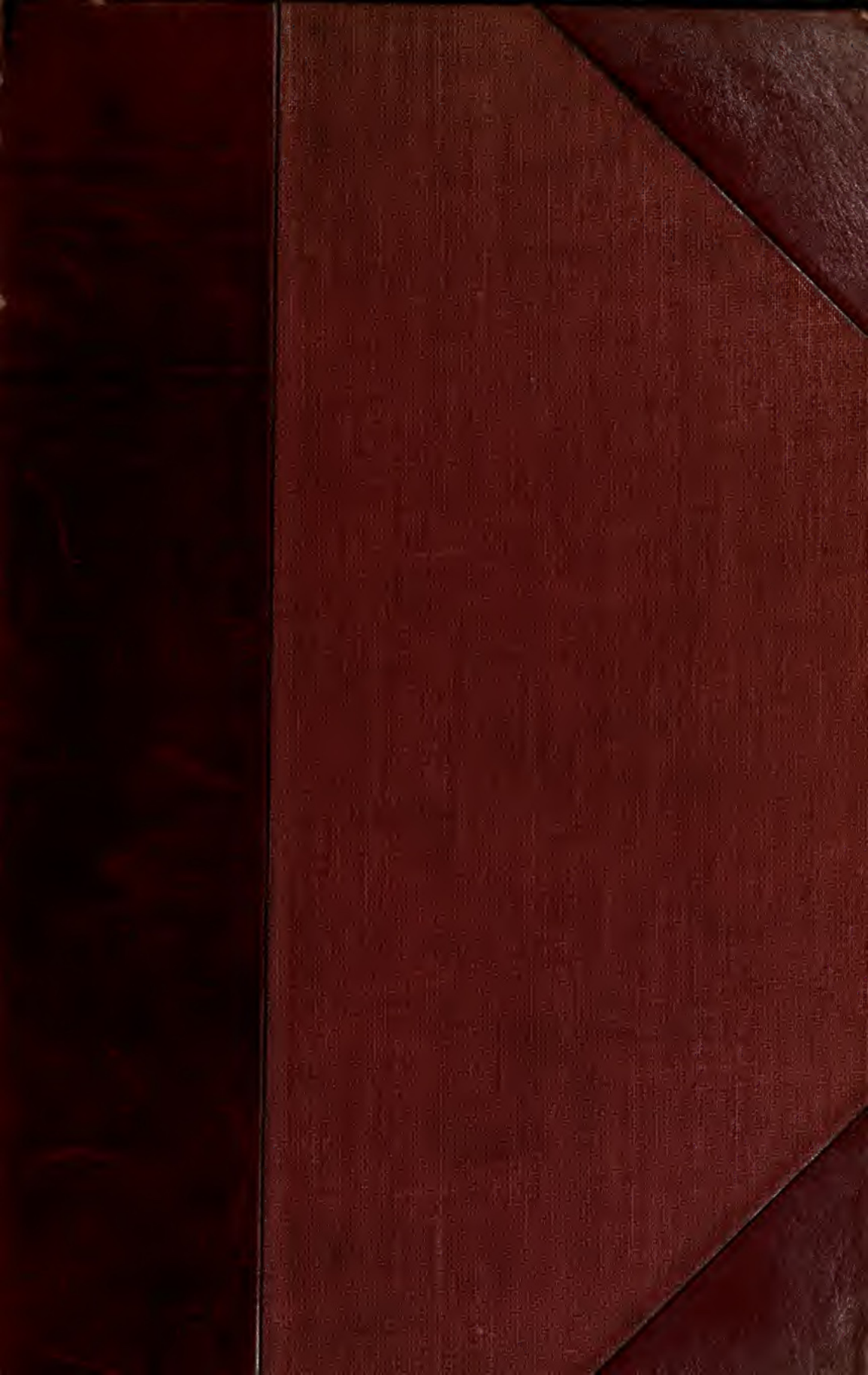




CHARLES LAMB'S
ESSAYS

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THE SUPERANNUATED MAN.

— *Sera tamen respexit*
Libertas.

IF peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office ; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite ; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood ; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six and thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing-lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant play-time, and frequently-intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a-day attendance at a counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to any thing. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself ; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation.*

* Our ancestors, the noble old Puritans of Cromwell's day, could distinguish between a day of religious rest and a day of recreation ; and while they exacted a rigorous abstinence from all amusements (even to the walking out of nursery maids with their little charges in the fields) upon the Sabbath ; in the lieu of the superstitious observance of the Saints days, which they abrogated, they humanely gave to the apprentices, and poorer sort of people, every alternate Thursday for a day of entire sport and recreation. A strain of piety and policy to be commended above the profane mockery of the Stuarts and their Book of Sports.

In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a week-day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over—No busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated prentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and lively expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look any thing but comfortable.

But besides Sundays I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thralldom.

Independently of the rigours of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my day-light servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the 5th of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly

inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained labouring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life, when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock) I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlour. I thought, now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L—, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me,—when to my utter astonishment B—, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant upon the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!) and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy.

Esto Perpetua!

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more Time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for

there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away, but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no Time my own but candle-light Time, I used to weary out my head and eye-sight in by-gone winters. I walk, read or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man

—— That's born, and has his years come to him,
In some green desert.

"Years," you will say! "what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us, he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me three-fold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was, that a vast tract of time had intervened since I quitted the Counting House. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks, with whom I had so many years and for so many hours in each day of the year been closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage, which may serve to illustrate this fancy, in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death:

—— 'Twas but just now he went away;
I have not since had time to shed a tear;
And yet the distance does the same appear
As if he had been a thousand years from me.
Time takes no measure in Eternity.

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk-fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity, which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk, the peg where I hung my hat, were appropriated to

another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D—I take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not,—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six and thirty years, that smoothed for me with their jokes and their conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know, that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell Ch—, dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do——, mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl——, officious to do, and to volunteer, good services!—and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington of old, stately House of Merchants; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one half the year supplied the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my “works!” There let them rest, as I do from my labours, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN.—No. II.

A Clerk I was in London gay.—O'KEEFE.

A FORTNIGHT has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond-street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a book-stall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in a morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish-street Hill? Where is Fenchurch-street? Stones of old Mincing-lane which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six and thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer

flags of Pall Mall. It is Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles. It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week, or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday nights' sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, &c. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sat as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holyday as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge candle, which it used to seem to cut out of the holyday. I have Time for every thing. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May-morning. It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? I recite those verses of Cowley, which so mightily agree with my constitution.

Business! the frivolous pretence
Of human lusts to shake off innocence:
Business! the grave impertinence:
Business! the thing which I of all things hate:
Business! the contradiction of my fate.

Or I repeat my own lines, written in my Clerk state:

Who first invented work—and bound the free
And holyday-rejoicing spirit down
To the ever-haunting importunity
Of business, in the green fields, and the town—
To plough, loom, anvil, spade—and oh! most sad,
To this dry drudgery of the desk's dead wood?
Who but the Being unblest, alien from good,
Sabbathless Satan! he who his unglad
Task ever plies 'mid rotatory burnings,
That round and round incalculably reel—
For wrath divine hath made him like a wheel—
In that red realm from whence are no returnings;
Where toiling, and turmoiling, even and aye
He, and his thoughts, keep pensive worky-day!

O this divine Leisure!—Reader, if thou art furnished with the Old Series of the London, turn incontinently to the third volume (page 367), and you will see my present condition there touched in a “Wish” by a

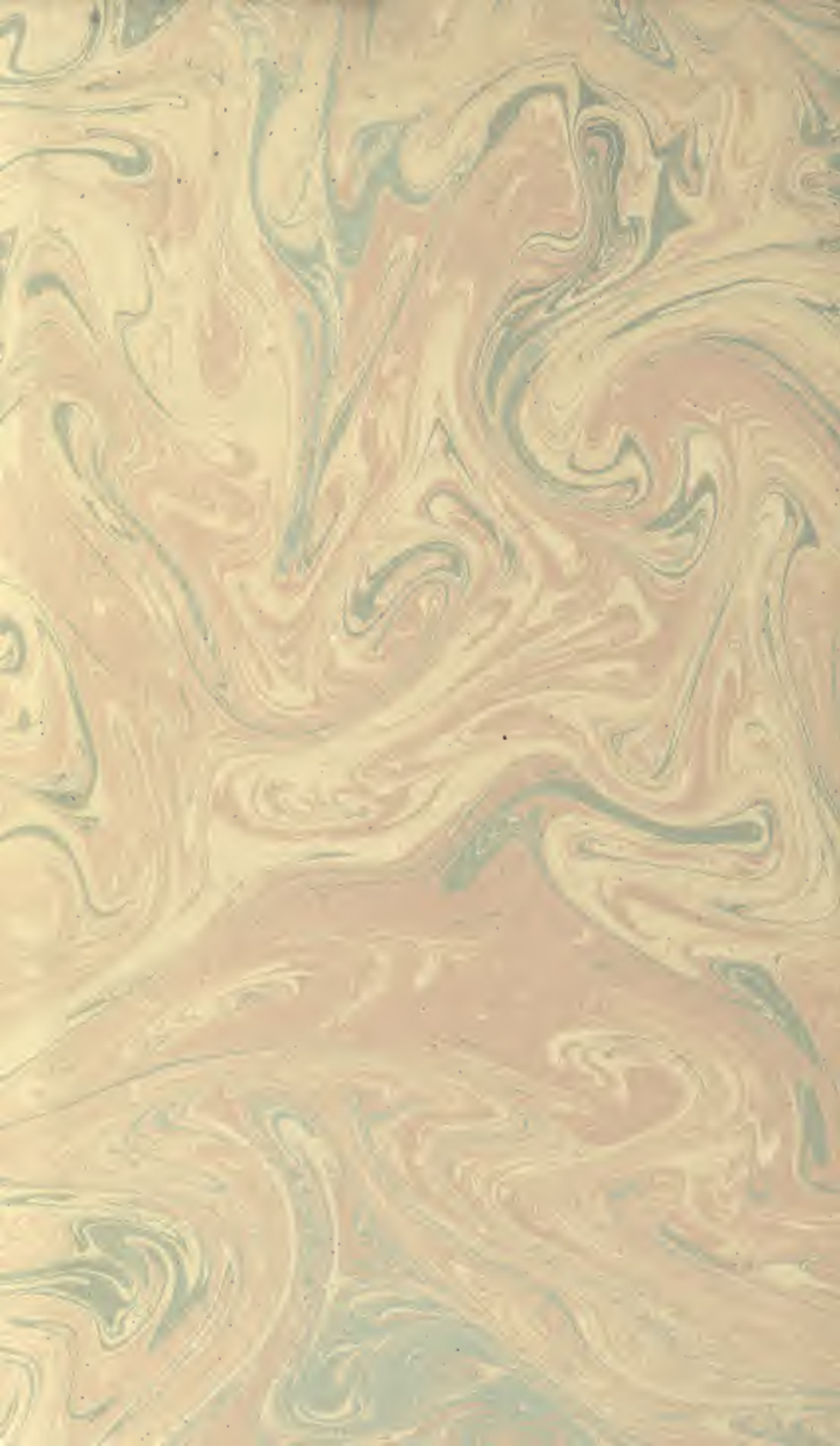
daintier pen than I can pretend to. I subscribe to that Sonnet *toto corde*. A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

As low as to the fiends.

I am no longer J——s D——n, Clerk to the Firm of, &c. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about; not to and from. They tell me, a certain *cum dignitate* air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the opera. *Opus operatum est*. I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task work, and have the rest of the day to myself.

J, D.

Beaufort-terrace, Regent-street;
Late of Ironmonger's-court, Fenchurch-street.





**Homily at Class Reunion,
St Brendan's College, Killarney
October 17, 2015.**

**+ Dermot Clifford
Archbishop Emeritus Cashel & Emly**

The scene from the parable of the Last Judgement which we just heard, has been painted by many artists, the most famous of whom is Michelangelo. It occupies the wall behind the altar in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. Some of you have probably seen it or, perhaps, found it on the Internet. It is a very crowded scene. The dead of all nations, *panta ta ethné* are being summoned to face the final judgement. Our Lord is seated on a throne at the centre, surrounded by angels, patriarchs and apostles. The Angels are blowing their trumpets with vigour while the bodies of the dead are rising below him. His mother Mary is disengaged by his side, not tugging at his sleeve as she did in the marriage feast at Cana. It is a very stark scene indeed.

Christ has his right arm raised, lifting the blessed toward Heaven while he is dropping his left hand to send the damned to Hell. The two arms of Christ represent the scales of justice, as the ultimate sentence is passed. Both the blessed and the damned are puzzled by the Lord's final sentence. The just ask, "When did we see you hungry or thirsty did not give you food and drink?" The damned make the exact same appeal, "As long as you neglected to do it to the least of my brothers and sisters you neglected to do it to me." The criterion on which the judgement is based is action, not good intentions or aspirations. There is no mention of heroic sacrifices on the one hand or heinous sins on the other! Just doing or neglecting the ordinary acts of kindness to the person in need, or, on the other hand, neglecting to help the neighbour in need. St Matthew's account makes extremely uncomfortable reading for everyone who lives a comfortable life without thought for and action in favour of the poor, sick and suffering at home and abroad.

I recall my very last words to you on the morning you left St. Brendan's at the end of the Leaving Cert in late June 1965. I sent you forth into the big world to find your feet in further education or in employment. They were as follows, "If at the end of your days will have everything but do not have Christ you have nothing. If, on the other hand, you have nothing except Christ you have everything". I did not expect to have the opportunity to address you again so soon! Here we are back this Chapel after 50 years, you are 67 or 68 years old now and I am 76! It would appear that I am even a bit late to wish you a happy retirement! Most of you have been married and have children and some of you have grandchildren. It is hard for me to believe. Each of you has a unique story to share and we look forward to hearing how you have fared since you left the Sem. It is wonderful that we have the leisure to sit down and spend time together today and tonight.

I was called to preach the Kingdom of God outside Kingdom of Kerry in 1986. I spent 26 years as Archbishop of Cashel and Emly and four years as Apostolic Administrator of Cloyne, both sentences running concurrently! I am only joking; I thank God the privilege of having served in both places. I had served eight years in St Brendan's, two years in the London School of Economics and 12 years as Diocesan Secretary with a voluntary Chaplaincy in St Mary of the Angels, Beaufort 1976 to 1986 running concurrently. And I thank the Lord for giving me the health to do so. *Buíochas mór le Dia.*

To return to 1964, when I had just been ordained in the Irish College Rome, I had been told that I would spend two or three more years there studying Canon Law at the Lateran University. Then out of the blue one morning, I received a letter from Bishop Dennis Moynihan which read, "Dear Father Clifford, I regret that I have to make a change of plans for you. St Brendan's College needs a Dean of

Discipline and a Professor of Science. You are to return for work in early September". I immediately thought to myself, "I will be the Professor of Science but I wonder who is the unfortunate man will be the Dean? That job would be the very last one I should have wanted. I went up the corridor in the Irish College to show my letter to Fr Michael Manning a Kerry priest who was completing his Doctorate in Canon Law. As he read the letter, he smiled broadly and said, "You have got two jobs, Dermot, Prosit, Congratulations! I was worried that I might be landed with the job of Dean." That fairly knocked me back I can tell you. It took the wind out of my sails!

When I returned home, I met Fr. Dan McSweeney a former member of the staff at St Brendan's now C.C. in Castleisland ", they will soon knock the smile off your face in Killarney", he told me with apparent satisfaction. But one day I was having lunch in Egan's restaurant in Portlaoise and Fr. Pat Joe O'Sullivan, who had just finished as Dean that June, came over to me from another table and said, "You are a lucky man, Dermot, this year's Leaving Cert class where a troublesome lot but all the thugs are gone now. Next year's Leaving Cert class are a lovely group". The word "thug" was much in use in St Brendan's at that time. In fact, there were three categories of boys there at the time. First there were the scholarship men, next the good footballers, after that the decent citizens and lastly the thugs! When Pat Spillane said on the "Sunday Game" that the Tyrone footballers were "thugs" he was reprimanded by the RTE Authorities. He was told to use the word "blackguards" instead. The original Thugs were Indian gangsters who posed as tourist guides and then strangled the tourists, buried their bodies and took their possessions. By comparison the thugs in St Brendan's were only middling thugs! The day pupils among you would divide the student body of the time into boarders, town dayboys and country dayboys, in descending order of importance.

Father Pat Joe O'Sullivan's words were very encouraging to me and meant a lot. Not only that, but his opinion of your class proved to be absolutely correct. When I arrived at the beginning of September⁶⁴ I was given some advice by the elders. Father Ned Corridan gave me this advice, "Be ruthless! If you make a threat be sure to carry it out." Father Dan Long who was visiting and was Dean long years before that said, "Be content with your pay as John the Baptist told the soldiers." My pay for the first year was £18-10-0 per month. But I was all found for 365 days of the year. The room staff put down my fire, cleaned the rooms and even polished my shoes! I did not realise how many benefits in kind I was given. At that time, the priests on the Staff handed over their cheques to the College as a contribution to the running costs. The students' pension at the time was £65 per year. Father Dermot O'Sullivan, who was Dean my first year in 1952 at St Brendan's gave me the best advice as follows, "Be yourself, be strict with the general body but be kind to the individual especially if he is in trouble. He was hugely supportive of me throughout my life. Go dtuga Dia leaba dhó 'sna Flaithis!

I was in the job for eight years and I can say with sincerity that your class the finest of them all. I had no part whatever in your formation. You were well-behaved, serious about your studies you took part in the sports especially the football and you cooperated very willingly with me in the extracurricular activities which I started. There were debates, concerts, quizzes, a fancy dress parade, a song contest and regular visits to the Fitzgerald Stadium on Sunday afternoons. We ended with a boat trip on the Shannon on June 16, two days before you began your Leaving Cert. We took in a film with Peter Sellers on our way home through Limerick that evening. I should add that Fr. John Moynihan was the "Real Dean". As President, he was unique, indefatigable and ubiquitous! When things seemed to be going well he always became very suspicious that some mischief was afoot somewhere among some of the boys. Years later, when I watched the British comedy "Porridge" Mr McCoy, the Scottish prison officer at Slade Prison reminded me of Moynihan in that he mistrusted the prisoners at all times! And he was usually right!

I am seven years older than you, as I said earlier. When I was 65 my class were celebrating 40 years of Priesthood and I was asked to address them. I rang the Central Statistics Office to enquire what the prospects were on average for men of 65 in 2004. Unknown to me, the CSO was now in Cork and a very good humoured lady answered me. "You are looking for your life expectancy, Archbishop. I will look up the table for you. You have 13.35 years to go". There was a long pause and she guessed that I was doing the arithmetic. "That will bring you to April 2018. But, cheer up, it might not be that long at all!" I rang them again the other day and another good lady told me that people aged 68 years have 14.5 years of life expectancy. I often noticed as I supervised study that your class spent almost half their study time on Honours Maths, so I am sure one or two of you went on to become statisticians! By the way, I am down to single figures myself at 9.1. Who knows? Man proposes, God disposes. And we must not forget Churchill's remark that there were three kinds of lies, lies, damn lies and statistics.

When I retired last February of this year I had a vague memory of an essay on the subject of retirement by Charles Lambe. I retrieved my old Leaving Cert textbook and I found the essay entitled, "The Superannuated Man. The only sentence which had remembered was that having spent years and years at an office desk, "the wood had entered my soul". I found the essay had far more meaning from me now than when I studied it in the mid-50s. Charles Lambe retired the age of 50 on to thirds of his salary which amounted to £450 per annum. He had spent 36 years working with East Indies Company in London. He worked a six-day week and only had a day off at Easter and Christmas and a one week's holiday in the summer. Small wonder then that he wrote to his friend Wordsworth as follows "I was set free on Tuesday last at 4 PM, and I came home for ever. It was like passing from life into Eternity. Every year to be as long as three i.e. to have three times as much real-time that is my own and it. I am now as if I had always been my own master. It is natural for me to go where I please, to do what I please. I have time for everything. I can visit a friend. I can interrupt a man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult him to take a day's pleasure with me in Windsor this fine May morning. It is a Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges whom I have left behind."

In the light of the Last Judgement parable, we might examine how we use the free time we now have. We could visit the sick more, we might consider joining a voluntary organisation which works the caring service of the neighbour in need. Newly retired people are a great resource in our communities. Charles Lambe began to attend church more often than when he was at work. I have seen newly retired and women take up the practice of coming to daily Mass in the Cathedral in Thurles, usually at 10:30 AM. They have a chat and perhaps, a cup of coffee afterwards. One needs to have interests and projects. One cannot play golf all day every day! I purchased a computer last March as my handwriting has become almost illegible. I had the assistance of a secretary in Killarney and in Thurles and they spoiled me! I dictated letters and homilies and they turned them out in minutes. But I took lessons from a good lady who teaches people like me to catch up on years of progress in technology which I missed out on, I now dictate into the machine and, with a bit of luck, I am able to get things down on paper in a legible manner. But the project of learning something new filled in a difficult enough few months in my new way of life.

Charles Lambe described how he found a change in his relationship to his former workmates, "his co-workers of the quill", as he called them, when he visited the office. "Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore me to the pleasant familiarity with which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked the same old jokes but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk, and the peg on which I hung my coat were appropriated by another. I knew that had to be, but I did not take to it kindly." I personally experienced many of the same things as Charles Lambe described. Former colleagues get me off the phone more quickly than in former times. Of course, I realise that I tend to go on a bit as is the nature of old people! The telephone

does not go nearly as often as it used to when I was at work. I was very pleased with this and relieved early on but I began to miss the chats, the asides when business had been completed. Even in the family setting the wives of retired men are not too happy to have their husbands under their feet all day when they have retired from working away from home most of the day. There is one story I heard recently. "An ever- loving wife", I don't know whether this is Homer's phrase or Damon Runyon's, but anyhow, the good lady said to her recently retired husband one morning, "John, what are you going to do today?" " Nothing", he replied. "But John, you did that all day yesterday." "I did," said John, "but I didn't get it finished!"

My advice to you back in June 50 years ago still holds good. If, at the end of your lives and may you

all enjoy long lives, if you have everything but do not have Christ, you have nothing. But if you have nothing only Christ you have everything. I think that in the interests of balance, we have to remind ourselves that the Christ of the Last Judgment is the Christ who used several parables to warn people to be watchful and ready at all times for His coming. But the Christ who walks with us through life is a much kinder and more merciful one. St Teresa of Avila, a great mystic, said the following: "A man can bear all things provided he possesses Christ Jesus dwelling within him as his friend and affectionate guide. Christ gives us help and strength, never deserts us and is true and sincere in his friendship." Or, in the words of Charles Lansbury, "He is my forever friend". Therefore, keep on the right side of Christ at all times so that you will end up on his right- hand side on the Day of the Last Judgement!