trousers, an honest lieutenant in similar trousers and blue spencer with landsman's hat, stood waiting at the gunwale to receive us in due form. The Captain, a weather-tanned but healthy firm little figure of five-and-forty, instantly struck you by his air of goodnatured energy, simplicity, intelligence and ~~competent~~ ~~aspect~~ civility; a massive closed mouth, spontaneously not spasmodically closed, full of valour and benevolence, a pair of ~~further mournful~~ large, sternly observant, yet but affectionate almost mournful eyes, contributed to form a true captain face; to which the firm broad figure and ~~studiously~~ ~~studiously~~ simple air carriage gave the best.¹⁰ To us that is to "the Hon. Commissioner," on whom indeed his best interests depended, his deportment was studiously courteous,—which indeed his natural disposition was. By this worthy son of the sea we were instructed in various small matters, names of church-steeple visible from his deck, &c[,] till dinner was announced, and the remains of my cigar not yet finished went over into the sea.

Of the dinner I recollect nothing except that it in addition to abundant elegant-provisions of the solid kind, it almost superabounded in champagnes[,] in hocks, clarets, and had altogether a very sparkling foamy character; to which the loose-flowing rather bantering sort of talk sufficiently corresponded. Half past nine being arrived, the "boat alongside," according to order, announced itself as ready; and we all shortly after leapt¹¹

⁹ Froude omits the last half of this sentence, after "smugglers"; see *Life* 1: ???

¹⁰ AC interpolates "best impression"; but in the manuscript, TC ends the sentence with "best."

¹¹ AC transcribes as "stept."

in for a short voyage of recreation to Margate. Night had sunk deeply down; innumerable bright stars were glancing, ~~the sea break~~ the sea meek¹² and windless ~~nipped~~ heaved and muttered, as if in sleep; Margate lay at a little distance, visible only as two considerable rows or one long jointed row of gas lamps, the sheen of which faintly extended itself over the water beyond the one great red lamp, that lay on "Danger-point," beyond the end of their long wooden pier. Our sailors, at some growl from their boatswain, simultaneously flapped their oars into the water, and struck away, the water at every stroke flashing in broad phosphorescence, as in large sheets of beautiful yellow-green flame; a phenomenon I had not noticed before in any such completeness. Flashing and flaming in this way, our boat in few minutes struck the shore, to which we successively leapt, ordering the crew to be there in waiting for us "at half-past 11."

Margate, light enough with gas from lamps and shops, seemed still to be full of life; one narrow winding, but trim smart street was especially populous; luminous with fancy shops, with anomalous, very deep and brilliant toy¹³ establishments, into which when you entered you found them ~~superintended plentifully by shewy young women~~ to consist mainly of [~~ship~~]-boxes "wheels of fortune" and wares to form the provender of these, plentifully superintended by shewy not openly immodest young women; and ~~a sprinklings~~ of dic-tables [*sic*], ~~with~~ for raffles, with a graver sort of wares,—these latter under the charge of Macassar-oil young men. To me the sooner we got out of them it was the welcomer. Our Captain, acting as cicerone, next took us to a Ball-room, or public "Assembly-Room" so called, where the first step was to pay a shilling each ~~at the door~~. Aloft on the staircase. Aloft thereupon the open door disclosed to you a kind of dim-green tarnished orchestra in rails, with various fiddlers and fluters, perched against the wall; right in front of which extended what I thought a rather sparse and languid kind of quadrille dance over more than half of a large floor; the other company sitting, likewise somewhat sparse, on a ~~wid~~ tier of covered benches or perhaps two tiers all round the same. A middle-aged or elderly man, with bald crown and the rest

¹² AC transcribes as "sleek."

¹³ Difficult word; AC transcribes as "toy."

of his hair tortured out into some look of profusion, in clear buttons and full dress, with an abominable smirk on the face of him, welcomed us as master of ceremonies; he was, said of our Captⁿ an anicient lietenant [*sic*] of the navy. My pity for him was considerable, my aversion ~~almost~~ still more so. The company seemed to consist, as far as I could judge, of the daughters of shopkeepers, some of them pretty women, some of them still children; these, and here and there a matron or matron and patron to guarantee them, formed one section of the population; then about a due allowance of young men, perhaps London clerks, perhaps Margate shopmen from the obscurer streets, perhaps members of the swell mob; all of them had a kind of copper-captain aspect to me; and some of ~~them~~, after dancing, spoke very close ~~indeed~~ into the ladies' bonnets, very close indeed, ~~under my own eye, not without an audible~~ as I could well enough listen! The Ex-lieutenant master of ceremonies invited ~~Spring-Rice~~ us to dance, with which the Hon. Commissioner ~~for one~~ complying was introduced to a partner, a rather pretty, and very timid-looking girl, in company with whom a dance and apparently very little else was ~~thing~~ straightway thereupon executed by the said Hon. Commissioner, who declared himself satisfied with the same. We next listened to some piece of music, perhaps to some attempt at song; and then taking a check-ticket for liberty to reenter, sallied forth into various deserted streets, very clear and cool;—the younger Spring Rice (“Charles” ~~as we called~~) had lost us in some of the Raffle establishments, and we were but three for the time. Bending back, after a while, to our Assembly-room so-called, we found the whole much reduced ~~to a most silent~~ in number, and now just about dissolving itself, in bassoon music and ~~peals of~~ tweedledeeing, which gradually slid into Auld Robin Gray¹⁴ sung badly by a very ill-looking woman solo, whereupon we all applauded, and went each his way. How comes it, I asked myself, that this same Robin Gray was never yet sung otherwise than badly in my hearing, never yet but with more or less of affliction to me? Is the Song itself but a kind of failure, at bottom, [~~illegible~~] if one saw into it,

¹⁴ “Auld Robin Gray (1772), a popular sentimental Scots ballad composed by Lady Anne Barnard, b. Lindsay (1750–1825); it was quoted in Walter Scott’s novel *The Pirate* (1823).

counterfeit?—Alas what is this Margate Ball-room, what is Margate, what is the greater part of life generally &c &c?— But lo, here sparkles in its yellow-green phosphorescence with stilly murmur the everlasting sea, here stand our punctual boat's crew and "Mr. Charles" has found them, if he could not us: let us home on board, and to bed without farther philosophy.

My sleep, that night, was a sleep as of hospitals, ~~and~~ of men in a state of asphyxia; a confused tumble, a shifting from headache to headache,—which after three miserable hours I gave up altogether, and exchanged for a place on the deck, with early sunshine and the breath of the fresh sea. The ship had hung out all her canvas, ~~which seemed to~~ an enormous expanse of cloth high and wide, and was dashing thro'¹⁵ the waters, in a heeling posture, with very great velocity,—a mad little wasp for sailing! The sea-air and the clear morning gradually drove away the miserable mock-sleep and its effects. At breakfast we all, "except Mr. Charles," met, fresh and hearty.

Not having troubled any one with questions, and fancying that the freshness of the breeze was but very recent, I was surprised to learn on coming on deck again, little after ten o'clock, that we were now within few miles of Ostend! There, sure enough, it was: a dim coarse shore of sand hillocks, dull down, sand as I supposed[,] and coarse uncertain grass-tufts, stretched all ahead; within which various blunt church-steeple, or ~~rot~~ blunt round-topt belfries shewed themselves; the indications of this town and of that ~~that~~. Yes, there too are churches and habitations; and various persons are getting on their Sunday clothes to go to sermon there too! The dull-blunt pyramid, probably of weathered brickwork, far to the right, that is Dunkirk,—verily Dunkirk, the Kirk¹⁶ of the ugly sand Downs, is there! Newkirk, farther to the left, ~~and nearer us~~ or rather not so far to right, you see it is round atop, ending in a kind of dome. Other domed or pyramided brick-and-slate church-towers we do not heed; for here right ahead of us, raising its awkward long steeple, like a tall ~~column~~ round pillar with some inverted punchbowl on the top is Ostend; its white light-tower, like an elongated most slim pepperbox, stands at the end of

¹⁵ AC regularizes thro' to "through" throughout the narrative.

¹⁶ AC does not render Kirk as underlined.

the long wooden pier,—white with black edgings, the pier itself painted of similar colours. Of Ostend itself, except some roofs, we can yet see nothing more,¹⁷ except its massive earthmound faced with stone, sloping up from the sea, ~~circling it all round~~ winding then landward, circling it all round, hiding it as in the hollow of a huge saucer; for Ostend is a fortified town.— The Captain now took the helm himself, all men were silently at their posts; silent all except one, who had been heaving the lead for some time, and singing out, in the mournful tune sailors have in that case, what depths and depths we were favoured with. The entrance, thro' long, not very wide channels, bordered by wooden piers, earth piers faced with brick, and breaking off at abrupt angles into new directions with little water and a swift wind, seemed to me a matter of delicacy;—and I daresay to the Captain also, ~~anxious moreover to do it well in the sight of their Belgian onlookers~~ who however was fully equal to the emergency. We could not but admire our little Captain: his large grey eyes were now glancing with swift energy, the whole face beaming and animated; his orders were given out with brief emphasis, without noise but with imperative decision: ~~the dour~~ ~~Ca~~ “Ease the main sheet !” “Down jib Sail!” “Ashore a hawser!” “Check her, Check her!” &c &c true words-of-command, ~~and~~ all unerringly [given],¹⁸ and unerringly obeyed; we went in, as if by clockwork, without any mistake at all, and moored safe and soft in some inner basin or brickfaced dock, as if a machine had gone thro' its motions, and there stopt being appointed to end. The strolling Belgian population, male and female, watching us from their wooden piers from their brick quays, may look at that! A heavy country ship came in directly after us, with much noise and jumble, vociferous Dutch scolding heard on board, and tarry irregular men jumping hither and thither:—evidently in far inferior style. Our little Captain stepped ashore with us; two ugly Douaniers in brown-green frocks ~~in flat~~ of coarse cloth, in flat dogskin caps, with sulky red moustaches, with coarse cutlasses, and not the best air in the world, were gently drawing nigh,—to see whether our Royal-navy flag was not perchance a counterfeit? Two little girl children interested

¹⁷ AC transcribes as “we can see nothing more.”

¹⁸ AC inserts “[given],” which TC omits in the MS.

me more; their father to be in the ~~ship~~ country ship just come in; and the younger of the two, with her close little Flemish cap, and eager eyes, was handed over our ~~ship and~~ deck and across into the other, that some rough Dutch pair of arms might lift her to some Dutch heart of the like quality! Allah akbar!—Across the water of this Dock, between us and the main sea, we could read on a large simple-looking, red-tiled, whitewashed house, ~~flanked by other kindred houses at some distance~~ one of a little group at some distance: Hier verkoopt men Drank, Here a human being sells drink!

Ostend seemed a circular dead-flat kind of place with straight clean streets, containing perhaps some 10 or 12 thousand souls. There was one large square, with a guard-house, with a Town-hall, with a ??? huge Town-hall Hôtel (Hôtel de la Maison de Ville),¹⁹ which looked spacious, pleasant, ~~and~~ and worthy of some architectural respect. A clear sun shone, a brisk breeze blew; the streets were not only straight, but they intersected at right angles; and generally at the end you could see the earth-mound or rampart rising, with here and there a some broad path leading up to it;—a fortified town. Many of the shops were open, tho' seemingly without business; the signs were occasionally in French; occasionally in Flemish, which I rejoiced now for the first time to discover was properly corrupt Dutch, a mere corrupt kind of German, and generally intelligible to me. The common people if you addressed them in French answered kindly, "Kann nit mir verstahn"; but the upper classes jabbered freely in that language, and seemed indeed to struggling to consider themselves and be considered French every way: this we found to be the general rule in Belgium;—a people "terribly aff for a langitch!" They seemed a clean healthy population, what few we saw on the streets or sitting in the shops; ~~skins fresh and tanned, wearing comfortable summer clothing~~ clean-washed, well tanned with weather and sun; a freckly blond complexion the prevailing one, sandyish ~~whiskers~~ hair. ~~A fair population of dark was who notice~~ Black whiskers also were not wanting,—nor a still larger proportion of altogether white tow whiskers. ~~They sat in their shops~~ Sundry of the maids, well-trimmed otherwise, went about

¹⁹ AC transcribes as "Large Town-hall" instead of "huge."

with heads altogether bare. Others sat in their shops, within their windows, women chiefly, either talking a little, or else solitary and doing nothing. We made for the English Consul's ascertained the starting-times of the Bruges Railway; got some money changed, provided ourselves with a passport,—both of which proved unnecessary; English ~~money~~ gold or paper passing freely current everywhere, and no passport having once been demanded of us.

As the day was hot, and my nerves still hotter, I for my own share decided on a walk to the Ramparts, and some attempt to wards a sea-bathe. The Rampart was easily found, the path up to it and then across it and across a huge green wet ditch over to the outer Rampart,—properly the beauty of Ostend. It was a high strong mound, ~~green~~ long grass inside, square whinstone outside, with a top perhaps 20 feet broad paved with tiles, clean as a table, in the free visitation of the breeze, the fresh sea-tide beating on your whinstones close at hand of you: one of the best promenades a ~~hea~~ man could wish! Copious promenaders mostly of the quality sort, and dressed as French, with a good sprinkling of English figures too, ~~and~~ were accordingly abroad here; chiefly towards the Northern end. where a fantasticality that proved to be a French tavern shewed itself, begirt with a whole ~~tide~~ flowing tide of ~~population~~ quality figures male and female; close beyond which, as I learned, ~~to be~~ stood the bathing machines. The Café and Estaminet opening direct ~~but~~ on the promenade of the Ramparts, to which its awnings and long eaves reached out, had numerous moustachioed figures and as numerous papilionaceous figures, sipping fermented or sugared liquors in the shadow of its walls and awnings, in sight of the solitary moaning sea: one huge black figure, ~~of a certain age~~ I noticed, with not a moustachio only but a massive black grey beard, an order ribbon visible in his button hole; of a certain age; and the papilionaceous figures evidently very fond of him. I passed over an unpaved part of the height, and soon sloped down to the sand beach where the machines stood; where some ~~twenty~~ score of ragged women sat sorting and freshening the salt towels, some cheering themselves with a loud song the while; when directly a freckled figure, with tow hair, barefoot and in blue blouse, volunteered in some kind of patois to ~~conduct me into the tide~~ do the bathing,

and straightway ~~admitted~~ showed me into his machine and shut the door. This is an adventure worth two words. I was stripped and ready by the time this blue-blouse's quadruped, one of the wretchedest garrons now alive, came to drag me in. I was dragged in nevertheless. I opened my door and plunged forward to one of the most beautiful tepid sea baths, tho' as yet somewhat shallow. Alas, I made only some three plunges and a stroke or two of swimming, when the Blue Blouse, in a state not far from distraction, came riding into the waves after me, vociferating with uplifted hand I knew not what. "Wow! Gow! Wow!" nay at length something like "Police! Wow! Gow!" and evidently expressing the intensest desire that I should come out of the water again. Clearly I had no alternative, with a man in Blue Blouse mounted in that manner. On entering I could not burst into laughing.²⁰ I found that men and women we were all bathing here in a heap, and that among my apparatus were not only two huckabuck towels, but a jacket and breeches of blue gingham, which I decidedly ought to have put on first. My three plunges however were enough, highly beneficial—and no "Police, Gow-Wow," as it chanced, had meddled with me.— On the Ramparts I met the rest of our party. We adjourned to the Estaminet for a dinner; a French thing of kickshaws not very edible, served deftly by a little brown elf of a boy: French every bit of him, a face of impudence, alacrity and savoir-faire: by dint of a chicken-wing and bad water, I, declining all champagne or the like, contrived to dine; and about four o'clock we were all in right time gathered at the station of the Bruges Railway, in fair travelling condition.

The Ostend and Brussels Railway carries passengers and goods thro' the country, at a respectable pace; but is far inferior in general finish and equipment to our English Railways. The Bookin[g]-office for example is generally a mean brick hut, to the outer window of which you are admitted under some shabby wooden penthouse (like the roof of a cowhouse,—such it resembled at Ostend,—the walls reduced to wooden posts, the floor probably not so much as paved); there a small window pane opens itself, and to a greasy moustachio-figure you communicate your purpose and pay your fare. The Railway

²⁰ AC changes the phrase to "I could not but burst into laughing."

itself consists but of one tram;²¹ so that carriages cannot meet, but must travel ~~all in direction~~ all in one direction only, and ~~then~~ cannot return till the very last arrival has effected itself and the road is entirely clear; a defect which occasions, as may well be fancied, infinite delays, &c. at the various stations, and indeed presupposes a railway with very languid traffic compared to ours. ~~The Netherlands~~ Belgium however is the very country for railways, the surface almost one dead flat; we did not notice in fifty miles except once that there had been any cut to make which the eye could recognise as a cut at all. Your track is generally raised but a very few feet above the common level of the soil; and the materials have been found in two ditches which you see running alongside, full now of stagnant water from rains or drainage.

Ostend soon vanishes, its high old steeples (which may have had a cannon-shot from Spinola ~~two centuries~~ in 1600, from the age of it)²² is also lost before long in the maze of poplar trees, &c; and ceasing to look behind (which indeed I for one did not do at all) we look abroad and before eagerly scanning what the new land yields. Fields of a barren aspect, divided merely by wet ditches, without any tree of respectability; yellow rag-weed, coarse blue grass, patches of heath, a mongrel, mixed, stunted breed of cows; on the whole an inferior cultivation to what you looked for. This however ~~by and by~~ soon improves; ~~before long~~ and ever more improves as you go inland, till ~~the style~~ it do clearly deserve the name of excellent.²³ The sward of the meadows gets rich green, with cows of the red speckled large Dutch species: green crops, potatoes, turnips, not unfrequently carrots, all in excellent condition without a weed; luxuriant patches of clover (coming to seed I fancied) and a due proportion of rich yellow grain, chiefly barley, good part of which was now reaped, and standing in shocks of ten sheaves each, without the Scotch²⁴ hood-sheaves (as the fashion in England too is). ~~A~~ Some fields stood in the single-sheaf fashion, what in Scotland they call gaits

²¹ AC inserts as explanation, “[single line].”

²² Ambrogio Spinola Doria (1569–1630), known as “Ambrosio,” Genoese aristocrat and Spanish general, conducted the successful siege of Ostend (1603–04) during the Eighty Years’ War.

²³ AC changes to “does clearly deserve.”

²⁴ AC renders only “without” as underlined

(goats).— The woods increased, began here and there to shew birches, even oaks, tho' but of slender growth; the prevailing element still poplars, and even alders, and meaner brushwood, which stood in distinct patches, and seemed to be kept for fuel. Farmhouses and farm-yards now and then occurred, solitary cottages too, tho' not so often as in Britain. The population seemed rather to be gathered into villages, which the dull brick spires of churches ever and anon indicated to us on this hand and that. Half way to Bruges, at some station anonymous to us, an ancient comfortable-looking beggar, stood blowing a very dusky time-worn Highland bagpipe; and in a low tone pipéd out his demands<>: each penny thrown him he eyed with animation, but did not interrupt his blast to pick up. It was not the bellows bagpipe; but the kind we call Highland. The tune, if any, I did not know. A queer little child, its in its Sunday cap and bodice, of much brighter dye than ours, would now and then arrest your attention: the few men and women were not of significant aspect. Paths branched off here and there into the country, and narrow cart-road. The dust of our railway, sand railway, was now and then disagreeable: our carriage was wide, lumbering, projecting far over the wheels (for which there was an ugly bulge of a cavity effected in the floor, and rising like a small arc of a circle covered with iron, among your feet): ours, for this evening, contained ourselves four only. ~~The steeples of Bruges gleaming~~ High steeples, red sun-beshone among poplar trees in the bright autumn afternoon, now announced that Bruges was at hand. Bruges, where we had some four hours to stay, till the next and latest Ghent train should come up, was now here;—which accordingly, leaving our luggage in the office, we sallied forth to survey.

Bruges, in German Brügge, must mean, I think, “Bridges,” “Briggs”:²⁵ it stands on a multiplicity of intersecting canals; the water of which must derive itself, doubtless from the clouds and rain, but from what river, named or nameless, no man or map has taught me!²⁶ The water does lie there, stagnating or imperceptibly flowing, of a greenish colour, like sweet oil to the

²⁵ AC changes to “‘Bridges,’ or ‘Brigs.’”

²⁶ AC ends the sentence with a period, and inserts a footnote: “Zwign is the name of the river.”

eye, and sometimes like unsweet to the nose; and on the banks has arisen, long ages ago, by the toil of forgotten men and generations, this city of the “Bridges,” with its winding streets, its ~~???~~ ~~???~~ broad market-places, its old fantastic edifices secular and religious very strange to a modern eye. Honour to the long forgotten generations; they have done something in their time: this city, nay this country is a work of theirs. Sand downs and stagnating marshes, producing nothing but heath, but sedges, docks, marsh-mallows, and miasmata: so it lay by nature; but the industry of man, the assiduous unwearied motion of how many spades, pickaxes, hammers, wheel barrows, a mason-trowels, and ten-thousandfold industrial tools have made it—this! A thing that will grow corn, potherbs, warehouses, Rubens pictures, churches and cathedrals. Long before Caesar’s time of swords, the era of spades had ushered itself in, and was busy. “Tools and the man!” “Arms and the man” is but a small song in comparison. Honour to you, ye long forgotten generations, from whom at this moment we have our bread and clothing;—not a delver of²⁷ you that dug out one shovelful of a marsh-drain but was doing us too a good turn!—Bruges in the 13th century, had become the “Venice of the North,” had its ships on every sea: the most important city in these latitudes was founded in a soil, which as Coleridge with a poor sneer declares was not of God’s making but of man’s. All the more credit to man, Mr Samuel Taylor!²⁸ The Beaver is a kind of builder; much more the Belgian.

Around these oil canals it was curious to see how the Fleming had done the utmost that was possible to make himself a fair dwelling. Long rows of whitened brick houses rose sheer up hemming in the waters, their walls rubbed upon by ships; on ~~one~~ any slight vacancy, if but of a few feet, pretty shrubs grew above the bank, perhaps a wooden seat to smoke your pipe on was set up; and then the little habitation, with its opened window, generally tight-looking, and dized with colour: here could the poor man sit and see the ships tracked²⁹ along (by ~~???~~ row-boats, I suppose, or from Bridge to Bridge, for often

²⁷ AC changes to “delver among you.”

²⁸ The source for Coleridge’s comment has not been identified.

²⁹ AC posits “traced,” but the “k” is clear.

there was no pathway clearly visible): the other front of the houses looked into some neat-paved street. The Town distinguished itself from all English towns by its perfect cleanness, smokeless as Salisbury plain; the people ~~either burnt~~ with their cunning kitchen stoves ~~burnt~~ and warming apparatus, burnt, I suppose, very little fuel, and that little was of charcoal or coke. The silence too, a true Sabbath stillness struck as much; not a carriage moving; no sound but of footfalls and here and there a low murmur of voices. The inhabitants, especially the women, ~~and~~ young children and old men, were drawn out sitting on chairs in front of their houses, mildly gossiping together in the afternoon ~~shad~~ shadow; free and easy: it was beautiful to see. They looked at us as we passed along, with a goodnatured air; and did not often laugh, and ~~never~~ hardly ever till our back was turned; which I must say betokened good-breeding, for we were in reality a rather wondrous group. The Captain and I had on rational English clothes, ~~not so~~ different, yet not greatly different, from theirs: but the costume of our two brethren did seem to myself astonishing. The Hon. Commissioner in a pair of coarsest blue shag trousers, called Flushing trousers (if I mistake not), with a horrible ~~shag~~ blue shag spencer, without waistcoat, and a scanty blue cap on his head, had truly a fibustier air; the good Charles had a low-crowned, broad brimmed gazed-hat,³⁰ ugliest of hats, and one of those amazing sack-coats which the English dandies have taken to wear, the make of which is the simplest,—one straight sack to hold your body, two smaller sacks atop for the arms, and by way of collar a hem: the earliest tailor on this Earth could make his coat even so, and the Bond-Street ~~???~~ snip has returned to that as elegance;— O ineffable snip of Bond Street, what a thing art thou, emblem of what things! In this singular costume, blackguard costume in all but the clean shirts, they travelled with us our section of the Netherlands; and few or none, as I said, seemed to laugh till our backs were turned. The young women did sometimes dimple as we passed, and the old women looked amazed; but we had free liberty to travel, and look.

Besides and indeed before the oil canals these things were notable: antique but still trim-built and almost elegant streets,

³⁰ AC changes to “glazed-hat.”

not built straight, nor yet abruptly angular, but winding at their own sweet will, often very gracefully; the building evidently ~~generations~~ centuries old, gable-ends in ogives, in cat steps, with multiplex ornaments of the sort we call “gingerbread,” which, however, once centuries had gone over it, was very agreeable to us. Windows much more frequent than with us, where a Pitt and his window-tax has been.³¹ The shop signs as before were in French in Flemish, sometimes in both. In the main market-place, a large open square, there grew a ~~real oak tree of liberty~~ a ~~??~~ real growing oak-tree, of straight respectable stem, planted I believe in 1794;³² I patted it with my hand in passing; it stood in the very centre of the square, the largest open space in Bruges.³³ At one end of the square rose a most respectable, ~~antique~~ old lofty brick tower, square atop, and all over with brick gingerbread; which I supposed to be some ~~prison~~ town Belfroi or Prison,—it terribly defaced with a huge new-gilt clock dial, stuck into it like a goggle eye very much in the wrong place, and recently as it seemed.³⁴ The other sides of the square were taken up with very ancient houses, but still kept in good repair, shops, estaminets (taverns), and one very heterogeneous modern building, of large size, part of which whereof was an estaminet too,³⁵ in front

³¹ William Pitt the Younger (1759–1806), prime minister, who in 1784 increased the window tax established by William III (1650–1702) in 1696 and introduced it to Scotland. Because the amount of tax was directly related to the number of windows in a building, people would brick in their extra windows.

³² In 1794 the Hapsburg’s rule of Bruges and the Austrian Netherlands was ended by the French, who incorporated the region into France the following year.

³³ At the center of Bruges’s Grote Markt [Big Market] square, which covers approximately 2.5 acres and has served as the center of commerce for the city since the tenth century, now stands the statues of Jan Breydel and Pieter de Coninck, who resisted the French occupation of Flanders in the early fourteenth century.

³⁴ Carlyle describes the belfry, or Belfort, originally built in 1240 as the city’s treasury and archives. The building burned three times before the stone parapet, and presumably the clock, were added in 1822; see also Longfellow’s poem, “The Belfry of Bruges” (1845).

³⁵ Carlyle refers to the classical-style building that replaced the ancient Waterhalle in 1787. On the site now stands the neo-gothic provincial court, completed in 1920.

of which under awnings sat the due proportion of black moustachios, smoking, &c, struggling to look ~~???~~ distinguished a la française. O dandies, semper inflex pecus!³⁶ One man I noticed with printed cotton trousers strapped down to the heels, so small of leg and ~~so~~ wide over the haunches—shaped like a pair of bellows, or long-shanked Westphalian ham! Tall figures, in French costume, ~~some~~ more than once³⁷ brought Cavaignac to my mind;³⁸ but alas in a disappointing manner; for the face had a mere moustachio, and ~~???~~ sleek sugar-loaf hat; perhaps snuff in the nose, ~~per~~ and watery sensuality in the eyes; no farther³⁹ meaning tragic or comic. I did not see a single ~~distinguished~~ face as of an truly superior man in our whole tour. Of pretty women indeed we all agreed that we had nowhere seen such a proportion as at Bruges. They were really notable: blondines, like English in feature, but with an expression recognisable as different; still better, your hazeeyed, aquiline brunettes, with profusion of long chestnut hair, with figure and carriage as of a southerlier lands: those were decidedly remarkable ~~among~~ ~~the~~ at Bruges. Notable also were the little children of the lower classes; with their straight long-eared scull-cap, with their tight puckered ~~boddies~~ bodice, bunching out into plaited petticoats at the hips: poor little fellows; most modern-antique! We got into the way of calling them Hans-Holbeins,⁴⁰ and I gave them all the copper sous that came to me. The numerous soldiers and guardhouses struck you too: in all quarters guardhouses, sentries walking, orderlies riding about. The soldiers, in ~~dirty~~ dull-coloured ~~brown~~ green-brown coat and trousers, with brimmed felt caps that had too much brass in front and seemed often too wide for the head withal,—did not seem very martial; generally

³⁶ “Ever a hapless flock”; see Virgil’s *Bucolics*, Eclogue 3.3. AC writes on the manuscript above the line, in pencil: “infelix? AC”; he corrects TC in the pbd. version.

³⁷ AC transcribes as “more than one brought.”

³⁸ Louis-Eugène Cavaignac (1802–57), French military officer who had gained prominence for his service in Algeria, which included the 1840 defense of Cherchell against the Barbary Pirates. He would later become a prominent figure in the 1848 revolutions in France.

³⁹ AC changes to “no further.”

⁴⁰ Hans Holbein the younger (1497–1543) and the elder (1460–1524), German painters of the northern Renaissance.

little men. Their white crossed belts seemed far too long for such short trunks; the cartridge box dangling quite below the hips, gave the poor fellows an afflicted unfortunate look. They had all swords, I think; and their bayonets were joined to their guns; opening out like the blade of a clasp-knife.— We called, at in our thirst, at the large estaminet,⁴¹ near the Liberty-tree, and got or struggled to get some quenching: coffee, beer, &c; I had two cups of the feeblest tea ever made by man.

But the grand notability of Bruges, as indeed of all Netherlands, is its churches; into which chiefly, wherever⁴² discoverable, we directed our steps. If I remember, we must have been in four that afternoon. The first, nearest our railway station, not otherwise nameable⁴³ by me,⁴⁴ had outwardly a very dilapidated rubbishy air, ~~the~~ unpruned trees, scattered bricks, &c, appearing about: but on entering, few things that I have seen were more impressive. Enormous high arched roofs (I suppose not higher than Westminster Abbey, but far more striking to me, for they were actually in use here), soaring to a height that dwarfed all else; great high altar-pieces with sculpture, wooden-carvings hanging in mid air; pillars, balustrades of white marble, edged with black marble; pictures, inscriptions, bronze-gates of chapels, shrines and votive tablets,—above all, actual human creatures bent in devotion there, counting their beads with open eyes, or bent as in still deeper prayer, covered by their black scarfs (for they were mostly women) and only their little pointed shoe-soles distinct to you: all this with the yellow evening sunlight falling down over and beneath the new and ancient tombs of the Dead,—it struck me dumb, and I cared nothing for Rubens or Vandyck canvasses,⁴⁵ while this living painted canvas hung here before me—on the bosom of eternity! The mass was ~~en~~ over, but these worshippers, it seemed, still loitered. You could

⁴¹ AC renders “estaminet” in italics.

⁴² AC transcribes as “chiefly, whenever discoverable.”

⁴³ AC transcribes as “not otherwise remarkable by me.”

⁴⁴ Sint-Salvatore Cathedral had been damaged by fire in 1839. The church’s neo-Roman tower was built afterwards and designed by the English architect Robert Dennis Chantrell (bap. 1793, d. 1872).

⁴⁵ Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Sir Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), Flemish painters of the Baroque period. Sint-Salvatore Cathedral has many precious paintings, but none by Rubens and van Dyck.

not say from their air that they were without devotion,—yet they were painful to me: the fat priests, in whose real sincerity, not in whose sincere-cant, I had more difficulty in believing, were worse than ??? painful; I had a kind of hatred of them, a desire to kick them into the canals unless they ceased that fooling! Things are long-lived, and God above appoints their term; yet when the brains of a thing have been out for three centuries and odd one does wish that it would be kind enough to die!—The tonsures of these priests, I observed, were very small; not bigger than a good crown-piece of English coin. They wore on the streets a horrid three-cornered shovel for hat, a black serge or cloth pelisses, exactly like a woman's, and some sasherics about their nasty thick waist, and a narrow scarf of black silk (about a triple ribbon of silk) hanging down right behind from their haunches, sometimes from the very neck;—oftenest very ugly men, and much too fat. At bottom, one cannot wish these men kicked into the canals; for what would follow were they gone? Atheistic Benthamism, French editorial “Rights of man” and grande nation, that is a far worse thing, a far untruer thing. God pity the generation in which you have to see deluded and deluding Simulacra, Tartuffes,⁴⁶ and Semi-Tartuffes, and to stay the uplifted foot, and not kick them into the canal, but go away near weeping,—in silence; alone, alone!

We came on one of these priests preaching, in another church, or perhaps chapel, for it was a small place, lined with wainscot, and fit for preaching in.⁴⁷ The audience was three-fourths women, some men too; † seemingly of the shopkeeper species, and attentive enough. We could not understand at all,—except that it was not French; ‡ that it consisted much of repetition of epithets,—a man partly preaching against time; yet with an air of considerable earnestness. We soon went on our way elsewhere.—Not to forget altogether the claims of “art,” which are oftenest in this canting time a decided nuisance to me, I must mention that in the second church we entered, which also was an ancient, lofty and lofty-towered one, of brick, and much the grandest we anywhere saw at Bruges,—there was, among much else of the sort,

⁴⁶ The hypocritical religious fanatic and title character of Moliere's *Tartuffe* (1664).

⁴⁷ Probably the Basilica of the Holy Blood, which since 1149 has housed a piece of cloth said to contain the blood of Jesus Christ.

a marble mother-and-child by Michel Angelo,⁴⁸ probably the most impressive piece of sculpture I ever saw. Michael Angelo had made it for some Italian church; on its passage in the Mediterranean, it was captured by some Flemish sea-king, and given to this church, where it yet stands in perfect preservation, and may long stand.⁴⁹ The treatment of the eyes is singular; the lids as if half-shut: Angelo's way of meeting the difficulty of stone eyes. The sculptural finish, I suppose, is perfect, or the nearest to perfection man has yet reached; the skin glistens sleek, waves with a softness as of very skin. The air of the Mother's face has something of Rachel the Actress;⁵⁰ narrow, Jewish, tho' not quite so narrow and Jewish, bending with an air of sorrow, of infinite earnestness, over her little Boy whose who standings before her, whose hand supported by her. ~~On his fat~~ The Boy's face struck me not less; a soft child's face, yet with a pride in it, with the noble courage in it as of a young lion. There is a child's hand, and a Mother's hand which I suppose it might be difficult to match. The sight of this statue, and also a picture by Pourbus (a Nativity)⁵¹ in a chapel of the same

⁴⁸ AC changes to "Michael Angelo."

⁴⁹ Michelangelo's *Madonna and Child* (1501–04), otherwise known as the *Madonna of Bruges*, still found in Bruges's Church of Our Lady, the only statue of Michelangelo's to leave Italy during his lifetime. He sold it to Jan and Alexander Mouscron, wealthy merchants from Bruges, after his original client refused to pay. The Mouscrons donated it to the church in 1514. French revolutionaries removed the statue in 1794, but it was later returned after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815; it was taken again by the Nazis in 1944, but returned two years later after it was found in Austria. The church's brick church tower remains the tallest in Bruges and the second tallest in Europe.

⁵⁰ Elisabeth Rachel Félix (1821–58), Jewish French actress known as "Mademoiselle Rachel." Her success in playing tragic French roles for a series of five nights at Her Majesty's Theatre, London, May–June 1841, ensured her fame throughout Europe. A reviewer for her debut on 10 May in Racine's *Andromaque* (1667) described her: [S]he is tall, erect, and vigorous, as well as graceful in her movements. Her figure is fine, and her attitudes those of Greek statuary. Her countenance, at first, is far from remarkable. Her features are regular, but small and not strongly marked, and her eyes have not the power which some of our great tragic actresses have exhibited. Her features, however, speak, and her eyes lighten, while the impassioned language of Racine flows from her lips" (*The Standard* 11 May 1841: 4).

⁵¹ TC refers to a triptych by the Dutch-born Flemish painter Pieter Bourbus (1523–84), *Adoration of the Shepherds* (1574). The work remains in the Church of Our Lady in Bruges.

Church gave me real pleasure: ~~No other picture which~~ a thing pictures and statues, so jargoned of as one hears them, seldom do. A most astonishing old carved pulpit of oak was in this Church too; the floor all paved with ~~Flemish~~-tombs, the inscriptions often Flemish and quite entire; the pillars ~~holding~~ white, high-soaring; at the bottom of many of them some box with a slit and offerblok to eere ("offering-box to honour" of such and such a saint); the roof far up painted white, with blue-guilt stars; an august silence now reigning over the place, the devotees having all departed. Three small living Han-Holbeins, tottering across the floor, sisters, the middle and smallest quite a tiny article, were not the least interesting figures for me! I opened the inner spring-door, and let them pass, poor little atoms; I had now no penny but an English one, which I gave, but, alas, with fear that it would end in disappointment.— Ought we not now to be upon the Ghent Railway, now at seven o'clock, when we have got our throats wetted in the big marketplace Estaminet? Yes; and even to be in Ghent itself,—for really by night there is nothing to be seen on the road thither!

The streets of Bruges, as we slowly wended towards the chemin-de-fer, were getting duskier, stiller; burghers in sugarloaf hat wending homewards with their wives; little children running about half-dressed, as it were sporting ~~there~~ their last; here and there an ancient man of the people sitting to enjoy the evening coolness with his nightcap already on. Peace be with you good ~~people~~ men and women of Bruges, brunettes, blondines, little boddiced Holbeins, grey veterans in nightcaps,—representatives and heirs of long forgotten generations! We had considerable waiting amid confused crowds at the railway station, till this train from the west and that other from the east got all safely in, and the way was clear, and the lumbering vehicles got wheeled and adjusted into their proper route. Thick twilight had sunk, and the hum of human voices was falling clearer in the great silence of the departing day. A hoarse coach-horn giving signal, we rolled off; we four, ~~and no~~ and no other, were still all in one carriage; properly in one end of a carriage, for they are divided each in two by a free thoroughfare without doors, thro' which the guard, seeking tickets, during the voyage, makes his ??? entrances and exits; each end holds, I think, nine; and you can shut your own

end with a little ~~folding~~ two-leaved door of plain wood, if you choose. The Night permitted nothing but a general woodiness and grassiness to be discovered; ~~sometimes the gleam of cottage window~~ here and there the light of some house window distant or near, here and there the momentary gleam of water, mere stagnant ditchwater; and the warm sky bent over all. Thus rustling along incessant swift, we reach suburban-looking hamlets, ~~pass the blazed blaze of coke-furnaces~~ incipient signs of manufacture, pass a lot of blazing coke-kilns, and now (about the stroke of ten) see our single rail-tram expand into a wide space of many trams, a whole corduroy web of rail-trams, with fiery steam-horses snort-snorting, and official persons and etceteras; and stop short, as the ~~shrill-voice~~ shrill-hoarse voice rings out: "Gand!"⁵²

Our Captain had been in Ghent before, and fancied he could remember that his Hôtel was named de Flandre: thitherward as benighted fowls towards any guidance or gleam of candle light, we determined; and, our Hon. Commissioner so ordering it,—determined in the pedestrian method. Leaving omnibuses audibly promising many things, Hôtel de Flandre audible, among others, we, each with his small travelling-bag in hand, set forth into the unknown element, uncertain yet on which hand of us Ghent might properly lie, to seek the Hôtel de Flandre there. Douaniers at a barrier poked out upon our bags, but judged them unworthy of search; we marched along with the general stream, thro' a new naked-looking street of no great length feebly lighted with gas; and at the farther end, inquiring of a Captⁿ of the Watch, learned that our⁵³ Hôtel de Flandre, that indeed all Ghent itself, lay to the left;—to the left.

Ghent streets, at least this one street⁵⁴ of ours to the left, were noisy: more like English streets; loud with vehicles, with variety of movement. For one thing, multitudes of human creatures seemed to have been drinking ~~wines or alcohols~~; Ghent, at that hour, had totally an intoxicated air. At the very entrance of our new street, a considerable regiment squadron of young persons, seemingly work-men and work-women, met

⁵² Part 1 of AC's version ends here with "to be continued."

⁵³ Published as "out Hôtel de Flandre."

⁵⁴ AC omits "street."

us, with arms linked, and a kind of regular march, ~~age~~ singing very loud with a decidedly Bacchanal sound: the watch made no criticism of them. Farther up in the chief square called Place d'Armes, precisely at our entrance, a whole tide of drunk dandies rushed swiftly off, down hill before us, flourishing their sticks, and shouting "Patrouille!"—~~and~~ while from ~~many~~ various taverns unmusical drunk melodies, done in concert, sounded very loud; and indeed from all frequented quarters sounds of drunkenness were heard; and poor Ghent seemed to have made herself a very Chloe reeling about with bottle-and-glass, in a most uncertain unseemly manner.⁵⁵ However, the drunkenness was gay, good natured in quality; neither am I sure that in quantity it exceeded what we ~~can~~ could have shewn⁵⁶ in Chelsea at the same hour,—except that our drunkenness (from heavy-wet and turpentine gin) is of a more silent, but also sulkier, ~~fatal~~ and more distressing nature. O Gin, Gin! is there any Devil like thee in these times? Thou art a Power of Nature and Art, and hast thy worshippers & victims; thou art a brutal Moloch ~~to whom~~, and multitudes of men do too truly pass thro' the fire to thee!—Flandre Hôtel, after a long weary walk of perhaps some mile and half, escorted by a volunteer guide in sabots and ~~rg~~ ragged blouse, was at length discovered, in a quiet wide street, far to the south-east: it opened its hospitable gates without difficulty; cheerfully exhibited two single bedrooms, one double bedroom; provided kickshaw supper, of which I remember only some slice of ~~leathern~~⁵⁷ leathern "rosbif" which I could not eat for toughness; some horrid cut of cold salmon with yellow clear jelly poured over it which I could not for five guineas have tried to eat; and a small glass of genuine Schiedam Hollands Punch,⁵⁸ which by industry I procured for myself, in preference to vin de nuit, or any other wine or thing, and swallowed as at once refectation and medicament, which; in some sort it proved to me. Our vast salle à manger, for all its size, was suffocating hot, glaring ~~also~~ indeed with gas-light

⁵⁵ Cf. the story of Daphnis and Chloe in Greek mythology.

⁵⁶ AC changes to "could have shown." TC added the "n" to "shew" after he deleted "can" and inserted "could."

⁵⁷ TC strikes through the underline of "leathern."

⁵⁸ Schiedam, a municipality in southern Netherlands, was known for its juniper-flavored genjèvre, or Holland gin.

to help it; and when we opened the windows, jolly faces from the street looked in more than once;—were answered goohumouredly⁵⁹ with a “*Monsieur, ce n'est pas joli!*”⁶⁰ or the like, which instantly procured their withdrawal. Bed was welcome after midnight: a neat papered room of good height, without fire-place, with high French bed; so oven-hot, that one had to fling the whole window open,⁶¹ and tho' a sudden deluge of rain was now falling, keep it wide open. We looked, as I could observe, into a square back-court, were on the third story; the two Spring Rices in their double room lay on one hand of me, the Captain in his single one on the other: the room-doors opened by a brass-handle, not round or oval like ~~home~~ ours, but long and small like ~~the~~ some brass head of a big gimlet; and to your door they maid delivered a key with your n^o labelled on it by a wooden ticket: with this you, at pleasure, comfortably locked yourself in.

Shortly after four the profound clang of church-bells, reinforced and succeeded by the baying of dogs, crowing of manifold cocks and cockerels, and close below in our courtyard by the rumble of some big omnibus or waggon getting awake and under way, forbade any farther sleep. How the ear of man is tortured in this Terrestrial Planet. Go where you will, the cock's shrill clarion, ~~not to~~ the dog's harsh watch-note, not to speak of the melody of jack-asses, and on streets, wheelbarrows, wooden clogs, ~~vociferous men~~ loud-voiced men, perhaps watch-men beat upon the hapless brain; and ~~to~~ as if all were not enough, the “piety of the middle ages”⁶² has founded tremendous bells, and the hollow triviality of the present age, far worse, has everywhere instituted the Piano! Why are not ~~at~~ at least all those cocks and cockerils boiled into soup, into everlasting silence? Or, if the Devil, some good night, should take his hammer, and smite into shivers all and every the Pianos of our European world, so that in broad Europe there were not one Piano left soundable, would the harm be great; would not on the contrary the relief be considerable? For once that you hear any real music

⁵⁹ AC corrects to “good-humouredly.”

⁶⁰ AC italicizes “*Monsieur, ce n'est pas joli!*”

⁶¹ AC changes to “whole window wide open.”

⁶² AC changes to “Piety of the Middle Ages.”

from a Piano do not you five hundred times hear mere artistic somersets, distracted jangling, and the hapless pretence of music? Let him that has lodged wall-neighbour to an operatic artist of stringed music say! This miserablest young woman that now in the next house to me spends all her young bright days, not in learning to darn stockings, sew shirts, bake pastry, or any art, mystery or business that will profit herself or others, not even in amusing herself, and skipping on the grass-plots with laughter of her mates, but simply and solely in **rumbling** raging, from dawn to dusk, to night and midnight, on a hapless Piano, which it is evident she will never in this world learn to render musical,—more musical than a pair of barn-fanners: the miserable young female! The sound of her through the wall is to me an emblem of the whole distracted ~~mis~~ hollow misery of this age; and her barn-fanners rhythm becomes all-too significant.—⁶³ At Ghent that morning, I rose in my long thick night-shirt (which reaches to the ancles), buckled on my stock, and taking a chair at the window, comfortably smoked a cigar, the wind serving to carry off the smoke; and watched the dappled dawn rise beautifully over this new sojourn of mine. A great church, which I found afterwards to be the church of Saint-Michael,⁶⁴ with vast roof of sleek blue slate,⁶⁵ with massive lofty old tower of fluted shape, and flat on the top, rose near at hand on the right; daws were flying and cawing round it this tower; scaffolding of slaters or masons hung perched far up on the side of it: the ~~top was flat~~ old church and it were mildly beautiful to me in the blessed morning there. Far under it, yet above my level, rose promiscuously, chimney-shafts, fantastic ogive gables, all clean and clear, only one chimney that I saw had yet any sign of smoke. Right under me lay the inn-court, from which the awakened omnibus had now rolled away, and where only one old ostler sat tranquilly mending a coach-saddle, right opposite, on the backmost side ~~which~~ of the court, which seemed to be all stables, the other three sides

⁶³ AC omits the double dashes and begins a new paragraph.

⁶⁴ Saint Michael's Church, Ghent, begun in 1440, was originally planned to have the largest steeple tower in Flanders, but lack of funds and religious conflict prevented its completion. The tower (approximately 80 ft. tall) was not roofed until 1828.

⁶⁵ AC changes to "roof of black-blue slate."

being rooms and bedrooms. The old man ~~slowly~~ slowly sewed and tugged, occasionally beating with a hammer of extremely long thin head,—very unconscious who was overlooking him! On the upper floor, ~~just our~~ close by, which seemed to be a hayloft, there lay another ostler in blue blouse asleep among the hay. The windows on the other three sides, like my own window, were mostly open: I saw portmanteaus, carpet bags scattered about within, and at one window once for a moment appeared a Lady Traveller,⁶⁶ like me roused by the bells and omnibus wheels, and looking out to see what cheer. She was pretty enough, and had wrapt herself not ungracefully in some copious modest-coloured ~~nightgown~~ dressing-gown: she glided in again; I suppose to the side of her sleeping spouse. She was on the right side of my inn-court: from the left side, which seemed to contain kitchens and the permanent inhabitants of the place, there issued out more than once a discreet old woman in long-eared beguine cap, and heavy stuff clothing, evidently engaged on secret services of the place,—services such as it may be interesting not to describe ~~on paper~~! The court was all well-paved and clean, decorated with fresh ivies, with flowering and creeping shrubs, and separate fresh flower-tubs wherever possible; a good leaden gutter ran round the eaves, our window-rabbets were of white polished stone; all was right and tight, and, in its exotic shape and arrangement, yet perfection of result, a kind of pleasure to contemplate. The one chimney now smoked a littler thicker,—breakfast getting ready for some industrious son of Adam, ??? bent probably on travel or some enterprise of moment, for it was not yet five. My smoke was out, and I returned to bed. Without hope,—and with no disappointment. Cocks and cockerels painfully audible sung ~~fa~~ co-responsive far and wide, and when I artificially shut my ears (an invaluable art I have) and fell into a kind of torpor, the immeasurable droning clang of St. Michael's great Bell, "Dong-tong!"—swinging and droning, as if it hung like an immense domed gong ~~to~~ right over my head, soon threw me broad awake again! One had the consolation to think that perhaps Philip van Artevelde might have heard that self-same

⁶⁶ AC changes to "lady traveller."

clangour;⁶⁷ that the old bell had tried to rejoice when Charles V,⁶⁸ a new Kaiser, came into the world here. Five, or perhaps it was now half-past five, seemed to be ~~the~~ our general hour of morning bells ~~here~~; <—> and any time henceforth about that hour thou canst fancy, What a merry place is Ghent even now! About seven the Hon. Commissioner shook my door, and was answered by a glad, Qui vive? He had passed “a shocking night,” our ~~poor~~ good Captain too had nearly been devoured “by bugs”; of which miseries, however, neither of the two made other than a brief historical mention.

Before breakfast I walked, some minutes, our comrades having also sallied out somewhither, on the broad clear street, all washed and cool with the last-night’s rain, and very pleasant on the shady side of it. Except two omnibuses, eager enough for custom, and ~~th~~ some cart or ??? barrow ~~there seemed to be~~ was little movement;⁶⁹ we seemed to be in a street chiefly of inns. Ogive gables and fine old houses, trim and painted, looked down on you; maids were busy with house-cleaning; one flunky or Savoyard male-figure, ~~perched~~ with long besom like an immense bottle-brush, was sweeping vigorously from within at the outer blinds of a high window,—vigorously, but in embarrassed manner. The street soon led down to the Scheldt River, a deep oily-looking mass of water, uncertain which way flowing; closely hemmed in by walled-banks, sometimes by sheer house-walls,—at other times the houses receded on one or both sides; and left, as here at this place, wide pleasant quays, ~~on which~~. On this quay of mine a multifarious

⁶⁷ Philip van Artevelde (ca. 1340–82), godson of Philippa, queen of England, leader of a 1381 Flemish revolt against Count Louis of Flanders (1330–84). Artevelde was killed in the battle of Roosebeeke, where he led an army of 50,000 Flemish burghers against troops led by the young French king Charles VI (1368–1422). As for Carlyle’s “consolation,” St. Michael’s Church was not begun until 1440.

⁶⁸ Charles V (1500–1558), Holy Roman Emperor, born in Ghent on 24 February. In 1539, Charles put down a rebellion of Flemish burghers in Ghent by simply marching his army into the town. Afterwards, he executed the leaders and humiliated the rest by marching officials and members of the aristocracy dressed in black shirts and peasants in white shirts with nooses around their necks through the streets of the city. They were then made to beg Charles’s forgiveness at his residence, the Prinsenhof.

⁶⁹ AC restores the excised “there,” as in “there was little movement.”

vegetable-market was now unfolding itself. Potatoes seemed the great element; ~~superintended~~ rough honest-looking country-people, of both sexes, were selling them out of sacks; selling eggs too, and sundries; old apple-women, or young boys, with their due stalls and importunities, were not wanting either. A big blunt monster of a ship was just getting towed up by men's strength; and the swivel-bridge swinging open, the crowd on both sides had to pause and accumulate for a minute. They were towheaded, Teutonic-looking people, rather rubbishy in aspect, with cottony loose clothing tinted red with clayey work; deep freckled in complexion, ~~in~~ and of poor stature mostly. The wheelbarrows, which seemed numerous, were narrower, but larger<;> from their great length, and seemed a half heavier than ours. They were made narrow, I found, to go through the wickets at the end of the many foot-bridges. The Ghent cart⁷⁰ seemed a very primitive thing: two pairs of low broad wheels, with coarse oaken axle trees; laid on these an enormous horse-manger,—exactly like a manger in shape, but much stronger and perhaps two ~~for~~ feet broad in the bottom: this, some twelve feet long of this, without ends or bars of any kind, was the cart! The driver sat in the bottom of it, at the front end, with his legs hanging over; a rope-rein in his hand; the main sound of him a kind of gollering, “Wo-yo!” I saw much carts trundling about<;> conveniently enough, and one of them, in the course of the day, very sufficiently loaded with cut hay-bundles,⁷¹—like a ship moving on its keel, so narrow was the bottom compared to the top. They must be very cheap: they were not painted; perhaps smeared with some thin-coloured brown tar, such as I saw on ships. Many of the common people wore sabots, by far the largest and coarsest I had ever seen: a great trough of wood (I suppose, birch or alder) ~~peaked at each end~~; some eighteen or twenty inches long, coarsely hewn, coarsely peaked at each end, coarsely admitting the foot; to walk in them, even in half sliding style, must be a kind of mystery<;>. Sore for the ankles;—accordingly I found the stocking was a thick sock of sewed flannel, felted ~~sufficiently~~ oftenest by much washing, and thick enough. Our innkeeper assured us, nevertheless, that it

⁷⁰ AC changes “cart” to “waggon” throughout this passage.

⁷¹ AC changes to “cut-hay bundles.”

was not bad walking at all; that with a good wisp of hay the foot ??? was kept soft, warm, dry even of perspiration, drier therefore than with shoes; that, above all, you ??? could have a pair of good wooden shoes for five pence, and they would last you well, without iron plates, for two months. Each land its custom! Wooden shoes, with dry hay-wisp and flannel felt sock, are better than the miserable blue chilblained bare-feet, or half-shod feet, I have seen among the mud and snow-slush here.

Breakfast at Ghent consisted of poor lukewarm coffee with lukewarm milk, and what you liked of a long ring-loaf, three fourths of it crust, and soundlooking, but far from palatable to me. A cold hard egg too, nay a tough greasy ~~mut~~ mutton chop. Good humour, reasonable appetite, and the merry morning, made it all right. No talk of it;—only of this ring-loaf, let me record that it seems a long roll, perhaps a yard and half of ~~dough~~ very yeasty dough, rolled out to the thickness of your wrist; then the ends of it are laid together; and in this way, like a serpent-of-eternity, it is committed to the oven, and baked dry and brown; and stands there for any one to break from who likes, a very dry morsel!— After breakfast by the Hon. Commissioner's haste, and my imperfect instruction where to find him and the others, we missed our rendezvous; and I passed the whole forenoon by myself;—not greatly to my regret, for their object, "pictures, visio art," &c was by no means principally mine; but only a partial and above all a silent item of mine. Finding that they were verily gone out of my reach, I wandered ~~according to my own humour~~ at my own sweet will, over churches, streets, marketplaces, shops; enjoying not "art"⁷² with vain gabble-ment of connoisseurship, but "Nature and Art" in godlike silence, except where it was indispensable to speak, and ask: verily a good way! I calculated that we should meet at the table-d'hôte dinner about half past one; and there would still be an afternoon of it for us in company. My observations henceforth must go down pell-mell.

My rendezvous was to the "Great Marketplace," Grand Marché, as I mistakenly fancied; thither accordingly by pleasant winding streets, old and new, across bridges, erratically

⁷² AC changes to "no 'art.'"

winding, guided and wrong-guided, I at last arrived: alas, the “Great Market” was only the Korn-Markt Marché aux Bles⁷³ a respectable old square, with high old houses, and a high old church, in no quarter of which was my party visible. I entered the church;—Attila Schmelzle’s “freehaven”;⁷⁴ really a pleasant covert in this hot weather, and ~~fert~~ fertile with reflexions and enjoyments to a thinking man. The same high-soaring vault-roofs, long column-rows, marbled and black-marbled aisles and chapels I had seen in Bruges; with pictures, sculptured altars, carved pulpit work; now silent mostly, with women sweeping it out after morning service;⁷⁵ only a few devotees still lingering with a kind of attempt to pray. Beautiful august old buildings Edifices; which it seems to my inmost heart a sin and offence to take up only as an architectural dilettantism. A far other feeling presided over the building of them; the industrious earnest decoration of them. An ancient pious burgherhood, looking ever into Eternity out of their busy Time-element, has left here a touching proof of its wealth, ~~liberality~~ devoutness, generous liberality, and taste— I care little whether you say good or bad! The hearty, healthy outcome of ?? robust souls to whom the Highest had descended as a familiar thing, and dwelt beside them to be practically honoured, made beautiful, impressive, ~~and~~ significant with manifold emblems and devices and decorations, speaks nobly, mournfully to one’s heart in these days. Good merchant burghers of Ghent—ah me, what a brutal heathenism are our Railway Terminuses, Pantehnicons, Shew-bazaars⁷⁶ in comparison: good so far as they go; yes,— but going no farther than the beaver principle in man will carry him; as if man had no soul at all, but only a work-faculty; as if Eternity were a fabulous dream, and the other world meant only (as Cunningham’s Cockney had it) a “Going to the undertaker , to be sure!”⁷⁷— Such tho^{ts} crowded on me in all these

⁷³ TC excises the accent in “Blés”; AC restores it.

⁷⁴ See Carlyle’s *Translations from the German*, p. 257, Library Edition— “Schmelzle’s Journey to the Flätz” [AC’s note; see *Works* 22: 164–65].

⁷⁵ AC changes to “after the morning.”

⁷⁶ AC changes to “Show-bazaars.”

⁷⁷ Apparently a phrase of the Carlyles’ friend Allan Cunningham (1784–1842); see *GLO*: JWC to Susan Hunter, 20 Sept. 1835; JWC to TC, 17 July 1837; and the sourcenote to JWC to TC, 2 Sept. 1850.

places;⁷⁸ and their architectural twirls and gingerbread fantasticalities, steeples like giant pepperboxes, like slated unicorns' horns, three hundred feet in height,—like slated Mandarins, with slate umbrellas, like what slate or stone absurdity you will, were full of beauty and meaning to me.—

The twelve, or it may be the ten, or I know not how many, "Stations" of the history of Christ, arc painted in all these Churches,⁷⁹ in pictures generally of small size, fixed up against successive pillars of the aisles: of small merit generally as paintings, but full of an earnest childlike significance,—mournfully pointing for us into the Past, into what once had significance! In another Church (I think, that of St Nicholas),⁸⁰ there stood ranged between the pillars all round the nave of the Church, a set of fresh-painted flower-tubs (like half a firkin each) filled with earth, a delicate green shrub, something like a box-wood tree, of perhaps a yard in height, freshly and healthily growing in each; and around each little tree, at about the middle of its height, there was passed a little red ribbon, suspending a pasteboard card with inscription Te eere, To honour of this or other other⁸¹ passage in the history of Unse liêut Vrowe,⁸² the Virgin Mary. These flower-tubs, mounted on trestles some four feet high, with their clear green shrubs, red ribbons and inscriptions, had a quite singular effect! The roof of that church, moreover, was all of wood, rising in gothic vault far up; fresh, tho' almost with something of an unfinished air. Sumptuous marbles of black and white; clear⁸³ floor, all of checkered marble, with tombs and inscriptions; wood carving, paintings in the window-recesses, over shrines and confessionals: here as elsewhere, nothing of this was wanting. By the side of the shrines there generally hung, on some black slab with gilt frame, a set of votive offerings

⁷⁸ AC changes "tho^{is}" to "thoughts."

⁷⁹ AC changes "Churches" to "churches" and "Church" to "church" throughout this passage.

⁸⁰ St. Nicholas's Church in Ghent was begun in the early thirteenth century to replace a Romanesque structure that had been destroyed.

⁸¹ AC deletes the repeated "other."

⁸² AC transcribes as "Unse liewe Vrowe." TC may be attempting a phonetic version of "Unsere Liebe Frau," Our Dear Lady.

⁸³ AC changes to "clean."

(exactly in the old heathen style), tiny figures of teeth, legs, horses, hands, jaw-teeth, in mother-of-pearl or perhaps in silver or gold,—grateful acknowledgements that by the saint there inhabiting such and such limbs or possessions had been freed from pain or peril. Wealthy liberality, simple-heartedness, and thick darkness of ignorance strangely looked out upon you as from past ages, here in your own age. The spires and outer architecture of these buildings have a luxuriance as of plants growing in rich mould under the influences⁸⁴ at once of heat and of darkness. Fantastic on the great scale; that is the definition of them. ~~Long fluted shafts~~ Confused flutings, stalks and branches; ~~bricks~~ high shafts suddenly swelling out in the middle into some annular bulge, and as suddenly contracting again, the annular bulge ~~above and~~ covered on its upper and even its under side with slate,—as if these good men had wanted to build a brick Solomon’s candle-stick; a brick pepperbox, as I already said: all which nevertheless, in its ~~size~~ Cyclopean size, in its ~~???~~ venerable age, is altogether poetic, next door still to sacred, for you. The roofs of these edifices all of sleek blue slate (like our Welsh slate) strike you ~~like~~ by their steepness, still more by their unexampled size,—like a whole hanging farm of slate. Of the interior pictures by Vandyke, Rubens, Van Eck or inferior persons, be nothing here said. In the Cathedral, Church of St Bavon, so-called, I found a large squadron of priests and singers busy chanting mass: a mass for the dead, I understood. The sound of them was as a loud not unmelodious bray, in various notes of the gamut, from clamorous eager sound of petitioning down to the depths of bass resignation awe or acquiescence, which, reverberating from the vasts roofs⁸⁵ and walls, was or might at one time have been a very appropriate thing. I grudge terribly to listen to any “office for the dead” as to a piece of an opera. The priests, while I was there, took their departure, “filthy gutty hallions,”⁸⁶ by a side passage, each with a small bow towards the altar, and left the rest of the affair

⁸⁴ AC changes to “influence.”

⁸⁵ AC changes to “the vast roof.”

⁸⁶ TC alludes to Walter Scott’s *Rob Roy* (1818), in which Dougal refers to the baillies of Glasgow as “ta filthy, gutty hallions” [filthy, gross rascals]; see also *CLO*: TC to John A. Carlyle, 18 Dec. 1824. AC deletes “filthy gutty hallions,” and Froude changes the phrase to “filthy hallions” (*Life* 1: 268).

to an effective enough squadron of singers and trumpet or bassoon men, who ~~remained~~ were seated, gravely at work, in their wooden pews in the choir. Aloft and around, as I perambulated the aisles, where some few poor people seemed faintly joining in this business, the view was magnificent; the noisy hoarse ~~good~~ growling of the mass, roaring thro' these time-honoured spaces, and still calling itself worship—ach Gott! Turner says, the Lama-liturgy in Thibet, which often goes on all night, is likewise distinguished for its noise, harsh but deep mournfully impressive, and reminds you of the mass.⁸⁷ In an outer corner of this Cathedral, opening from a solitary street in the rear, I found a little chapel with ~~a long~~ an old Gothic-arch door which stood open: approaching I found it a little closet of a place, perhaps some ten feet square, and fifteen high: on the wall right opposite the entrance was a little niche dized round with curtains, laces, <a> votive tablet⁸⁸ of teeth, &c at the side of it; within this niche, sat a dized paltry doll, some three feet long, done with paint, ribbons and ruffles,—this was the Mother of God; on the lap of it lay a much smaller doll (literally they were dolls, such as children have)—this was itself God. Good Heavens, O ancient Earth and Sky—⁸⁹ Before this pair of dolls sat, in very deed, about noon of Monday gone a week, some half-dozen women, not of the lowest class, some of them with young children, busy counting their beads, applying themselves to prayer. I gazed speechless,—not in anger! An aged woman in decent ~~cap~~ black hood (perhaps a nun), sat in a little sentry-box in the ~~darkest corner~~ corner, looking as thro' a small window, silently superintending the place, ~~with the holy water in sight~~; they bowed ~~unto~~ towards her before going out when their devotions were done. While I stood here for a moment there entered a stunted crooked-looking man, of the most toil worn downpressed aspect, tho' still below middle age; he had ~~leather-str~~ coarse sabots; leathern straps on him, like a chair-man or porter; his ~~fingers~~ hands hard, crooked, black, the nails nearly all gone, hardly the eighth of an inch of

⁸⁷ Captain Samuel Turner, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of Teshoo Lama, in Tibet; Containing a Narrative of a Journey through Bootan, and Part of Tibet* (London: G. and W. Nicol, 1800); see 307.

⁸⁸ AC changes to “votive tablets.”

⁸⁹ AC changes to “Earth and Sky!”

nail belonging to each finger,—fruit of sore labour, all his days and all his fathers'⁹⁰ days,—the most perfect image of a poor drudge: he, poor drudge, put two of his horn-fingers into the holy-water, dabbed it on his brow, and, folding the black horn-hands, sank on both his knees to pray. The low black head and small brow, and folding the black horn-hands sank on both his knees to pray.⁹¹ The low black head, and small brow, nailless fingers, face and aspect like the poorest Irishman; praying to the two Dolls there! You had to stand speechless. L'homme et absurde. At the door sat squatted a poor beggar-woman with nearly famished child,⁹² to whom I gave my sou, and walked off.

Of churches and architecture &c be nothing more now said,—or as little more as possible! The roof of the lofty, very large old Town hall is still worth a word: an immense steep hanging acre of blue sleek slates; but the back wall of the edifice seemed some two stories higher than the front; whereby it came about that the front side of the roof was out of all proportion long and the back part short,—giving you the notion of a pair of human legs, one of them cut short at mid thigh! In the interior of the building seemed to be law-courts now sitting; and a especially some police-office with a ragged questionable population waiting in the old corridors, thro' whom and back again I walked, not perhaps without criticism in unknown Flemish tongue. Three or four solid-looking burghers stood in consultation in another corridor on the same floor, smart little figures in cylindrical barretta (cap) and advocate-gown issued out and in, as green spring-doors opened and closed; but I descended the outer staircase again, and went on my way without inquiry. The streets of Ghent have all a modest respectable substantial appearance; wonderfully clean, and the air too altogether smokeless: some half-dozen cotton-mills I found emitting realt thick reek, but they stood at the outskirts, and the wind was blowing favourably towards the country quarter. French speech was more prevalent than at Bruges, and becomes as I understand, ever more prevalent onward to Brussels: but the lower class is still generally of

⁹⁰ AC changes to “all his father’s days.”

⁹¹ AC changes to “on his knees.”

⁹² Froude omits the mention of the famished child.

Dutch dialect, ignorant of any other: in a small grocer-shop, in a steep bye-street, I had to bargain with the young mistress of it for a Glas Bier in High Dutch,⁹³ and which with a modicum of dumb-shew brought us handsomely thro'. In a better grocer-shop, in the herb-market, a woman sold me bad cigars in fluent enough French. It seems to me again a very miserable thing this of an honest Deutsch people struggling to deny its Dutchhood, and become a kind of mongrel Gallic Celts!⁹⁴ Fanfaronade has carried the Grande Nation a great way, among nations; but seems as if it would not go much farther in our days.

The street-population was but scanty, in the hot weather; decent, well-dressed for most part; the shop men and women were also reasonable, cleanly figures. To the Northwest the level of the city decidedly rises. I struck into a narrow obscure street, dirty, ill-paved, evidently the abode of the lower kind of poor. Ill-starred taylors⁹⁵ were at work here, shoemakers, solitary artisans, oftenest women wives of artisans with groups of dirty children, and an abundance of small dogs. The accommodation was equal in wretchedness to the worst of a British large town. The doors stood all open: a dirty small room, with a few stools &c, and litter and rubbish, dirty yellow sand on the wooden floor; here toiled and moiled the poor wife with her hungry ones; a narrow staircase, little wider than a ladder, led up to the bedroom above: this seemed to be all the house. One clean house, and perhaps only one, I noticed in the street: an elderly, or rather oldish-young, ♀ woman sat working lace here, with her green pillow and pattern marked on it, with many pins, which she shifted according to need, and some fifty or forty slim little thread-bobbins, which she kept dancing hither and thither, round and among the said pins on her lace pattern figure with astonishing celerity: "Kan not verstahn,"⁹⁶ said answered she, when I said "Dentelle?"—her messin-dog barked, but was rebuked by her, and she seemed to like that I should watch her a little. Poor "oldish young girl!" I could see how it was with her: she had missed getting

⁹³ AC changes to "a steep by-street" and "for a *Glass Bier*."

⁹⁴ AC changes to "Celts. . . ." and omits the rest of the paragraph.

⁹⁵ AC changes to "Ill-starred tailors."

⁹⁶ AC changes to "*Kan nit verstahn*."

married,—perhaps by “misfortune;”—and now, retreated to this small shelter, which and all in it she kept clean as a new penny, she was to plait lace for the rest of her time in this world. I laid a half franc on her pillow, and went pensively my way. Aloft at the North-west extremity stands the Abbaye de St. Pierre, part of it still a Church,⁹⁷ of very respectable equipment; the rest changed—alas, into barracks; nay another great mass of it, outskirts, I suppose, blasted entirely away, and the ground getting itself itself⁹⁸ for an elevated esplanade! The view into the woody green country is pleasant enough; the railway carriages snorting and panting, as if impatient to start, just under your feet. An accurate-looking steel-grey man, whom I spoke to here, answered my inquiries; informed me farther that he was an ancien-militaire (poor Belgian halfpay Lieutenant, I suppose), and had fought against us English and the Duke of York in 1793.⁹⁹ “Vous l’avez bien battu,” I answered; “et enfin c’est ce qu’il a mérité. Il n’avait que rester chez lui alors, je pense!” The steel-grey man squeezed my hand at parting. Poor ancien momie militaire!¹⁰⁰ Nunneries exist still at Ghent; at least one Nunnery which I found at the other root of this Hill, close by the Scheldt sedges of the Scheldt;¹⁰¹ but no abbey or monk establishment survives the hard times. Nearby that same Nunnery, which is properly without the town, among rough sedgy and dock-covered spaces, ~~close by them~~ between two branches of the lazy Scheldt, I entered a huge high roofed old building, which seemed to have been a Church, but was now an excellent-looking Hospital. The sentry answered me

⁹⁷ Froude inserts “the rest of it still a barracks and an elevated esplanade” and deletes the rest of the passage until “An accurate looking steel-grey man.”

⁹⁸ *Sic*; AC changes to “ground getting itself cleared for.”

⁹⁹ Prince Frederick, duke of York and Albany (1763–1827), second son of George III and commander of British forces during the Flanders campaigns of 1793–95. Having driven the French army from Belgium during the summer of 1793, Prince Frederick was subsequently defeated and forced to retreat at the battle of Hondschoten (6, 8 September 1793). The British contingent was driven from Belgium the following year, and in December Prince Frederick returned to England, where his father promoted him to the rank of field marshal (February 1795).

¹⁰⁰ Froude deletes the rest of this passage and begins with a new sentence, “Precisely where the town.”

¹⁰¹ AC changes to “sedges of the Scheldt.”

civilly that I could not enter farther “pour_me promener.” At the door I talked with an artisan, strolling idle with a child on his arm; not far off, precisely where the town ended, in the rear of a poor brown cottage, stood a poor young woman, dabble-dabbling with linens in a wash-tub. ~~Conquer~~ Poor young sister, conquering heroes perambulate the world, where so much is going on, and this is thy share in its history: good b’ye to thee, my girl,—and see thou do thy washing honestly; it will then be well with thee; ~~but~~ better than with most quack-egoists, never so conquering!— At an earlier hour of the day I had entered one of the old ~~Gate~~ Gate-houses, or Ports of Ghent; ~~built~~ girt now into the inside of many busy streets. It was a strong black place; with huge hinges, as at Temple Bar;¹⁰² had been of considerable height and depth, but the interior of it now was changed into dingy vaulted culs-de-sac (blind alleys), in which children were sporting, the inhabitants apparently poor workmen. Allons!

~~About one o’clock, according to anticipation, we all did meet, at our inn, and with an~~

Soon after noon, the working people, generally in cleanish blouses, came along the street I was in for dinner. Cotton people, I supposed; about a half were women, also very clean and decent-looking. I sat down amidst the trees in the chief square, called Place d’Armes, where now also labourers were sitting at dinner. Their wives or some little boy had brought it out to them. In all cases, it appeared to consist of two parts—a coarse brown jug containing liquor, soup, oftenest beer, or skim-milk, flanked by a slice of two of black rye bread. This formed the out flank, I think generally the rear-guard of the repast:¹⁰³ the main battle was a coarse brown stewpan of glazed crockery (narrower at the top, like a kind of small rude hemisphere of a dish) which uniformly contained potatoes stewed with bits of broken coarse meat; all in a moist state;—eaten ravenously with a pewter fork. The dishes I judged had all been cooked in some common oven for a sou or so each. The good wife sat by in a composed sorrowfully satisfied way, seeing

¹⁰² Temple Bar, London, where Fleet Street becomes the Strand, location of a city gate designed by Sir Christopher Wren (1632–1723) and completed in 1672. Wren’s gate, carefully dismantled in 1878, now stands in Paternoster Square, near St. Paul’s Cathedral.

¹⁰³ Froude omits the comma and “I think generally the rear-guard.”

her good man eat; what he left, before taking to the liquor jug, he carelessly handed her, and she ate it with much more neatness tho' also willingly enough. Good motherkin! But the appetite of the male sex was something great! One man not far from me, a weak-built figure, almost "without chin," shovelled and forked with astonishing alacrity out of his stewpan, his protrusive eyes flashing all the while, and his loose eye-brows shuttling and jerking at every stroke—the whole face of him a devouring chimera! He gave the remnant (a small one, I doubt) to his boy; snatched up the black bread, and made a cut in it, at the first bite, equal to a moderate horse-shoe. Poor fellows! They all wiped their mouths, I could see, with some kind of dim cotton handkerchief ~~in their pockets~~ drawn from their blouses for that end: they then tumbled themselves down for a half hour of deepest ambrosial sleep.— All round this same Place d'Armes sat, stood, or paraded itself, as I could discern, the ~~???~~ flower of the Ghent Donothingism, Dandyism male and female. Sumptuous Cafés, "salles of Reunion"¹⁰⁴ were visible on this hand and that: at one door amid pillars opening into some wide hall, lounged many well-dressed Frenchified persons, merchants or lawyers, talking, or lifting their hats in solemn salute; ~~in an~~ on the opposite side of the square was a Café with extensive awnings, under which a younger section of Frenchified Donothingism ~~??~~ sat extensively, and smoked cigars to their liquor,—sugarloaf hats white and black, moustachios, faces with no overplus of meaning: pleasant enough for the passer-by.

Our table d'hôte, where we did all joyfully meet between one and two, had nothing worth describing. It was not the main table d'hôte, which latter did not sit down till five. Four other English tourists, elderly men and elderly wives (one pair of them Scotch) joined themselves to our end of the table; a milk-faced Dutch figure or two with ~~two~~ tow moustachios trying to speak English, were next visible; and far down, quite out of reach of us, sat braves Belges, army captains and such like—quietly intent on their victuals, and unexceptionable men. A most nut-brown young woman entered with her harp towards the end of the business, but soon went round with her wooden

¹⁰⁴ AC changes to "Salles de Reunion."

dish; the ? Scotch male tourist (instructed by a milk-faced Dutch neighbour) said, as he gave his half-franc, “Spielen sie noch ein wenig,” † (Good Hoch Teutsch too), “Play a little more,” which the brown girl did. After dinner we sat arcadianly, in the shady wide entrance of the inn, on chairs, and smoked, looking out into the street: then came new promenading, new church-seeing, visit to Playhouse, Concert-room; visit to the Coupure, “chief promenade” so-called,¹⁰⁵—where however was nothing but some dim miscellany, mostly of apple-women and idle boys, the shady river-bank, all deserted at this hour. In fine towards five o’clock we had to settle our inn-bills, mount into the high spacious omnibus (which puts British omnibuses to Shame!), and so after long confused delaying, get under way towards Ostend and England again.

Two French ladies sat in our carriage this time; a mother and her daughter, with whom Spring Rice and I, eschewing sleep or sulky tedium, contrived to keep up a kind of brisk conversation most of the way. The Mother, tho’ old, was much the livelier; small, crooked, flabby, with aquiline ~~sh~~ low-browed face (frog-face, an enemy would have said!), ~~but something~~ with small ~~intelligence~~ or no intelligence beyond common; but something really graceful, dextrous and ingenious in her ways: manners decidedly well-bred, and beautiful neat little hands—her only natural beauty. The daughter, herself no longer young, sat screwed together into melancholy taciturnity for most part. Guizot, Louis Philippe, Rachel, Lafarge,¹⁰⁶ &c, &c, on this commonplace element we contrived to subsist with comfort,—so graceful was our old ingenious lady. England, I could see, figured with her as the “triste” nation of shopkeepers, all wonderfully observant of la belle France—“cette belle France que nous aimons tous!”—in all which views we cheerfully let her persevere. Her daughter and she, both of them, got tears

¹⁰⁵ “The Coupure,” name of the canal that runs through old Ghent, built in 1751 during the reign of the Hapsburg ruler Maria Theresa (1717–80).

¹⁰⁶ François Pierre Guillaume Guizot (1787–1874), French historian, orator, and statesman who after the 1830 revolution served as the minister of education under Louis Philippe (1773–1850), “citizen king” of the French. Mademoiselle Rachel; see above, 59. Marie-Fortunée Lafarge (1816–52), convicted of poisoning her husband in 1840 after a sensational trial. While in prison she published her *Mémoires* (1841).

brought into their eyes as we spoke of the Duke of Orleans's death.¹⁰⁷ I took this worthy old Française to be perhaps the widow of some Arras Judge or Advocate,—perhaps?¹⁰⁸ She had good manners, pretty hands; and I suppose, for all her frog-face, was a coquette once! At half past nine, under cloud of night we bade them mild farewell, now on the sand terminus at Ostend,—where the Ship's Steward awaited us to carry the baggage, and the little Ship herself near by with a second dinner and all needful accommodation.

Thus had our little Belgian Tour, the shortest in recorded history, ended. With the next full sea, about one in the morning, we had left Ostend; and should, had the wind answered, have been in Margate next morning at 11, and home that same Tuesday by the Steamer, as prearranged. But the night and the day proved windless, or all but windless, so that even the Vigilant could not make above some three or two knots in the hour. We sat in the shadow of the large sails, screened from the over-brightness of the brightest of days; well pleased to loiter in such delicious temperature; to look at the clear green sea, green and pure as emerald, with the boat-keel lightly dragging thro' it, the great silent sky in pure hem and perfect hemisphere spread over it. Not till nightfall, with its stars and lamps, did we discern the North Foreland, the two rows of Margate gas-ranges, and other beacons of English land. On the morrow morning with a right brisk breeze we were swiftly rushing up the Thames-stream, overpassing its multitudes of ships; whole marching regiments of ships, with their canvas all spread London-ward,—beautiful enough to see. The very steamers could hardly keep pace with us. Once in the brisk breeze, our little Captain steering, there went off somewhere a kind of sudden screech: our enormous jib-sail, of thin cloth, had gone in a moment, close by the rope, swift as fate; torn by a single thread,¹⁰⁹ and trailing there in the water! The ship

¹⁰⁷ Ferdinand Philippe, duc d'Orléans (1810–42), eldest son of king Louis Philippe, had died on 13 July from head injuries suffered when he leaped from an out of control carriage.

¹⁰⁸ Arras, principal town of the province Artois in northwestern France and the birthplace of Maximilien de Robespierre (1758–94), who practiced law and served there as a judge.

¹⁰⁹ AC changes to “torn to a single thread.”

gave a sudden a lurch, the Captain's eyes a sudden twinkle; no other change observable: in ten minutes more they had the old sail neatly gathered in for mending, and a fresh jib flying as before.¹¹⁰ To see men so perfect in their craft, fit for their work, and fitly ordered to it, was a pleasure. At Deptford, mate and Captain ranged themselves both by the tiller for farewell, and swiftly in our swift motion, a gallant boat's-crew had made itself ready for us; we shook hands cordially with the two good men, stepped down into our places, and shot swiftly forward in our boat, the ship now turning swiftly leftwards towards anchorage. Five rowers with a boatswain; men unsurpassable, I do not doubt, in boat navigation! Strong tall men, all clean-shaved, clean-washed, in ~~good~~ clean blue trousers, in massive clean checkshirts, their black neckcloths tied round their waists; their large clean-brown hands—cunning in the craft of the sea: it was a kind of “good joy” to look at it all. In few minutes the shot us into the Custom-house stairs,¹¹¹ and here ~~ar~~ waving mild farewells, our travel's history concluded.

Thus had kind destiny projected us rocket-wise for a little space into the clear blue of Heaven and Freedom: thus again were we swiftly reabsorbed into the great smoky simmering crater,¹¹² and London's soot-volcano had again recovered us.

Alas, while I scribble down these things, all Lancashire is risen in Chartist Hunger insurrection. Can a thinking Englishman, in these hours, find nothing suitabler to write!¹¹³

Chelsea, Tuesday 16 August, 1842—

¹¹⁰ AC changes to “fresh jib-sail flying as before.”

¹¹¹ AC changes to “they shot us into the Custom-house stairs.”

¹¹² Froude transcribes as “smoky simmering center.”

¹¹³ On 16 August, newspapers widely reported news of riots by workers in the manufacturing districts that had been instigated by a Birmingham Chartist named Arthur O'Neill and by members of the National Charter Association. The *Times* featured individual reports on the situation in Manchester, Dudley, Leeds, Huddersfield, Bolton, Leicester, Stockport, Warwickshire, Coventry, and Preston, where four men were fatally shot by the military (5). *The Morning Chronicle* also reported riots in Blackburn, Glasgow, Dundee, Calton, Dunfermline, and West Greenless, where a potato field was ransacked by striking colliers from Cambuslang (3). Both AC and Froude omit this paragraph.