

**BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF A. W. KINGLAKE**

**BY**

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## Preface

It is just eleven years since Kinglake passed away, and his life has not yet been separately memorialized. A few years more, and the personal side of him would be irrecoverable, though by personality, no less than by authorship, he made his contemporary mark. When a tomb has been closed for centuries, the effaced lineaments of its tenant can be re-coloured only by the idealizing hand of genius, as Scott drew Claverhouse, and Carlyle drew Cromwell. But, to the biographer of the lately dead, men have a right to say, as Saul said to the Witch of Endor, "Call up Samuel!" In your study of a life so recent as Kinglake's, give us, if you choose, some critical synopsis of his monumental writings, some salvage from his ephemeral and scattered papers; trace so much of his youthful training as shaped the development of his character; depict, with wise restraint, his political and public life: but also, and above all, re-clothe him "in his habit as he lived," as friends and associates knew him; recover his traits of voice and manner, his conversational wit or wisdom, epigram or paradox, his explosions of sarcasm and his eccentricities of reserve, his words of winningness and acts of kindness: and, since one half of his life was social, introduce us to the companions who shared his lighter hour and evoked his finer fancies; take us to the Athenaeum "Corner," or to Holland House, and flash on us at least a glimpse of the brilliant men and women who formed the setting to his sparkle; "*dic in amicitiam coeant et foedera jungant.*"

This I have endeavoured to do, with such aid as I could command from his few remaining contemporaries. His letters to his family were destroyed by his own desire; on those written to Madame Novikoff no such embargo was laid, nor does she believe that it was intended. I have used these sparingly, and all extracts from them have been subjected to her censorship. If the result is not Attic in salt, it is at any rate Roman in brevity. I send it forth with John Bunyan's homely aspiration:

And may its buyer have no cause to say,  
His money is but lost or thrown away.

## Early Years

The fourth decade of the deceased century dawned on a procession of Oriental pilgrims, variously qualified or disqualified to hold the gorgeous East in fee, who, with bakshish in their purses, a theory in their brains, an unfilled diary-book in their portmanteaus, sought out the Holy Land, the Sinai peninsula, the valley of the Nile, sometimes even Armenia and the Monte Santo, and returned home to emit their illustrated and mapped octavos. We have the type delineated admiringly in Miss Yonge's "Heartsease," {1} bitterly in Miss Skene's "Use and Abuse," facetiously in the Clarence Bulbul of "Our Street." "Hang it! has not everybody written an Eastern book? I should like to meet anybody in society now who has not been up to the Second Cataract. My Lord Castleroyal has done one--an honest one; my Lord Youngent another--an amusing one; my Lord Woolsey another--a pious one; there is the 'Cutlet and the Cabob'--a sentimental one; Timbuctoother--a humorous one." Lord Carlisle's honesty, Lord Nugent's fun, Lord Lindsay's piety, failed to float their books. Miss Martineau, clear, frank, unemotional Curzon, fuddling the Levantine monks with rosoglio that he might fleece them of their treasured hereditary manuscripts, even Eliot Warburton's power, colouring, play of fancy, have yielded to the mobility of Time. Two alone out of the gallant company maintain their vogue to-day: Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine," as a Fifth Gospel, an inspired Scripture Gazetteer; and "Eothen," as a literary gem of purest ray serene.

In 1898 a reprint of the first edition was given to the public, prefaced by a brief eulogium of the book and a slight notice of the author. It brought to the writer of the "Introduction" not only kind and indulgent criticism, but valuable corrections, fresh facts, clues to further knowledge. These last have been carefully followed out. The unwary statement that Kinglake never spoke after his first failure in the House has been atoned by a careful study of all his speeches in and out of Parliament. His reviews in the "Quarterly" and elsewhere have been noted; impressions of his manner and appearance at different periods of his life have been recovered from coeval acquaintances; his friend Hayward's Letters, the numerous allusions in Lord Houghton's Life, Mrs. Crosse's lively chapters in "Red Letter Days of my Life," Lady Gregory's interesting recollections of the Athenaeum Club in Blackwood of December, 1895, the somewhat slender notice in the "Dictionary of National Biography," have all been carefully digested. From these, and, as will be seen, from other sources, the present Memoir has been compiled; an endeavour--sera tamen--to lay before the countless readers and admirers of his books a fairly adequate appreciation, hitherto unattempted, of their author.

I have to acknowledge the great kindness of Canon William Warburton, who examined his brother Eliot's diaries on my behalf, obtained information from Dean Boyle and Sir M. Grant Duff, cleared up for me not a few obscure allusions in the "Eothen" pages. My highly valued friend, Mrs. Hamilton Kinglake, of Taunton, his sister-in-law, last surviving relative of his own generation, has helped me with facts which no one else could have recalled. To Mr. Estcott, his old acquaintance and Somersetshire neighbour, I am indebted for recollections manifold and interesting; but above all I tender thanks to Madame Novikoff, his intimate associate and correspondent during the last twenty years

of his life, who has supplemented her brilliant sketch of him in "La Nouvelle Revue" of 1896 by oral and written information lavish in quantity and of paramount biographical value. Kinglake's external life, his literary and political career, his speeches, and the more fugitive productions of his pen, were recoverable from public sources; but his personal and private side, as it showed itself to the few close intimates who still survive, must have remained to myself and others meagre, superficial, disappointing, without Madame Novikoff's unreserved and sympathetic confidence.

Alexander William Kinglake was descended from an old Scottish stock, the Kinlochs, who migrated to England with King James, and whose name was Anglicized into Kinglake. Later on we find them settled on a considerable estate of their own at Saltmoor, near Borobridge, whence towards the close of the eighteenth century two brothers, moving southward, made their home in Taunton--Robert as a physician, William as a solicitor and banker. Both were of high repute, both begat famous sons. From Robert sprang the eminent Parliamentary lawyer, Serjeant John Kinglake, at one time a contemporary with Cockburn and Crowder on the Western Circuit, and William Chapman Kinglake, who while at Trinity, Cambridge, won the Latin verse prize, "Salix Babylonica," the English verse prizes on "Byzantium" and the "Taking of Jerusalem," in 1830 and 1832. Of William's sons the eldest was Alexander William, author of "Eothen," the youngest Hamilton, for many years one of the most distinguished physicians in the West of England. "Eothen," as he came to be called, was born at Taunton on the 5th August, 1809, at a house called "The Lawn." His father, a sturdy Whig, died at the age of ninety through injuries received in the hustings crowd of a contested election. His mother belonged to an old Somersetshire family, the Woodfordes of Castle Cary. She, too, lived to a great age; a slight, neat figure in dainty dress, full of antique charm and grace. As a girl she had known Lady Hester Stanhope, who lived with her grandmother, Lady Chatham, at Burton Pynsent, her own father, Dr. Thomas Woodforde, being Lady Chatham's medical attendant. {2} The future prophetess of the Lebanon was then a wild girl, scouring the countryside on bare-backed horses; she showed great kindness to Mary Woodforde, afterwards Kinglake's mother. It was as his mother's son that she received him long afterwards at Djoun. To his mother Kinglake was passionately attached; owed to her, as he tells us in "Eothen," his home in the saddle and his love for Homer. A tradition is preserved in the family that on the day of her funeral, at a churchyard five miles away, he was missed from the household group reassembled in the mourning home; he was found to have ordered his horse, and galloped back in the darkness to his mother's grave. Forty years later he writes to Alexander Knox: "The death of a mother has an almost magical power of recalling the home of one's childhood, and the almost separate world that rests upon affection." Of his two sisters, one was well read and agreeably talkative, noted by Thackeray as the cleverest woman he had ever met; the other, Mrs. Acton, was a delightful old esprit fort, as I knew her in the sixties, "pagan, I regret to say," but not a little resembling her brother in the point and manner of her wit. The family moved in his infancy to an old-fashioned handsome "Wilton House," adjoining closely to the town, but standing amid spacious park-like grounds, and inhabited in after years by Kinglake's younger brother Hamilton, who succeeded his uncle in the medical profession, and passed away, amid deep and universal regret, in 1898. Here during the thirties Sydney Smith was a frequent and a welcome visitor; it was in answer to old Mrs.

Kinglake that he uttered his audacious mot on being asked if he would object, as a neighbouring clergyman had done, to bury a Dissenter: "Not bury Dissenters? I should like to be burying them all day!"

Taunton was an innutrient foster-mother, arida nutrix, for such young lions as the Kinglake brood. Two hundred years before it had been a prosperous and famous place, its woollen and kersey trades, with the population they supported, ranking it as eighth in order among English towns. Its inhabitants were then a gallant race, republican in politics, Puritan in creed. Twice besieged by Goring and Lumford, it had twice repelled the Royalists with loss. It was the centre of Monmouth's rebellion and of Jeffrey's vengeance; the suburb of Tangier, hard by its ancient castle, still recalls the time when Colonel Kirke and his regiment of "Lambs" were quartered in the town. But long before the advent of the Kinglakes its glory had departed; its manufactures had died out, its society become Philistine and bourgeois--"little men who walk in narrow ways"-- while from pre-eminence in electoral venality among English boroughs it was saved only by the near proximity of Bridgewater. A noted statesman who, at a later period, represented it in Parliament, used to say that by only one family besides Dr. Hamilton Kinglake's could he be received with any sense of social or intellectual equality.

Not much, however, of Kinglake's time was given to his native town: he was early sent to the Grammar School at Ottery St. Mary's, the "Clavering" of "Pendennis," whose Dr. Wapshot was George Coleridge, brother of the poet. He was wont in after life to speak of this time with bitterness; a delicate child, he was starved on insufficient diet; and an eloquent passage in "Eothen" depicts his intellectual fall from the varied interests and expanding enthusiasm of liberal home teaching to the regulation gerund- grinding and Procrustean discipline of school. "The dismal change is ordained, and then--thin meagre Latin with small shreds and patches of Greek, is thrown like a pauper's pall over all your early lore; instead of sweet knowledge, vile, monkish, doggerel grammars and graduses, dictionaries and lexicons, and horrible odds and ends of dead languages are given you for your portion, and down you fall, from Roman story to a three-inch scrap of 'Scriptores Romani,'--from Greek poetry, down, down to the cold rations of 'Poetae Graeci,' cut up by commentators, and served out by school- masters!"

At Eton--under Keate, as all readers of "Eothen" know--he was contemporary with Gladstone, Sir F. Hanmer, Lords Canning and Dalhousie, Selwyn, Shadwell. He wrote in the "Etonian," created and edited by Mackworth Praed; and is mentioned in Praed's poem on Surly Hall as

"Kinglake, dear to poetry,  
And dear to all his friends."

Dr. Gatty remembers his "determined pale face"; thinks that he made his mark on the river rather than in the playing fields, being a good oar and swimmer. His great friend at school was Savile, the "Methley" of his travels, who became successively Lord Pollington and Earl of Mexborough. The Homeric lore which Methley exhibited in the Troad, is curiously illustrated by an Eton story, that in a pugilistic encounter with

Hoseason, afterwards an Indian Cavalry officer, while the latter sate between the rounds upon his second's knee, Savile strutted about the ring, spouting Homer.

Kinglake entered at Trinity, Cambridge, in 1828, among an exceptionally brilliant set--Tennyson, Arthur Hallam, John Sterling, Trench, Spedding, Spring Rice, Charles Buller, Maurice, Monckton Milnes, J. M. Kemble, Brookfield, Thompson. With none of them does he seem in his undergraduate days to have been intimate. Probably then, as afterwards, he shrank from camaraderie, shared Byron's distaste for "enthusymusy"; naturally cynical and self-contained, was repelled by the spiritual fervour, incessant logical collision, aggressive tilting at abuses of those young "Apostles," already

"Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield, Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,"

waxing ever daily, as Sterling exhorted, "in religion and radicalism." He saw life differently; more practically, if more selfishly; to one rhapsodizing about the "plain living and high thinking" of Wordsworth's sonnet, he answered: "You know that you prefer dining with people who have good glass and china and plenty of servants." For Tennyson's poetry he even then felt admiration; quotes, nay, misquotes, in "Eothen," from the little known "Timbuctoo"; {3} and from "Locksley Hall"; and supplied long afterwards an incident adopted by Tennyson in "Enoch Arden,"

"Once likewise in the ringing of his ears  
Though faintly, merrily--far and far away -  
He heard the pealing of his parish bells," {4}

from his own experience in the desert, when on a Sunday, amid overpowering heat and stillness, he heard the Marlen bells of Taunton peal for morning church. {5}

In whatever set he may have lived he made his mark at Cambridge. Lord Houghton remembered him as an orator at the Union; and speaking to Cambridge undergraduates fifty years later, after enumerating the giants of his student days, Macaulay, Praed, Buller, Sterling, Merivale, he goes on to say: "there, too, were Kemble and Kinglake, the historian of our earliest civilization and of our latest war; Kemble as interesting an individual as ever was portrayed by the dramatic genius of his own race; Kinglake, as bold a man-at-arms in literature as ever confronted public opinion." We know, too, that not many years after leaving Cambridge he received, and refused, a solicitation to stand as Liberal representative of the University in Parliament. He was, in fact, as far as any of his contemporaries from acquiescing in social conventionalisms and shams. To the end of his life he chafed at such restraint: "when pressed to stay in country houses," he writes in 1872, "I have had the frankness to say that I have not discipline enough." Repeatedly he speaks with loathing of the "stale civilization," the "utter respectability," of European life; {6} longed with all his soul for the excitement and stir of soldiership, from which his shortsightedness debarred him; {7} rushed off again and again into foreign travel; set out immediately on leaving Cambridge, in 1834, for his first Eastern tour, "to fortify himself for the business of life." Methley joined him at Hamburg, and they travelled by Berlin,

Dresden, Prague, Vienna, to Semlin, where his book begins. Lord Pollington's health broke down, and he remained to winter at Corfu, while Kinglake pursued his way alone, returning to England in October, 1835. {8} On his return he read for the Chancery Bar along with his friend Eliot Warburton, under Bryan Procter, a Commissioner of Lunacy, better known by his poet-name, Barry Cornwall; his acquaintance with both husband and wife ripening into life-long friendship. Mrs. Procter is the "Lady of Bitterness," cited in the "Eothen" Preface. As Anne Skepper, before her marriage, she was much admired by Carlyle; "a brisk witty prettyish clear eyed sharp tongued young lady"; and was the intimate, among many, especially of Thackeray and Browning. In epigrammatic power she resembled Kinglake; but while his acrid sayings were emitted with gentlest aspect and with softest speech; while, like Byron's Lambro:

"he was the mildest mannered man  
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat,  
With such true breeding of a gentleman,  
You never could divine his real thought,"

her sarcasms rang out with a resonant clearness that enforced and aggravated their severity. That two persons so strongly resembling each other in capacity for rival exhibition, or for mutual exasperation, should have maintained so firm a friendship, often surprised their acquaintance; she explained it by saying that she and Kinglake sharpened one another like two knives; that, in the words of Petruchio,

"Where two raging fires meet together,  
They do consume the thing that feeds their fury."

Crabb Robinson, stung by her in a tender place, his boastful iterative monologues on Weimar and on Goethe, said that of all men Procter ought to escape purgatory after death, having tasted its fulness here through living so many years with Mrs. Procter; "the husbands of the talkative have great reward hereafter," said Rudyard Kipling's Lama. And I have been told by those who knew the pair that there was truth as well as irritation in the taunt. "A graceful Preface to 'Eothen,'" wrote to me a now famous lady who as a girl had known Mrs. Procter well, "made friendly company yesterday to a lonely meal, and brought back memories of Mr. Kinglake's kind spoiling of a raw young woman, and of the wit, the egregious vanity, the coarseness, the kindness, of that hard old worldling our Lady of Bitterness." In the presence of one man, Tennyson, she laid aside her shrewishness: "talking with Alfred Tennyson lifts me out of the earth earthy; a visit to Farringford is like a retreat to the religious." A celebrity in London for fifty years, she died, witty and vigorous to the last, in 1888. "You and I and Mr. Kinglake," she says to Lord Houghton, "are all that are left of the goodly band that used to come to St. John's Wood; Eliot Warburton, Motley, Adelaide, Count de Verg, Chorley, Sir Edwin Landseer, my husband." "I never could write a book," she tells him in another letter, "and one strong reason for not doing so was the idea of some few seeing how poor it was. Venables was one of the few; I need not say that you were one, and Kinglake."

Kinglake was called to the Chancery Bar, and practised apparently with no great success. He believed that his reputation as a writer stood in his way. When, in 1845, poor Hood's friends were helping him by gratuitous articles in his magazine, "Hood's Own," Kinglake wrote to Monckton Milnes refusing to contribute. He will send 10 pounds to buy an article from some competent writer, but will not himself write. "It would be seriously injurious to me if the author of 'Eothen' were affixed as contributing to a magazine. My frailty in publishing a book has, I fear, already hurt me in my profession, and a small sin of this kind would bring on me still deeper disgrace with the solicitors."

Twice at least in these early years he travelled. "Mr. Kinglake," writes Mrs. Procter in 1843, "is in Switzerland, reading Rousseau." And in the following year we hear of him in Algeria, accompanying St. Arnaud in his campaign against the Arabs. The mingled interest and horror inspired in him by this extra-ordinary man finds expression in his "Invasion of the Crimea" (ii. 157). A few, a very few survivors, still remember his appearance and manners in the forties. The eminent husband of a lady, now passed away, who in her lifetime gave Sunday dinners at which Kinglake was always present, speaks of him as SENSITIVE, quiet in the presence of noisy people, of Brookfield and the overpowering Bernal Osborne; liking their company, but never saying anything worthy of remembrance. A popular old statesman, still active in the House of Commons, recalls meeting him at Palmerston, Lord Harrington's seat, where was assembled a party in honour of Madame Guiccioli and her second husband, the Marquis de Boissy, and tells me that he attached himself to ladies, not to gentlemen, nor ever joined in general tattle. Like many other famous men, he passed through a period of shyness, which yielded to women's tactfulness only. From the first they appreciated him; "if you were as gentle as your friend Kinglake," writes Mrs. Norton reproachfully to Hayward in the sulks. Another coeval of those days calls him handsome--an epithet I should hardly apply to him later--slight, not tall, sharp featured, with dark hair well tended, always modishly dressed after the fashion of the thirties, the fashion of Bulwer's exquisites, or of H. K. Browne's "Nicholas Nickleby" illustrations; leaving on all who saw him an impression of great personal distinction, yet with an air of youthful ABANDON which never quite left him: "He was pale, small, and delicate in appearance," says Mrs. Simpson, Nassau Senior's daughter, who knew him to the end of his life; while Mrs. Andrew Crosse, his friend in the Crimean decade, cites his finely chiselled features and intellectual brow, "a complexion bloodless with the pallor not of ill-health, but of an old Greek bust."

## "Eothen"

"Eothen" appeared in 1844. Twice, Kinglake tells us, he had essayed the story of his travels, twice abandoned it under a sense of strong disinclination to write. A third attempt was induced by an entreaty from his friend Eliot Warburton, himself projecting an Eastern tour; and to Warburton in a characteristic preface the narrative is addressed. The book, when finished, went the round of the London market without finding a publisher. It was offered to John Murray, who cited his refusal of it as the great blunder of his professional life, consoling himself with the thought that his father had equally lacked foresight thirty years before in declining the "Rejected Addresses"; he secured the copyright later on. It was published in the end by a personal friend, Ollivier, of Pall Mall, Kinglake paying 50 pounds to cover risk of loss; even worse terms than were obtained by Warburton two years afterwards from Colburn, who owned in the fifties to having cleared 6,000 pounds by "The Crescent and the Cross." The volume was an octavo of 418 pages; the curious folding-plate which forms the frontispiece was drawn and coloured by the author, and was compared by the critics to a tea-tray. In front is Moostapha the Tatar; the two foremost figures in the rear stand for accomplished Mysseri, whom Kinglake was delighted to recognize long afterwards as a flourishing hotel keeper in Constantinople, and Steel, the Yorkshire servant, in his striped pantry jacket, "looking out for gentlemen's seats." Behind are "Methley," Lord Pollington, in a broad-brimmed hat, and the booted leg of Kinglake, who modestly hid his figure by a tree, but exposed his foot, of which he was very proud. Of the other characters, "Our Lady of Bitterness" was Mrs. Procter, "Carrigaholt" was Henry Stuart Burton of Carrigaholt, County Clare. Here and there are allusions, obvious at the time, now needing a scholiast, which have not in any of the reprints been explained. In their ride through the Balkans they talked of old Eton days. "We bullied Keate, and scoffed at Larrey Miller and Okes; we rode along loudly laughing, and talked to the grave Servian forest as though it were the Brocas clump." {9} Keate requires no interpreter; Okes was an Eton tutor, afterwards Provost of King's. Larrey or Laurie Miller was an old tailor in Keate's Lane who used to sit on his open shop-board, facing the street, a mark for the compliments of passing boys; as frolicsome youngsters in the days of Addison and Steele, as High School lads in the days of Walter Scott, were accustomed to "smoke the cobbler." The Brocas was a meadow sacred to badger-baiting and cat-hunts. The badgers were kept by a certain Jemmy Flowers, who charged sixpence for each "draw"; Puss was turned out of a bag and chased by dogs, her chance being to reach and climb a group of trees near the river, known as the "Brocas Clump." Of the quotations, "a Yorkshireman hippodamoio" (p. 35) is, I am told, an obiter dictum of Sir Francis Doyle. "Striving to attain," etc. (p. 33), is taken not quite correctly from Tennyson's "Timbuctoo." Our crew were "a solemn company" (p. 57) is probably a reminiscence of "we were a gallant company" in "The Siege of Corinth." For "'the own armchair' of our Lyrist's 'Sweet Lady'" Anne" (p. 161) see the poem, "My own armchair" in Barry Cornwall's "English Lyrics." "Proud Marie of Anjou" (p. 96) and "single-sin--" (p. 121), are unintelligible; a friend once asked Kinglake to explain the former, but received for answer, "Oh! that is a private thing." It may, however, have been a pet name for little Marie de Viry, Procter's niece, and the chere amie of his verse, whom Eothen must have met often at his friend's house. The St. Simonians of p. 83 were the disciples

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