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# Boffin's Books and Darwin's Finches: Victorian Cultures of Collecting

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BOFFIN'S BOOKS AND DARWIN'S FINCHES:  
VICTORIAN CULTURES OF COLLECTING

By

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Michael William Hancock

M.A., Kansas State University, 1995

Submitted to the Department of English and the  
Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Kansas  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

BOFFIN'S BOOKS AND DARWIN'S FINCHES:  
VICTORIAN CULTURES OF COLLECTING

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## ABSTRACT

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December 2006

Although wealthy continental virtuosos had passionately and selectively accumulated a variety of natural and artificial objects from the Renaissance onwards, not until the nineteenth century did collecting become a conspicuous national pastime among all classes in Britain. As industry and empire made available many new and exotic goods for acquisition and display, the collection as a cultural form offered the Victorians a popular strategy of self-fashioning that was often represented in the literature of the age as a source of prestige and social legitimation. Through interdisciplinary readings of Victorian fiction, narrative nonfiction, and poetry, my study examines how textual representations of collecting helped to define nation, class, and gender in Britain from the 1830s to the turn of the century and beyond.

Combining literary analysis with cultural criticism, including approaches from museum studies, I explain how Victorian writing about collecting, from Charles Dickens's earliest works to fin-de-siècle lepidopteran narratives, participated in the formation of individual and collective identities. During the first half of the nineteenth century, prominent author-collectors asserted their specifically male authority and British dominion abroad through travel narratives about acquiring exotic artifacts for the nation or assembling proprietary collections exhibited back

home. Meanwhile, Victorian novels included an array of collectors of all ranks, many of whom seek to enhance their professional or social status through their collections, which are often the products of competition or emulation. However, from mid-century on, a period in which museums proliferated and the British empire grew during the age of the New Imperialism, authors increasingly turned to the figure of the collector to convey anxieties about habits of consumption that threatened personal identity or social stability and a world of objects that were not necessarily under the consumer's control. Thus, even as collecting helped to order knowledge, material culture, and social relations in nineteenth-century Britain, it also posed certain challenges to the social identities and forms of subjectivity the Victorians attempted to forge for themselves, as their collections and texts show.

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Chapter Four, "The Stones in the Sword: Tennyson's Crown Jewels,"  
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## Introduction

Four years before the anatomist Richard Owen coined the word "dinosaur" (Ashworth 4), the British Museum's geological curator George Richardson<sup>1</sup> documented the "unrivalled" private collection of his friend and former patron, the great fossil-hunter Gideon Mantell (220), in his second series of Sketches in Prose and Verse (1838). Richardson describes the Mantellian Museum at Brighton, where he had served as curator, as a formative influence on the developing and increasingly prestigious sciences of geology and paleontology: "[T]he exhibition of this Museum has more widely diffused a taste for these pursuits, and made more geologists, than any similar establishment extant" (3). According to Richardson's estimate, Mantell's two-story museum consisted of some twenty to thirty thousand specimens, including the famed Maidstone Iguanodon;<sup>2</sup> "a series of fossils and minerals, illustrative of the geological structure of the coast of Sussex" (14); and various "antiquities of man" (198), from the spoils of the neighborhood's Saxon barrows to Norman architectural fragments from the "once splendid" Priory of Lewes (199).

Mantell's accumulated evidence of extinct "monster[s]" (11) and lost civilizations and the impending dispersal of these material remains among the British Museum's collections prompted Richardson to assemble a permanent record of the Mantellian Museum, as if to preserve it against the very passage of time that it recorded. Besides presenting a verbal snapshot of the museum "in its present separate state" through a sequential narrative tour (4-27, 189-222), Richardson inserts his own

invented history of Mantell's antique Roman bronze Cupid alongside "various poetic tributes . . . paid to this collection" (222), including an anonymous sonnet to Mantell<sup>3</sup> modeled upon Wordsworth's "London 1802" ode to Milton. Whereas Wordsworth invokes the epic poet's spirit to return and redeem a fallen England, the Mantellian sonnet celebrates the collector's achievement of fame within his lifetime and describes his "vast Museum" as his "monument" and secular "immortal shrine" (qtd. in Richardson 222). Besides reflecting the hagiographic tendencies of England's empirical and professionalized "Heroic Age of Geology" from 1830 to 1850 (Kneel 305-36), Richardson's anthology, itself a collection, epitomizes the practice of textualizing collections in multiple genres and forms, a part of the broader early Victorian culture of collecting that raised the scientific collector-connoisseur Mantell "to a distinguished rank among the discoverers and philosophers of the age" (Richardson 3).

The Victorians acknowledged collecting, in the sense of "the gathering together and setting aside of selected objects" (Pearce, On Collecting 3), as a defining characteristic of their times and even an essential component of British national identity. "This is a 'collecting' age," declared London's Graphic weekly in 1869: "Never was the vocation of the gatherer of curiosities more followed than at present. Not only pictures, prints, coins, birds, insects, and fishes are collected, but there are amateurs who form cabinets of postage-stamps, first numbers of periodicals, playbills, and street ballads" ("Her Majesty" 12). Although wealthy continental virtuosos had passionately and selectively accumulated a variety of natural and artificial objects

from the Renaissance onwards, not until the nineteenth century did collecting become a conspicuous national pastime among all classes in Britain. For the Victorians, this distinctive and concentrated form of consumption manifested itself in both the public and private spheres, from the burgeoning institutions of the so-called Museum Age to the domestic interiors of the middle and upper classes. As industry and empire made available many new and exotic goods for accumulation and display, the collection as a cultural form offered the Victorians a popular strategy of self-fashioning.

Perhaps nowhere was the Victorians' systematic urge to accumulate and organize the material culture of the past and present more evident than in the literature of the day. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, novelists such as Swift, Smollett, and Scott had joined poets such as Pope, Cowper, and Byron in representing, examining, and even satirizing collecting as a social practice.<sup>4</sup> From the 1830s on, however, collecting became more commonplace in British literature, reflecting its increasing prominence in Victorian culture and society as the result of its relation to British consumerism, travel, science, imperialism, and museums, all of which experienced profound growth during the nineteenth century. Many Victorian writers registered the rise of collecting in their works, with Dickens foremost among them. In fact, as Kevin McLaughlin argues, Dickens's retrospective collecting of his early pseudonymous journalism in book form and his attempt to lend coherence to otherwise disparate pieces by adding new ones in *Sketches by Boz* (1836) affiliates his development as an author with achieving wholeness and interrelatedness through the figure of the collection (85-92). An avid book collector in his own right, as

Dickens began to publish under his own name, he portrayed other collectors in such works as The Pickwick Papers (1836-7) and Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi (1838). Even as the advent of the age's great novelist was inextricably connected to the practice and representation of collecting, Dickens's contemporaries also incorporated collectors and their accumulations into their works, from the shelves and drawers of "Nature's ever-varying productions, nicely arranged" (158), inside Sarah Wilson's India Cabinet (1838) to the miscellaneous tools, weapons, and other anthropological and archaeological artifacts of "every clime and age" (16) on display at Vivian-place in Tennyson's Princess (1847).

Through readings of some of the most familiar poetry and prose of the Victorian period (1837-1901), my study examines how representations of collecting and collections helped to define nation, class, and gender in Britain from the 1830s to the turn of the century and beyond. It also illuminates the diverse pleasures, tensions, and anxieties generated and reflected by collecting in Victorian literature and culture. Although some writers celebrated the acquisitions and bequests of public benefactors, others viewed collecting as a social pathology derived, in part, from a profligate aristocracy. As I show in a wide-ranging series of case studies, the increasingly critical portrayal of collectors by later Victorian authors reflects changing attitudes towards domestic and global issues alike.

My study is interdisciplinary in nature, with texts ranging from the archaeologist Austen Henry Layard's Nineveh and Its Remains (1849) to the Norwich lepidopterist Margaret Fountaine's diaries (1878-1939). In addition to such works, I

also take into account a variety of catalogues and other guides to nineteenth-century collecting and collections. Articles from Dickens's Household Words and All the Year Round, along with other periodical literature, help me to document what contemporaries described as the "craze" or "mania" for collecting of all kinds. These same sources also allow me to discuss what is distinctive about Victorian collecting, such as its links to a medieval past and a colonial present.

In her seminal work On Collecting (1995), Susan Pearce notes the "quite amazing extent to which collecting now appears as a major theme in what we might call serious fiction" (12-13), and calls for a full-length study of this "interesting facet of contemporary culture" (13). Because collecting is at least as central to Victorian poetry and prose as it is to more recent literature, my study is significant as a parallel venture to Pearce's proposed investigation. Besides offering a new context for much Victorian writing, my work could also serve as a precursor to further interdisciplinary studies of collecting and literature.

This study also holds special significance because of its distinctive approach to the material culture of past and present. As the Victorians emulated and endorsed various types of collecting through their texts and their lives, they revealed the complex and often contradictory meanings of an enterprise we frequently take for granted. By learning how, what, and why the Victorians collected, we can better understand the objects and practices we have inherited from them, along with our own motivations for perpetuating their collecting legacy.

While some studies of Victorian collecting as a historical phenomenon do exist, these histories have focused on individual collectors or separate categories of collections (art, antiquities, natural history specimens, etc.),<sup>5</sup> so there is no comprehensive account of Victorian collecting as a whole.<sup>6</sup> However, my work incorporates these diverse histories to provide relevant cultural contexts for analyzing the representation of collecting in Victorian literature. I also make extensive use of theoretical approaches to collecting unavailable to or overlooked by previous writers, particularly from the field of museum studies, which demonstrates the historically specific nature of institutional and individual collecting practices as well as the collection's potential to construct novel social identities.

Of the recent studies that deal with some aspect of Victorian collecting,<sup>7</sup> Barbara J. Black's On Exhibit: Victorians and Their Museums (2000) most closely approximates my own interests and approach by combining cultural critique with literary analysis to examine the proliferation of Victorian museum culture through a range of texts and institutions. Black's concentration on nineteenth-century London museums, whose growth was encouraged by nationalistic tendencies and imperialistic ambitions and precipitated by the development of consumer society,<sup>8</sup> informs her account of the representation of the rise and fall of the museum in Victorian poetry and fiction. Although Black helps to lay the groundwork for my study, her emphasis on institutional collecting, public collections, and museums as symbolic spaces leaves much room to explore the role of individual agency within collecting in Victorian literature and culture. I do so, in part, through my discussion of novelists not

considered by Black, including Elizabeth Gaskell, Wilkie Collins, Joseph Conrad, and Arthur Conan Doyle. My study also provides a more extended treatment of the most prominent authors of the day, Charles Dickens and Alfred Tennyson, by using texts Black does not discuss.

Like Black, Judith Pascoe tends to associate Victorian collecting with the "disciplinary and classificatory impulse" of the institutionalized Victorian museum (60) in her study The Hummingbird Cabinet: A Rare and Curious History of Romantic Collectors (2006). Pascoe's focus "on collected objects in the romantic period rather than on the poetry that addresses these objects" subordinates literature to consumer culture (6), though she argues that "romantic poetic preoccupations—with immortality, pastoral escape, fame, sublimity, loss—underpin the accumulative practices of both early-nineteenth-century collectors and their like-minded descendants" (23). Many of these same concerns inform Victorian collecting as well, but I am more interested in how nineteenth-century British literature represents collecting as a contemporary and historical practice and a potential source of individual and corporate identity and how collecting, in turn, helps us to read Victorian texts.

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At the beginning of the nineteenth century, collecting in Britain was dominated by wealthy upper-class connoisseurs of the fine arts, led by the Prince

Regent, later George IV. During what the art historian Frank Herrmann calls "the heyday of collecting" from 1770 to 1830, an affluent British aristocracy in particular took advantage of unsettled political and economic circumstances in Europe, the decline of aristocratic and royal families on the Continent, and the wholesale dispersal of private French and Italian collections in the wake of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars (6-8). Epitomized by the 1792 sale of the collection of the Duke of Orleans, the sudden and unprecedented availability of Old Masters with an established provenance reversed the flow of fine paintings out of Britain and provided models and materials for the collections of the English gentry and aristocracy (Haskell 26, 37; Herrmann 134-9, 373). As Francis Haskell notes, "Titians and Raphaels, Correggios, Rubenses, and Guidos joined the odd family portrait or hunting scene that until then had constituted the sum total of their artistic possessions" (27-8). Moreover, Parliament's 1816 purchase of the Parthenon marbles brought to England by Lord Elgin helped to spread a passion for classical antiquities among the well-to-do (Belk 43).

However, changing economic circumstances that favored finance, industry, and trade over land as a source of wealth soon displaced the aristocracy as Britain's trendsetters in collecting (MacGregor 9). In 1824, the government's purchase of the Russian-born London merchant and financier John Julius Angerstein's collection of Old Masters as the nucleus of the new National Gallery signaled the rise to power of Britain's nouveaux riches in the elite world of art collecting. An ascendant middle class of industrialists and merchants who became wealthy through the intensive phase

of the Industrial Revolution began to form collections after the Napoleonic wars, providing new directions for collecting in the arts during the second quarter of the nineteenth century (Herrmann 327). As Arthur MacGregor explains, this new breed of collectors "opened up fresh areas of interest, especially in contemporary art, antiquities and the decorative and applied arts" (9). During the 1830s and 1840s, middling-sort collectors with ready money for buying paintings, wary of investing in unauthenticated Old Masters, extended the patronage of contemporary artists beyond portraitists to genre, history, landscape, and narrative painters (Steegman 235; Herrmann 40). A growing interest in medieval British artifacts over classical Greek and Roman antiquities provided opportunities for men of modest means as well as the noble and landed in the excavation of British barrows and other native archaeological sites, many of which were unearthed by urban development (MacGregor 15-16).<sup>9</sup> The relative lack of competition for objets d'art before the 1850s led to the formation of impressive and influential collections in the decorative arts, including those of Ralph Bernal and Felix Slade, which signaled a shift in collecting from the work of the artist to the product of the craftsman (MacGregor 8; Herrmann 15, 293). Meanwhile, as seen in the sale at Lord Dives's house in Thackeray's Vanity Fair (1848), prominent aristocratic families suffered financial casualties that precipitated the "hitherto unimagined" sales of family collections at Stowe mansion and other insolvent country houses in the late 1840s (MacGregor 6). From the 1850s on, the collecting scene underwent "a gravitational shift," with public museums and private collectors from

the middle classes and gentry competing in former aristocratic strongholds (MacGregor 6).

Throughout the nineteenth century, collecting also developed through its affiliations with science, including the increasingly formalized and professionalized disciplines of geology, paleontology, archaeology, and anthropology. Due to the popularity of natural history in Britain (see Chapter 5) and the contributions of science to European projects of exploration and national expansion abroad, Victorian homes and museums were stockpiled with objects of scientific, commercial, and social value. In the biological sciences, which emerged from natural history, Linnaean taxonomy provided impetus for the elaboration of a system of classification through the gathering, description, comparison, and naming of specimens. From the 1860s on, evolutionary views revolutionized collecting techniques, helping to establish, for one, the significance of the finches whose adaptive radiation into different ecological niches their collector Charles Darwin had hinted at but could not demonstrate.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, in the social sciences, the adaptation of Linnaean and Darwinian principles to human artifacts produced a corresponding system of typology that arranged ethnographic materials according to similarities in form and function to illustrate technological development, providing a progressivist framework for understanding the products of human culture (Chapman 15-48). Moreover, aided by improvements in communication (the penny post) and transportation (railroads), regional and national networks of collectors established archaeological and natural history societies, whose collections often formed the basis for local museums.

Besides reflecting new economic, social, and intellectual realities, Victorian collecting was unusual in scale and kind; at mid-century, more people collected a much wider range of objects than ever before (Saisselin 73; Wainwright, Romantic 286). By the 1840s, concentration on one type or class of objects, which has been attributed to the influence of Banksian science and its emphasis on "intelligent specialization" in collecting (Rigby and Rigby 251-2), had become far more prevalent, as reflected by such renowned "monomaniac" collections as John Sainsbury's Napoleon Museum and Charlotte Schreiber's ceramics (Wainwright, Romantic 287). An 1841 Punch article identifies the various "species" of single-minded "curiosity-hunters" by their singular quarry:

Some of them are well known, and need no description—such as the book-worm, the bird-stuffer, the coin-taster, the picture-scrubber, &c.; but there are others whose tastes are singularly eccentric: of these I may mention the snuff-box collector, the cane-fancier, the ring-taker, the play-bill gatherer, to say nothing of one illustrious personage, whose passion for collecting a library of Bibles is generally known.

("Curiosity")

Preferring curiosities with a connection to traditional intellectual pursuits over everyday ephemera, the Punch writer goes on to lampoon the peculiarly British fashion for relics of criminals, which he attributes to "the sanguinary spirit of our laws," an unhealthy interest in public executions, and the celebrity of notorious convicts.

The popularization of collecting more generally was largely a function of mass consumption, which emerged in the eighteenth century and had become "a permanent social fact" by the nineteenth century (McCracken 29). The consumer revolution went hand-in-hand with and drove the Industrial Revolution, helping to democratize luxury in Britain from the late eighteenth century onwards.<sup>11</sup> Russell Belk observes that "the number of manufactured objects in Victorian collections suggests a legitimization of mass-produced objects as collectibles" (46), a phenomenon that continues to this day. As I shall explain, in encountering an expanding array of new commodities, the Victorians collected with a vengeance, using the cultural meanings of abundant consumer goods and other objects to define themselves and the world.

The chapters which follow analyze, in roughly chronological fashion, some of the ways in which narrative nonfiction (including autobiography, travel writing, and diaries), the novel and the short story, and poetry represented, reflected, and attempted to influence Victorian collecting practices and the individual and collective identities they constructed. Chapter one discusses professional collectors of the 1840s, particularly those whose popular accounts of their imperial discoveries helped to turn their authors into celebrities and testified to the supremacy of the British as a people. As Richard Altick observes in The Shows of London, between 1820 and 1850, many exotic exhibitions in London were supplemented by published narratives written by the collectors behind the shows (243-6, 246-8, 275-9, 290-2). I focus on two such works from the publisher John Murray, Austen Henry Layard's bestselling Nineveh

and Its Remains (1849), which is still in print, and Roualeyn Gordon Cumming's adventure-packed hunting classic Five Years of a Hunter's Life in the Far Interior of South Africa (1850). As imperial agents who collected along the Overland and Cape routes to India, Layard and Cumming composed narratives of triumphant colonial masculinity in which their collections are used to support claims of British superiority over imperial others. These autobiographical accounts of collecting, which went through multiple editions over several decades, served as enduring memorials to their authors, who became famous for their expeditions, acquisitions, and related exhibitions. More important, these works helped to establish and indeed testify to the prominence of the upper middle-class male collector as a cultural hero in early Victorian England.

In chapter two, my focus turns to novelistic representations of collecting and Victorian class. Here, I explain, with reference to Dickens's fiction of the forties, how the less wealthy laid claim to the cultural currency of collections by imitating the behavior and practices of museum curators and prosperous proprietors. In his early novels The Old Curiosity Shop (1840-1) and Dombey and Son (1846-8), Dickens demonstrates the collecting propensities of the lower-middle and working classes, showing their participation in a national museum culture that served as a source of emulation and an instrument of social control. Drawing upon Tony Bennett's account of the exhibitionary complex as a technology of spectacle and surveillance that facilitated crowd management through a self-regulating citizenry, I explain how Dickens confronted contemporary fears of the masses as museums became

increasingly accessible to all. Through the Cockney waxworks proprietress Mrs. Jarley, the ships' instrument maker Sol Gills, and his friend and business partner Captain Cuttle, Dickens reveals the ability of the masses themselves to manage objects, spaces, and crowds by means of display and narration of their collections. In the process, he suggests the increasing availability of collecting as an instrument of self-fashioning to members of all classes, who were encouraged to model themselves upon middle-class codes of conduct and consumption.

By looking at fiction of the late fifties and early sixties by Henry Noel Humphreys, Charles Dickens, and Wilkie Collins in chapter three, I examine how collecting by the social elite, often undertaken in the name of philanthropy or posterity, could become a self-serving and even misanthropic venture. Through both historical and literary examples, I show that collecting, especially by the newly wealthy, began to acquire a popular reputation as a degenerate obsession in mid-Victorian England, decades before Oscar Wilde's *fin-de-siècle* invention of the hedonistic aristocrat and connoisseur Dorian Gray. My literary case-studies of the nouveaux riches Dubois D'Erville (a French bibliomane who devotes his life, family, and fortune to recovering the lost books of Livy), Noddy Boffin (a former dustman masquerading as a miser who collects books about misers), and Frederick Fairlie (a rich recluse who collects art and antiquities) depict the anti-social character of three wealthy individuals who, to different extents, substitute relations with objects for relations with people. In each instance, a collecting pathology emerges out of the desire to emulate aristocratic collectors of the past or present.

Chapter four provides a further commentary on the perils of collecting in its depiction of the elusive ownership and violence accompanying gems that pass through women's hands in Tennyson's Idylls of the King, including Arthur's gemmed sword, Elaine's pearl sleeve, Lancelot's nine diamonds, and Nestling's ruby carcanet. Theorizing these jewels in terms of gift exchange, museum culture, and the social life of objects, I argue that the poet laureate depicts specific gems recently seized from India in order to express imperial anxieties about the cost and dangers of such foreign acquisitions. In Lancelot and Elaine (1859), Lancelot's great diamond closely resembles Victoria's supposedly cursed Indian diamond, the Koh-i-noor, which occupied the Victorian popular imagination as visible proof of England's prosperity and an important symbol of Britain's imperial power. I connect the Koh-i-noor to Lancelot's diamonds and Elaine's pearls through its character as a dangerous or figuratively poisoned gift that quickly became a burden for the crown through the obligations it imposed on Britain, as the 1857 Indian Mutiny vividly demonstrates. In addition, the ruby carcanet of The Last Tournament (1871) emerges as a textual counterpart to another one of Victoria's jewels, the Timur Ruby, a longtime companion of the Koh-i-noor. I compare Tristram's attempts to arbitrate the use of Nestling's ruby necklace to Victoria's own extensive efforts to transform her foreign possessions for personal use. Ultimately, I suggest that Tennyson unites concerns of nation, class, and gender when he implies that his queen's future, as well as that of Britain, depended in part on how well Victoria, as a collector, managed these imperial possessions.

My final chapter examines turn-of-the-century narratives of tropical butterfly collecting. Throughout the century, natural history in general and entomology in particular appealed to large and diverse British audiences, whose pursuit of specimens at home and abroad was reflected in fiction from the 1840s on. At the fin de siècle, lepidoptery, or butterfly and moth collecting, was incorporated within a developing discourse about the tropics, which had been a frequent, if problematic, locus of European travel, exploration, and colonialism for two centuries. I examine late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century lepidopterists in the fiction of Joseph Conrad and Arthur Conan Doyle and in Victorian women's travel writing, where tropical butterflies epitomize the so-called luxuriance of life between Cancer and Capricorn. In these works, the pursuit of rare and exotic specimens such as Alfred Russel Wallace's Malaysian birdwings acquires a colonialist dimension through its association with attempts to possess or control cultural others, who are themselves likened to butterflies in terms of their appearance or behavior. In turn, the elusiveness of tropical butterflies comes to suggest the futility of their collectors' colonial ambitions in a wide region that was typically viewed as resistant to European acclimatization and hegemony. Even as collecting, especially the systematic and classifying kind epitomized by natural history or stamps,<sup>12</sup> offered the Victorians "a means to seem to gain control of the world and of the past" (Belk 46), it also posed certain challenges to the social identities and forms of subjectivity they attempted to forge for themselves, as their collections and texts show.

## Chapter One

### Layard's Assyria and Cumming's Africa:

#### Travel Narratives and Imperial Exhibitions at Mid-Century

In 1820, the prominent London publisher John Murray issued the first of several successful travel narratives whose novelty consisted of the strategic use to which they were put by their authors. Beginning with the Italian-born Giovanni Belzoni's Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries . . . in Egypt and Nubia (1820), Murray published a series of narratives written by British collectors whose accounts of their travels abroad appeared just before or soon after exhibitions of their collections of ancient artifacts or exotic specimens debuted in London. This carefully coordinated publicity sold books as well as tickets while making a name for the authors as collectors. More important, by mid-century, the tandem of publication and exhibition helped to make the imperial collector a popular figure and even a cultural hero, lending additional prestige to collecting at home and abroad.

As Richard Altick explains in The Shows of London, the London Museum in Piccadilly, a gallery-for-hire also known as the Egyptian Hall for its distinctive architecture, provided the venue for England's first exhibitions that were accompanied by their proprietors' timely accounts of their travels and collecting (235-48). Belzoni's favorably reviewed Narrative helped to promote his May 1821-June 1822 Egyptian Hall show, which featured some of the artifacts from his then unrivaled explorations and excavations in Egypt, with the remainder of his finds going to the British

Museum (Altick 244-6; Siliotti 68-9). Emulating Belzoni, William Bullock, the Egyptian Hall's owner and an accomplished showman in his own right, excited public interest with the release of his Six Months' Residence and Travels in Mexico (1824) before opening his exhibition of ancient and modern Mexico in April 1824 (Altick 236-43, 246-8). Belzoni and Bullock's narratives, like the shows they anticipated, were commercial successes; both books went into multiple editions and were translated into several languages (Siliotti 68; Alexander 136).

Following the precedent established by Belzoni and Bullock, the English archaeologist Austen Henry Layard and the Scottish hunter Roualeyn George Gordon Cumming published travel narratives as companion pieces to exhibitions of their own collections at mid-century. Besides having their works published by Murray, Layard and Cumming resembled one or both of their predecessors as collectors in other ways as well. All four traveled to their collecting destinations as part of professional or commercial ventures—Belzoni as a hydraulics engineer, Bullock as a company agent, Layard as an aspiring lawyer, and Cumming as an ivory trader. Archaeologists Belzoni and Layard did most of their collecting for the British Museum with the support of British ambassadors; Bullock and Cumming, who shared interests in natural history and hunting, amassed large personal collections despite war in Mexico and Africa. Layard's artifacts, like those of Belzoni and Bullock, formed the cornerstone of an important collection in the British Museum's Department of Antiquities, whereas Cumming became a showman in the tradition of Belzoni and Bullock by exhibiting at St. George's Gallery, a pagoda built in the early 1840s at

Hyde Park Corner for American Nathan Dunn's Chinese collection. Moreover, Cumming's show, like those of Belzoni and Bullock, served as a prelude to the sale of his personal collection.

Despite the differences between them, Layard and Cumming had much in common as collectors, with both serving as "agents of the process of imperialism" and "exhibitors or celebrants of its results" (Ritvo 244). During the 1840s, Layard and Cumming both collected along routes to India, Britain's eastern base of power, through the Middle East and southern Africa, respectively.<sup>13</sup> After returning to Britain with their spoils, Layard and Cumming wrote bestselling narratives that accompanied their popular exhibitions of the early 1850s. These widely circulated works, reprinted for decades, established the collector as a popular author, captivating narrator, and heroic protagonist and also influenced later literary representations of the collector as a traveler abroad. In their narratives, these young, unmarried, socially elite<sup>14</sup> Victorian collectors present a model of masculinity whose cardinal virtues include courage, perseverance, competitiveness, and acquisitiveness. Moreover, Layard and Cumming's self-portraits construct British identity in terms of superiority over imperial others, supported in part by their proficiency in collecting.

Insofar as Layard and Cumming present themselves as "innocent questers for knowledge" (Franey 115), their travel narratives contribute to the discourse of what Mary Louise Pratt calls the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European "anti-conquest" narrative, which "reject[s] the rhetoric, and probably the practice, of conquest and subjugation" even as it underwrites colonial appropriation in the name

of science (53). On the other hand, Laura Franey identifies the 1840s as a "crucial" decade in the transition between anti-conquest narratives and conquest narratives of the late 1850s through the early 1890s "that more blatantly argue for the superiority of Europeans in the realms of culture, religion, and technology" (114-15). Not surprisingly, then, Layard and Cumming's examples of "collectography"—Franey's term for "written treatments of collecting practices" (113)—of the late forties and early fifties display tensions between these competing modes of travel narrative. More than Cumming, Layard the diplomat longs for "a way of taking possession without subjugation and violence" (Pratt 57), but he nevertheless wrests Assyria's remains from their hiding places through his command of indigenous Mesopotamians and is forced to take up arms in defense of his collections. Meanwhile, the sportsman Cumming, a former colonial officer one step removed from the front, triumphs over nature as a result of his more overt ability "to deploy superior physical force, to reenact on a personal level the violent appropriation that underlay the serene majesty of empire" (Ritvo 264-5). Even as both men dedicate themselves to ostensibly disinterested missions of scientific discovery, their narratives of triumphant colonial manhood, along with their collections, establish their supremacy as British collectors and imperial heroes and assert Britain's ascendancy as a world superpower.

### **Layard of Nineveh**

In what has been described as the first archaeological bestseller in English (Malley 155), Austen Henry Layard documented his groundbreaking initial Mesopotamian expedition in what is now northern Iraq from 1845 to 1847. Nineveh and Its Remains (1849) dramatizes the acquisition for Britain of an extensive collection of ancient Assyrian artifacts, which Layard calls "the most convincing, and lasting evidence of that magnificence, and power, which made Nineveh the wonder of the ancient world, and her fall the theme of the prophets, as the most signal instance of divine vengeance" (2: 145-6). To Layard's Victorian readers, Nineveh, "one of the capital cities of the great Assyrian Empire, which ruled over much of the Near East during the first half of the first millennium B.C.," was familiar from the Old Testament as "the place . . . where God sent the prophet Jonah, who promptly took off in a different direction . . . and was swallowed by 'a great fish.' . . . It was a city that, at one point, God refused to destroy (thus angering Jonah) so that its people might reform themselves, but it was also the wicked and 'bloody city' whose ultimate downfall was vividly foretold by the prophet Nahum" (Thomas 27-8). Besides presenting his Assyrian discoveries as material proof of the Bible's historicity, Layard's account foregrounds his central role, as an imperial agent, in obtaining these remains on the nation's behalf. Despite claims of Layard's modesty by historians and biographers alike,<sup>15</sup> his narrative portrays him as the resourceful engineer of an ambitious enterprise, whose skill and initiative unearth what he views as a part of England's cultural patrimony in the form of national treasures for the British Museum. Through his reflections on these appropriated antiquities, Layard becomes the fitting

spokesman for an empire whose collections seemed to justify its feeling of cultural superiority to its contemporary Ottoman and ancient Assyrian counterparts, among others.

In his introduction, Layard presents the West's knowledge of Assyria and its remains before his discoveries as fragmentary at best. He laments the loss of the earliest ancient Greek histories of Assyria by Herodotus and Ctesias and notes the derivative nature or limited scope of later accounts, including the Bible, with its focus on the later monarchs and "their conquests over the Jews, whom they led captive into Assyria" (1: xix). Layard explains that this incomplete historical record had recently begun to be supplemented through the exploration of the immense mounds near Mosul and Baghdad, which travelers and tradition had long identified with Nineveh and Babylon, the capitals of the ancient kingdoms of Assyria and Babylonia, respectively (1: xxi-xxii). He praises Claudius Rich, the former Resident of the East India Company at Baghdad, for his "careful account" of these ruins (1: xxiii), though Rich's rudimentary excavations in the early 1820s uncovered only a few scattered objects, including inscribed bricks, potsherds, and engraved stones, later placed in the British Museum. Nevertheless, these relics formed for over twenty years "the principal, and indeed almost only, collection of Assyrian antiquities in Europe," as Layard remarks, with evident astonishment: "A case scarcely three feet square enclosed all that remained, not only of the great city, Nineveh, but of Babylon [sic] itself!" (1: xxv). In narrative terms, then, Layard constructs ancient Mesopotamia as a

historical and material void to be filled by European (and especially British) archaeologists like himself.<sup>16</sup>

The unearthing of an Assyrian palace under Khorsabad from 1843 to 1845 by Layard's friend and colleague Paul Émile Botta, the Italian-born French vice-consul at Mosul, promised much more to come. Botta's monumental accomplishment offered further incentive for Layard's own excavations, long planned but indefinitely postponed because of his work as the personal advisor of Sir Stratford Canning, the British ambassador at Constantinople. Botta's discoveries whetted Layard's appetite for previously unknown bas-reliefs like the ones at Khorsabad, "slabs of gypsum covered with sculptured representations of battles, sieges, and similar events" (1: 11), which were eminently suited for public display because of their mimetic and narrative elements (Bohrer, "Times" 204). Further, Botta provided Layard with a benchmark against which he could measure his own achievements for readers.

In many respects, Layard hoped to use Botta's short but successful archaeological career as a blueprint for his own. As Layard explains, Botta had received generous subsidies for his investigations from France, which recognized the importance of his discoveries and rewarded him accordingly for his "zeal, discrimination, and personal sacrifices" (1: 15). However, Layard failed to find similar backing from the parsimonious British government. At first, he relied on Ambassador Canning's private but limited funding of his initial excavations in late 1845, "in the hope that, should success attend the attempt, means would be found to carry it out on an adequate scale" (1: 17). Despite Layard's immediate and

unprecedented success, however, he never received what he felt was sufficient support from home for his work, which prevented him from making more methodical explorations and even forced him to spend his own money to finance excavations (Waterfield 164, 191).

Consequently, throughout his narrative, Layard criticizes the British government for lacking the vision of the French and for hampering his investigations with inadequate funding. Even after England had obtained official permission from Turkish authorities to remove Layard's discoveries, the British Museum could offer him only a relatively small research grant, which Layard felt was "scarcely adequate to the objects in view" (1: 326). Despite being expected to do much with little, the altruistic Layard took on the challenge for what he describes as the public good:

I determined, however, to accept the charge of superintending the excavations, to make every exertion, and to economise as far as it was in my power—that the nation might possess as extensive and complete a collection of Assyrian antiquities as, considering the smallness of the means, it was possible to collect. . . . I had therefore to superintend the excavations; to draw all the bas-reliefs discovered; to copy and compare the innumerable inscriptions; to take casts of them; and to preside over the moving and packing of the sculptures. (1: 327)

Performing the work of a whole team of experts, Layard did the best with what he had: "I determined . . . to devote the whole of my time to the undertaking, and to make every sacrifice to ensure its success" (1: 328). At this point, Layard's labor of

love already included enduring "almost intolerable" summer heat (1: 24), brutal sandstorms, chronic illness, and spartan accommodations, such as a leaky mud hut that he shared with his host's livestock one winter. Toiling under what he characterizes as a shortage of finances and personnel allowed Layard to take almost exclusive credit for the results, as he staked his own claim as a public benefactor.

Besides having to deal with his own government's lack of support, Layard, like Botta before him, also faced "formidable opposition" from local Turkish authorities (1: 33), much of it religiously motivated. Like Belzoni and other archaeologists throughout the century, Layard "was dogged by the fact that local inhabitants were convinced the foreigners could be digging only for treasure and would cheat them of their right to it" (Searight 146). Layard had tried to conceal his excavations from the despotic provincial governor, Mohammed Pasha; however, his discovery of small amounts of gold leaf at Nimrud led to rumors of the supposed riches he had found. Layard assured the Pasha that he had no interest in any precious metals, but he soon encountered bitter resistance from Mosul's Cadi, a judge and religious leader, who suspected Layard's motives. Layard was asked to stop his excavations because of the Cadi's claims that he was disturbing a Muslim burial ground, but he continued his work after learning that one of the Pasha's servants had been ordered to move gravestones to the site. Layard had the counterfeit graves removed and other remains relocated, only to hear of still more trouble:

I received information that the Cadi of Mosul was endeavouring to stir up the people against me, chiefly on the plea that I was carrying away

treasure; and, what was worse, finding inscriptions which proved that the Franks [Europeans] once held the country, and upon the evidence of which they intended immediately to resume possession of it, exterminating all true believers. (1: 55)

Though the Cadi had yet to visit Layard's excavations, he tried to convince his followers of Layard's treasure hunting and violent colonial intentions while overlooking his true acquisitive motives. In January 1846, the new interim Pasha, Ismail, asked Layard to humor the Cadi and his associates and temporarily suspend his operations, but Layard continued his excavations, though on a smaller scale. Shortly thereafter, Layard endured another brief work stoppage after his discovery of a gigantic sculptured head caused a commotion in Mosul, giving the Cadi another opportunity to "annoy" him (1: 67). In spring 1846, Layard's fortunes improved with the installment of a new Pasha, Tahyar, who allowed the excavations to continue without interruption until his death that December. Though the Cadi continued to throw obstacles in Layard's way, he was able to defy such "interference" (1: 48) and "machinations" (2: 3) after Canning finally obtained a decree from the Sultan's Grand Vizier that authorized "the continuation of the excavations and the removal of such objects as might be discovered" and "secured to the British nation the records of Nineveh, and a collection of the earliest monuments of Assyrian art" (1: 130-1).

Meanwhile, Layard also had to contend with the French, who had become his archaeological adversaries almost overnight. Though Layard's relations with Botta had been mutually supportive, he encountered difficulties from M. Rouet, Botta's

successor as French vice-consul, that reflected the "nationalist-chauvinistic rivalry" of early Near Eastern archaeology (Larsen 12). Ever since Napoleon's Egyptian expedition of 1798-1801 ended with England's capture of French collections, including the famed Rosetta Stone, the Louvre and the British Museum and their agents had competed for ancient artifacts from the Middle East in a contest for institutional superiority and national prestige. In the 1840s, Britain and France raced to be the first not only to transport and exhibit Assyrian sculptures, but also to decipher the cuneiform writing that accompanied many of them (Waterfield 125, 138). Without naming names, Layard suggests that the French exacerbated his problems with local officials and even purposely worked against him: "Others, who well knew my object, and might have spared me any additional interruption without a sacrifice of their national character, were not backward in throwing obstacles in my way, and in fanning the prejudices of the authorities and natives of the town" (1: 33). Layard even accuses the French of destroying antiquities in an effort to keep him from obtaining them. On one occasion, Layard visited a tunnel where he discovered a slab with cuneiform inscriptions that he planned to examine more closely later. Unfortunately, he never got the chance: "Some days after, others who had casually heard of my visit, and conjectured that some Assyrian remains might have been found there, sent a party of workmen to the spot; who, finding the slab, broke it into pieces, in their attempt to displace it" (1: 80-1). Layard bemoans the tablet's "wanton destruction" because it contained a genealogical list of kings that was new to him, and he had planned to remove the stone "carefully" and look at it more closely (1: 81). In

this case, Layard suggests that, unlike the plundering French agents, he was motivated more by the search for knowledge than by the urge for possession. He laments, "This was not the only loss I had to complain of, from the jealousy and competition of rivals" (1: 81). When Layard began to work at Kuyunjik, which travelers had identified as the actual site of Nineveh, the only opposition he received was from Rouet, "who claimed the ruins as French property" (1: 132), to no avail. Layard notes with satisfaction his ability to find remains at Kuyunjik, where his rival had failed to do so, and attributes his success to a superior understanding of Assyrian construction (2: 119-21). Layard also measures his personal triumph over the French through other discoveries that he felt surpassed those from Khorsabad in importance,<sup>17</sup> an opinion with which Botta himself privately concurred (Larsen 97).

Besides playing Wellington to Rouet's Napoleon, Layard also represents himself as being in almost constant danger of attacks from "hostile Arabs" (1: 6), many of whom had themselves suffered losses of person and property under the brutal regime of Mohammed Pasha or from the depredations of other marauding tribes (1: 58-9, 72-3). Layard describes himself as being armed, though "unmindful of danger," during his first travels with the merchant Edward Mitford in Asia Minor and Syria (1: 1), where he and his companion "ran daily risks" as unescorted foreigners (1: 3). Layard's decision not to relate the muggings he survived while later traveling alone minimizes the mortal danger he faced while also making him seem more self-reliant than he in fact was.<sup>18</sup> More important, these omissions also have the effect of exclusively and directly associating the threat of violence to Layard with his

archaeological work, making his personal risks part of a national cause. After learning of an attempted robbery from the "thieving" Abou Salman Arabs (1: 56), Layard decided to form an alliance with their sheik, Abd-ur-rahman, whom he conciliated with gifts. To protect his men, his property, and himself, Layard later armed all his workers (1: 331). When robbers stole his cargo, Layard and some of his men apprehended the offending tribe's sheik and threatened him with prosecution in Mosul, after which the missing property was returned, along with gifts of livestock, by way of restitution (1: 365-8). Though Layard claims that this incident ended his problems with local Bedouins and produced "a proper respect for [his] property" (1: 368), he had to take extra precautions when excavating at Kalah Shergat, the site of Assyria's first capital, Assur. The area was "notoriously dangerous, being a place of rendezvous for all plundering parties" (2: 45), and general scarcity and intense rivalries "had unsettled the Arabs, and every one was on the look-out to help himself to his neighbour's property" (2: 50). Moreover, Layard states that his local fame and continued rumors of his successful treasure hunting made him an even more inviting target. Under the protection of a local tribe and surrounded by "a regular system of warlike defence" (2: 49) that included scouts and watchmen, Layard's men worked until threats from "wandering parties of plunderers" forced a regretful Layard to withdraw them in the interest of their safety (2: 67). Layard's fear of violence from a band of marauders later ended his work at Nimrud as well. Sacrificing potential discoveries for his men's welfare, Layard suggests that, although his own courage

knew no bounds, he would not put others in harm's way for national glory or personal gain.

In this respect, Layard portrays himself as a model master, an identity which he carefully cultivated abroad and consciously constructs in his narrative. He describes the relationship between superiors and their subordinates as it supposedly existed within the Ottoman Empire in idealized terms: "In no country in the world are ties of this nature more close than in Turkey: nowhere does there exist a better feeling between the master and the servant, and the master and the slave" (2: 2). Layard exploits this congenial inequality to his great advantage, acknowledging his debt to the "liberality and public spirit" of his patron, Stratford Canning (1: 17), while depicting himself as the benefactor of his own workmen, who were "attracted by the prospect of regular wages" (1: 28). Because of the depredations of Mohammed Pasha and the scarcity of food, laborers seeking a livelihood were readily available to Layard, who recruited local Arabs, Turks, and Chaldean or Nestorian Christians, using each group in a capacity that best suited his needs and their abilities: "The Chaldæans from the mountains, strong and hardy men, could alone wield the pick; the Arabs were employed in carrying away the earth" (1: 35). Like other Victorian archaeologists who depended on local hired help for their excavations, Layard subscribed to the class distinction that separated his workmen's manual labor of digging and hauling dirt from his own "primarily intellectual effort," a division that persisted until the development of team work in the twentieth century (Levine 93). At the same time, he portrays the relationship between himself and his workmen as

mutually advantageous. Everyone gained materially from the transaction, and numbers of hangers-on, from family members to fellow tribesmen, offered protection for laborers and Layard's sculptures alike. Layard supervised up to three hundred men at a time through his familiarity with and self-proclaimed mastery of the desert tribes of Mesopotamia: "I knew enough of the Arab character not to despair of bringing the men under proper control" (1: 329). The hero-worship shown by his workers upon his departure bolsters Layard's flattering self-image: "All they wanted was each man a teskerè, or note, to certify that they had been in my service. This would not only be some protection to them, but they would show my writing to their children, and would tell them of the days they had passed at Nimroud" (2: 147). This final, paternalistic portrait of Layard surrounded by his faithful workmen, who ask him the favor of a souvenir, conveys a sense of his local reputation and authority, as Layard's men define themselves in relation to him and his remains.

Though his account has been praised for its freedom from "racist overtones" (Larsen 55), Layard suggests that the Arabs' and Turks' lack of knowledge and understanding about his discoveries made them unfit stewards for such cultural property.<sup>19</sup> When Layard's workmen uncovered an enormous alabaster head, they mistook the artifact for a god or monster. One Bedouin announced to Layard, "Hasten, O Bey [Lord] . . . hasten to the diggers, for they have found Nimrod himself. Wallah, it is wonderful, but it is true! [W]e have seen him with our eyes. There is no God but God" (1: 65). Layard states that he was not surprised by the Arabs' amazement and terror, which extended to their leaders. Sheik Abd-ur-rahman, whom

Layard says could hardly believe at first that the head was made of stone, exclaimed, "This is not the work of men's hands . . . but of those infidel giants of whom the Prophet—peace be with him!—has said that they were higher than the tallest date tree; this is one of the idols which Noah—peace be with him!—cursed before the flood" (1: 66-7). Even the Turkish authorities revealed their ignorance on this head: "The Cadi had no distinct idea whether the bones of the mighty hunter had been uncovered, or only his image; nor did Ismail Pasha very clearly remember whether Nimrod was a true-believing prophet, or an infidel" (1: 68). According to Layard, a later delegation to Nimrud from Tahyar Pasha showed a similar response to his discoveries: "[The Pasha] visited the ruins, and expressed no less wonder at the sculptures than the Arabs; nor were his conjectures as to their origin and the nature of the subjects represented, much more rational than those of the sons of the desert" (1: 142). A pair of man-headed lions was identified as "the idols of the infidels" (1: 142), of supernatural origin, destined "to be sent to England to form the gateway to the palace of the Queen" (1: 143), who was thought to worship them. To Layard, such responses seemed as absurd and amusing as his workmen's unsophisticated reactions to each new bas-relief: "If it was a bearded man, they concluded at once that it was an idol or a Jin, and cursed or spat upon it. If an eunuch, they declared that it was the likeness of a beautiful female and kissed or patted the cheek" (1: 137).

Layard also indicates that, despite their interest in his finds,<sup>20</sup> the local Arabs and Turks failed to show proper reverence for what he felt were cultural treasures. He describes the intentional destruction of a sculpture accidentally uncovered at one of

the mounds before Rich's visit: "The ulema having at length pronounced that these figures were the idols of the infidels, the Mohammedans, like obedient disciples, so completely destroyed them, that Mr. Rich was unable to obtain even a fragment" (1: xxiv). The continued threat of such destruction compelled Layard to rebury remains that he did not remove: "Had the numerous sculptures been left, without any precaution being taken to preserve them, they would have suffered, not only from the effects of the atmosphere, but from the spears and clubs of the Arabs, who are always ready to knock out the eyes, and to otherwise disfigure, the idols of the unbelievers" (2: 108). From Layard's point of view, "[t]he best of the antiquities had to be sent to England, otherwise they would be broken to pieces by the Arabs, or the French would take over Nimrud" (Waterfield 144).

Layard's focus on his preservation of such remains through whatever means necessary rhetorically establishes Britain's moral claim to them, as well as his own identity as a cultural conservator. A number of the buildings explored by Botta and Layard had been damaged by fire, time, and the elements, reducing gypsum slabs to lime that quickly fell to pieces upon exposure to the air (1: 12-13, 27). Because of the delicate nature of such remains, Layard felt compelled to supervise his diggers and even to get his own hands dirty at times, as he did at Nimrud: "I was obliged to be continually present, and frequently to remove the earth myself from the face of the slabs—as, through the carelessness and inexperience of the workmen, they were exposed to injury from blows of the picks" (1: 328). After a workman at Nimrud broke a "perfect" vase with a pick, Layard took the tool, and "working cautiously"

himself, he was "rewarded by the discovery of two vases, one in alabaster, the other in glass (both in the most perfect preservation), of elegant shape, and admirable workmanship," though they were later lost in transport (1: 343). When patient and persistent digging near the center of the same mound revealed a black marble obelisk commemorating an Assyrian conquest,<sup>21</sup> Layard immediately had it carefully packed for transport and closely guarded, taking "every precaution that the superstitions and prejudices of the natives of the country, and the jealousy of rival antiquaries, could suggest" (1: 348). Layard also describes his painstaking efforts to remove a number of crumbling ivory ornaments embedded in the soil at Nimrud: "I had the greatest difficulty in extracting them, even in fragments. I spent hours lying on the ground, separating them, with a penknife, from the rubbish by which they were surrounded" (2: 8). Moreover, he went to great lengths to preserve the remains of some nearby paintings on plastered walls for sketching: "It required the greatest care to separate the rubbish from the walls, without destroying, at the same time, the paintings, as the plaster fell from the wall in flakes, notwithstanding all my efforts to preserve it" (2: 12). Because of his limited means, though, the acquisitive Layard generally reserved such extreme measures for when there was "the promise of the discovery of something to carry away" (2: 12). In his focus on "moveable antiquities," Layard was typical of early Victorian archaeologists, whose concentration on artifacts and excavations and love of the rare and the beautiful gave their nascent discipline its "treasure-hunt aspect" (Levine 31-4).

The removal and transportation of the remains uncovered by Layard proved to be almost as massive an undertaking as the excavations themselves. Layard describes this process in detail so that his readers could appreciate the materials, manpower, and ingenuity it took to send these artifacts home. He initially anticipated that the Nimrud bas-reliefs in his first shipment would give him little trouble in transit: "The slabs on which they were sculptured . . . could be without difficulty packed and moved to any distance" (1: 64). In the interests of economy, however, Layard later decided to have these sculptures sawed from their slabs and cut down in back, which reduced their size, thickness, and weight, though at the regrettable cost of some standard inscriptions. Layard, however, describes the operation as an unmitigated success: "When the bas-reliefs were thus prepared, there was no difficulty in dragging them out of the trenches. . . . After having been removed from the trenches, the sculptures were packed in felts and matting, and screwed down in roughly made cases" (1: 140-1). Layard had hoped that, after transporting the sculptures from the mound to the Tigris on the Pasha's "rude" buffalo carts (1: 141), he could send them downriver by steamer, but his prospective ship could not get over the rapids above Tikrit. Consequently, Layard, like Botta before him, had to rely instead on rafts made of wood and inflated sheepskins to get his sculptures to Baghdad, from where they were taken by boat to Basra (Larsen 32; Layard 1: 141). In a similar manner, a second cargo, consisting of twenty-three cases of bas-reliefs and other artifacts, was transported on the Pasha's "rotten and unwieldy" carts and left port on December 25, 1846, as a kind of Christmas present from Layard to the nation (1: 372).

However, it was Layard's ability to transport a monumental winged man-headed lion and bull that epitomized his accomplishments as a collector. During the removal of these sculptures, Layard again confronted many of the obstacles that he had faced before. Early in his narrative, Layard explains that moving the larger sculptures was impossible because of inadequate equipment: "The few ropes to be obtained in the country were so ill-made that they could not support any considerable weight" (1: 140). Months later, however, the threat of local instability from drought and famine induced Layard "to undertake the removal of the larger sculptures as early as possible" (2: 73). He suggests that his limited means, rather than the lack of technical ability or proper materials, compelled him to leave behind a massive pair of winged man-headed lions, which he calls "the finest specimens of Assyrian sculpture discovered in the ruins" (2: 74).

With a sense of urgency, Layard made preparations for removing whole "two of the smallest and best preserved" sculptures (2: 74), as the British Museum directed, rather than sawing them into several pieces, as Botta had been forced to do with a pair of bulls from Khorsabad. Using iron axles from his predecessor, Layard constructed a large mulberry cart, which itself became an object of wonder in Mosul and an example of "the learning and wisdom of the Infidels" (2: 76). To move the sculptures at all, Layard had to reduce the thickness and weight of the slabs by cutting away as much as possible from the back. About fifty workmen dug a large trench, "nearly two hundred feet long, about fifteen feet wide, and, in some places, twenty feet deep," to allow the bull to be moved from inside the mound and onto the cart (2: 77). The

dramatic lowering of the bull with ropes to a horizontal position upon rollers forms a central episode in Layard's narrative. Layard details the technical aspects of this arrangement, explaining how, after the bull was secured with ropes, one group of workmen supported its weight with beams while others slowly slackened off their ropes to lower the bull. As the bull descended towards the rollers, the supporting beams had to be removed, shortly after which the overtaxed ropes broke and the bull fell. Miraculously, it survived unharmed, much to Layard's relief: "It would be difficult to describe my satisfaction, when I saw it lying precisely where I had wished to place it, and uninjured!" (2: 82). After this close call, the bull was pulled forward on its rollers with cables. The next day, it was rolled out of the trench and dragged down the mound and onto the cart, which three hundred men pulled towards the river. Before they reached their destination, however, the cart got stuck, and the bull sustained minor damage from a rifle ball during a Bedouin attack. Layard moved the more fragile lion without incident, and he transferred both it and the bull to rafts that had been specially constructed for them. As Layard explains, he also foiled a potentially devastating strike by his workmen on the eve of the sculptures' embarkation by appealing to the few tribes still left in the vicinity for assistance. In narrative terms, then, Layard's removal of the winged sculptures represents the triumph of British engineering and administration over logistical difficulties and organized resistance.

Besides providing the subject of one of Layard's longest and most suspenseful chapters (2: 68-114), this process was also memorialized in the engravings that serve

as frontispieces for the two volumes of his book. Working from the author's detailed description of moving the bull, illustrator George Scharf Jr. portrays the heroic Layard in action in images that emphasize his technical ingenuity and personal triumph in a picturesque setting (Bohrer, "Printed" 96). In "Lowering the Great Winged Bull," Layard is prominently placed atop the mound, directing the workers below, who support the bull's immense weight. As Shawn Malley suggests, "[T]he Bedouin are represented as a sleepy people in need of guidance" (162), which Layard provides. Moreover, the presence of Arab onlookers at Layard's level emphasizes the scene's character as entertainment or spectacle, with Layard serving as stage-manager. Layard's leadership is also foregrounded in "Procession of the Bull," which "evokes biblical images of Pharaonic mastery over a slave race," as Layard "directs his parade of workers from a rearing horse, which he effortlessly controls with one hand in a traditional representation of military command" (Malley 162). As in "Lowering," interested Arab bystanders, much like the book's readers, provide an audience for Layard's performance. Unlike the book's documentary illustrations of sculptures and monuments, picturesque scenes, and ethnographic imagery, which were derived by Scharf and artist Samuel Williams chiefly from Layard's own drawings<sup>22</sup> (Bohrer, "Printed" 94-7), Scharf's dramatic frontispieces make use of the artist's imagination as much as the author's narrative to show Layard's power over people and things.

For Layard, the bull and its companion piece represented Assyria's achievements as well as his own. Earlier, Layard had associated a similar pair of composite sculptures with Assyria's ancient glory and eventual decline and fall:

I used to contemplate for hours these mysterious emblems, and muse over their intent and history. . . . These winged human-headed lions were not idle creations, the offspring of mere fancy; their meaning was written upon them. They had awed and instructed races which flourished 3000 years ago. Through the portals which they had guarded, kings, priests, and warriors had borne sacrifices to their altars, long before the wisdom of the East had penetrated to Greece, and had furnished its mythology with symbols long recognised by the Assyrian votaries. They may have been buried, and their existence may have been unknown, before the foundation of the eternal city. For twenty-five centuries they had been hidden from the eye of man, and they now stood forth once more in their ancient majesty. But how changed was the scene around them! The luxury and civilisation of a mighty nation had given place to the wretchedness and ignorance of a few half-barbarous tribes. The wealth of temples, and the riches of great cities, had been succeeded by ruins and shapeless heaps of earth. Above the spacious hall in which they stood the plough had passed, and the corn now waved. (1: 69-70)

Layard follows with references to Ezekiel and Zephaniah, which, like these statues, testify to Assyria's "power and renown" as well as its ruin (1: 70). Through Layard, scripture and sculpture speak with one voice, portraying Assyria as a former prodigy among nations. By evoking the lost grandeur of Assyria through its monuments,

Layard indicates the magnitude of his own accomplishment in revealing what had been concealed for millennia. His final images of cultivation serve as a reminder that, unlike him, local Arabs had been unaware of what lay right under their feet.

Using one of these Bedouins as his mouthpiece, Layard later suggests that his collections signal his intellectual and cultural superiority as a Westerner in the East. During the transportation of the bull, Layard's old ally, Sheik Abd-ur-rahman, wonders aloud why an industrial nation like Britain would invest great effort and expense in old stones that would not improve its manufactures. He struggles to understand how the English could gain wisdom from them, as Layard had claimed:

"For twelve hundred years have the true believers (and, praise be to God! all true wisdom is with them alone) been settled in this country, and none of them ever heard of a palace under ground. Neither did they who went before them. But lo! here comes a Frank from many days' journey off, and he walks up to the very place, and he takes a stick (illustrating the description at the same time with the point of his spear), and makes a line here, and makes a line there. Here, says he, is the palace; there, says he, is the gate; and he shows us what has been all our lives beneath our feet, without our having known anything about it. Wonderful! Wonderful! Is it by books, is it by magic, is it by your prophets, that you have learnt these things? Speak, O Bey, tell me the secret of wisdom." (2: 85)

Even though Abd-ur-rahman parenthetically denies the legitimacy of Layard's infidel "wisdom," his amazement at its results validates that same knowledge and equates it with a preternatural power, of which he yearns to know the source.

Besides providing a melodramatic image of Layard as an intellectual hero, the sheik anticipates Layard's own ensuing "reverie," which confirms his authority as a collector and cultural sage:

Such thoughts crowded upon me day by day, as I looked upon every newly discovered sculpture. A stranger laying open monuments buried for more than twenty centuries, and thus proving to those who dwelt around them, that much of the civilisation and knowledge of which we now boast, existed amongst their forefathers when our "ancestors were yet unborn," was, in a manner, an acknowledgement of the debt which the West owes to the East. It is indeed, no small matter of wonder, that far distant and comparatively new nations should have preserved the only records of a people once ruling over nearly half the globe; and should now be able to teach the descendants of that people, or those who have taken their place, where their cities and monuments once stood. (2: 85-6)

Here, as elsewhere, the ancient remains become a credit to their discoverer, who brings to light a dead civilization that is reborn and redeemed through him. Layard sees himself as a product, however indirect, of that same culture, whose contributions to Western art and mythology he later traces via Persia and Greece (2: 285-97, 481).

Like Layard's salvage operation, this constructed lineage helps to establish the credentials for his performance as what Edward Said calls a "superior judge, learned man, [and] powerful cultural will" (208). At the sheik's invitation, Layard feels compelled to share his knowledge with Assyria's geographical successors, "a kind of intellectual proletariat" (Said 208) whose apparent destiny is to be the beneficiaries of and witnesses to Britain's superior wisdom. Thus, Layard lectures the sheik on "the advantages of civilisation and of knowledge" in what becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: "All I could accomplish was, to give the Arab Sheikh an exalted idea of the wisdom and power of the Franks; which was so far useful to me, that through his means the impression was spread about the country, and was not one of the least effective guarantees for the safety of my property and person" (2: 86). More than the speech, the sheik's response to it demonstrates the "advantages" to which Layard refers, as his own authority is not only confirmed but also extended.

Even as Layard's reputation helped to protect the collections he made, those same collections guaranteed his legacy, which he acknowledges in transporting the winged bull and lion to England:

I watched the rafts, until they disappeared behind a projecting bank forming a distant reach of the river. I could not forbear musing upon the strange destiny of their burdens; which, after adorning the palaces of the Assyrian kings, the objects of the wonder, and may be the worship, of thousands, had been buried unknown for centuries beneath a soil trodden by Persians under Cyrus, by Greeks under

Alexander, and by Arabs under the first successors of their prophet.

They were now to visit India, to cross the most distant seas of the southern hemisphere, and to be finally placed in a British Museum.

Who can venture to foretell how their strange career will end? (2: 104-5)

The movement of the sculptures from East to West follows what Layard sees as the progress of civilization, which culminates, for the time being, in Britain and himself. Like his historical predecessors, in whose very footsteps he imagines himself to be traveling, Layard seeks "to spread the light of his own civilization in the wake of his conquests" (Silberman 12). He outdoes the military and religious leaders of antiquity, whom he represents as having literally passed over these venerable remains without realizing their presence, let alone recovering them. As signs of Layard's singular achievement, then, these sculptures become a testament for future generations to his initiative. Moreover, Layard's removal of these icons of antiquity signals Britain's power across the globe they will travel, while their addition to its national collections confirms England's identity as a cultural caretaker.

Though Layard, like Dante Gabriel Rossetti after him, wonders about the ultimate fate of the sculptures and, by extension, about Britain's own imperial destiny,<sup>23</sup> he eschews the role of the prophet for that of the curator. Before leaving Nimrud, Layard takes readers on a virtual tour of its northwest palace after excavation. He turns from the hustle and bustle of his workmen at the site to the spectacle of the remains themselves, which he maps out in detail. As he does

throughout the book, Layard serves as a mediator between the reader and his collections, here reminding his audience of the extent of his discoveries. His familiarity with the layout and contents of the subterranean ruins allows him to guide us expertly through this large "maze" (2: 112):

Whichever way we turn, we find ourselves in the midst of a nest of rooms; and without an acquaintance with the intricacies of this place, we should soon lose ourselves in this labyrinth. . . . We may wander through these galleries for an hour or two, examining the marvellous sculptures, or the numerous inscriptions that surround us. Here we meet long rows of kings, attended by their eunuchs and priests,—there lines of winged figures, carrying fir-cones and religious emblems, and seemingly in adoration before the mystic tree. Other entrances, formed by winged lions and bulls, lead us into new chambers. In every one of them are fresh objects of curiosity and surprise. (2: 114)

In his re-creation of his excavations as a public attraction, Layard emerges as the king of the castle. The "magnificent" and "imposing" interior (2: 262) functions as a monument to both Assyrian culture and Layard's industry. Meanwhile, Layard's description of labyrinthine "galleries" and their "sculptures" establishes the ancient palace as a kind of proto-museum, which is reinforced by the narrative presence of his readers as visitors, not to mention his own performance as guide. Layard's present-tense narration belies the fact that what he describes had already been reburied or transported; in fact, his appendices include an extensive catalogue of eighty-five

Assyrian bas-reliefs and sculptures sent to England, most of them from the northwest palace, and nearly half of which had already been installed in the British Museum, along with over forty ivories (1: 391-99).

Even before the publication of Nineveh and Its Remains, Layard and his collections were gaining notice back home and throughout Europe. The periodical press had covered Layard's excavations almost from the start; the Athenæum carried five articles on his work during 1846 alone (Larsen 112-13), and the popular Illustrated London News offered its descriptions and engravings of Layard's collections as substitutes for the originals (Bohrer, "Times" 206-7). Meanwhile, "[o]n 23 June [1847], the day before he had left Mosul, the first consignment of bas-reliefs from Nimrud was placed in the British Museum and had aroused very great interest" (Waterfield 178), ultimately leading to the establishment of separate Assyrian galleries.<sup>24</sup> Six months later, Layard lectured before France's Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres in Paris. During his year back in England, from late 1847 through 1848, Layard was feted by society and received numerous accolades while writing the book that would make him a household name. The Foreign Office appointed him to the Turco-Persian Boundary Commission, from which he resigned shortly thereafter, however. For his pioneering work, Oxford bestowed an honorary doctorate of canon law upon Layard, who later listed it on his book's title page to establish his academic credentials in the absence of a university education.<sup>25</sup>

The December 1848 publication of Layard's double-decker account of his travels and excavations led to a resurgence of popular interest in the Assyrian artifacts

at the British Museum (Larsen 193). In fact, the book, which sold nearly eight thousand copies within a year, was "the single most important publication" in publicizing Layard's collections (Bohrer, "Times" 211). For its publisher John Murray, "the Nineveh book was one of the few successes of a year when nearly all trade was at a standstill" (Paston 78). An 1851 abridgement, A Popular Account of Discoveries at Nineveh, sold almost twelve thousand more copies in a little over a year, which "did the most to spread [Layard's] fame among the British populace" (Bohrer, "Printed" 98, 101). The great success of these books has been attributed to their many illustrations and to "Layard's skillful combination of religious commentary, ethnographic observations, criticism of government niggardliness, adventure-filled anecdotes, and geographic description, in the midst of all of which is Layard as the persistent . . . and ultimately successful hero" (Bohrer, "Printed" 98; Russell 56-7). Reviewers praised Layard for his apparent authentication of biblical narrative (Malley 156-158), even though he was not yet able to read cuneiform texts, making it impossible for him to connect his discoveries with specific historical names and events and therefore to establish their precise relation to scripture (Larsen 164; Thomas 31, 54).<sup>26</sup> Layard was also celebrated for uncovering what was identified as one of the ancient sources of a more advanced British civilization (Malley 159-61). Furthermore, Layard's accomplishments were read as a sign of England's colonial destiny, and Layard himself was even portrayed as a nineteenth-century messiah and the British as God's chosen people (Malley 161-4).

Through the publicity that his collections and narratives provided, Layard became living proof of his friend Benjamin Disraeli's remark that the East was a career. Although he had returned to the British Embassy in Constantinople as an unpaid diplomatic attaché just before his book's publication, Layard was soon appointed to a paid position there in belated recognition of his achievements. He was also funded, however inadequately, for additional work from 1849 to 1851, which included sending back the monumental winged lions from Nimrud. Moreover, Layard's agitation in his preface for the long-awaited shipment of the winged bull and lion from Basra to London finally led to their arrival in late 1850 (Layard 1: xii-xiii; Russell 67). As art historian Frederick Bohrer notes, "The colossal animals eventually became the very emblems of Assyria in the popular mind" (Orientalism 106). Later, Layard parlayed his fame and knowledge of the East into a living as a politician and diplomat. More important, his excavations and their objects almost single-handedly popularized the biblical archaeologist,<sup>27</sup> whose mission it became to defend the Bible against not only the higher criticism and uniformitarian geology,<sup>28</sup> but also the related and emerging discipline of prehistoric studies (Malley 156; Levine 96-7).

### **The British Nimrod**

Among the many Assyrian reliefs Layard unearthed, the royal hunt was a frequent subject, offering "proof of the high estimation in which the chase was held

by the people" (Layard 2: 431). After all, the legendary founder of Assyria, the biblical Nimrod, is described in Genesis as "a mighty hunter before the Lord," and the greatest of his successors, the Ninus of history and tradition, was as renowned for his hunting exploits as for his martial triumphs (Layard 2: 431-2). For the Assyrians, hunting was not just a rehearsal for war, but an important pursuit in its own right; it allowed their kings to provide real and symbolic protection for their subjects and to claim dominion over nature (Curtis and Reade 51, 88). In particular, lion killing furnished a "voucher of majesty" for Assyrian rulers from Tiglath-Pileser to Ashurbanipal, who counted their kills in formal inscriptions (Quammen 25), and court artists accordingly represented lion hunts with remarkable care, knowledge, and skill (Layard 1: 130; 2: 428).

Almost 2500 years after the destruction of Nineveh, lion hunting continued to be a prestigious imperial activity, though it was no longer reserved for royalty. In late 1843, twenty-three-year-old Roualeyn George Gordon Cumming, a bachelor and the second son of a "comfortably well-to-do, but not affluent," Scottish baronet (Casada vii), took up what he later described as the "manly and ennobling pursuit" (2: 83) of African big-game hunting for profit, adventure, and fame. Such trophy hunting has been characterized as a prestige-driven ritual of victimization, in which the triumphant hunter's conversion of quarry into trophy asserts human superiority over the natural world (Pearce, Museums 69-71). Further, as Harriet Ritvo explains, the Victorians saw the arrival of British big-game hunters in previously unexplored inland regions of Asia and Africa as a violent "harbinger of civilization" (255) and their

attendant trophy displays as a metaphor for conquering colonized peoples: "The connection between triumphing over a dangerous animal and subduing unwilling natives was direct and obvious, and the association of the big game hunter with the march of empire was literal as well as metonymic" (254). In Cumming's case, he maximized the status he achieved as a hunter and collector through skillful publicity that combined narration with display. His 1850 portrait of the collector as a young man, Five Years of a Hunter's Life in the Far Interior of South Africa, popularized the African sporting narrative, going through its first three editions in eight months (Ritvo 257; Casada xi-xiii). The initial publication of Cumming's book coincided with the opening of his London exhibition or "South African Entertainment," as it was called ("Mr. Gordon"). Together, Cumming's narrative and museum graphically represented his prowess in hunting exotic animals under adversity in a largely unexplored and unknown land<sup>29</sup> that had become "the theatre for the playing-out of European fantasies of masculinity" (Barringer 175). By documenting his singular exploits in exploration, survival, and conquest for a popular audience, Cumming transformed the big-game trophy hunter into a national celebrity and an imperial hero.

In his book, Cumming describes his African expedition as the culmination of a lifelong interest in collecting from nature. Cumming's earliest acquaintance with natural history came through entomology, which he found to be an "interesting pursuit" from a young age (1: 269n). He also showed a great interest in birds' eggs for many years and possessed what he calls, with his usual predilection for self-congratulating superlatives and hyperbole, "one of the finest collections in Great

Britain, amassed with much toil and danger" (1: 95). Cumming's account of his egg hunting demonstrates the lengths (and heights) he would go to in pursuit of his most prized specimens, whether bird or beast: "I have descended most of the loftiest precipices in the central Highlands of Scotland, and along the sea-shore, with a rope round my waist, in quest of the eggs of the various eagles and falcons which have their eyries in those almost inaccessible situations" (1: 95). Before long, Cumming's love of the outdoors turned to sport, as he remarks in his introduction: "Salmon-fishing and roe-stalking were my favourite amusements. . . . Long before I proceeded to Eton I took pride in the goodly array of hunting trophies which hung around my room" (1: vii). In 1839, Cumming joined the Fourth Madras Light Cavalry Regiment in India, where he continued to add to his collection before leaving because of the harsh climate. After a brief return home, where he quickly tired of his favorite pastime of deerstalking, the restless Cumming enlisted in a Canadian regiment, but found little time to pursue wild game in his new post. He also gave up his next commission with the Cape Colony mounted riflemen<sup>30</sup> because of the limited prospects it offered for either hunting or fighting, and resolved instead "to penetrate into the interior farther than the foot of civilized man had yet trodden—to vast regions which would afford abundant food for the gratification of the passion of my youth,—the collecting of hunting trophies and objects of interest in science and natural history" (1: ix). Though Cumming considered traveling to the Kalahari, his decision to support himself as an ivory trader led him to the greener forests of the east, where

he became "the first [European] to penetrate into the interior of the Bamangwato country" (1: ix).

Throughout his narrative, the trailblazing Cumming treats his safaris as an extension of his Highland hunting, domesticating Africa's wilds in Scotland's image to establish his field credentials at home and abroad. This reconfiguration begins with Cumming's self-presentation in terms of his typical hunting attire, which consisted of an old gray or tartan kilt and gray stalking cap, along with sturdy Badenoch brogues for his feet. This "garb of Old Gaul" served as Cumming's passport when he traveled among the Boers, who were "rather partial to Scotchmen, although they detest the sight of an Englishman" (1: 66). As Cumming explains, the Boers' affinity for the Scottish grew out of a sense of their shared history and values: "They have an idea that the Scotch, like themselves, were a nation conquered by the English, and that, consequently, we trek in the same yoke as themselves; and further, a number of their ministers are Scotchmen" (1: 66-7). Cumming also felt somewhat at home in Africa because of some familiar features of its landscape, especially the river rapids "which thundered along in Highland fashion over masses of dark rock" (2: 184-5). According to Cumming, even the animals were like ones he knew; for example, a pack of wild dogs resembled Cumming's old "noble deer-hounds" (1: 168). Noticing some likenesses between African and Scottish wildlife in terms of their behavior, Cumming hunted Cape buffalo, rhebok, and hartebeest using homegrown deerstalking techniques, including "the old Scottish principle of the ring, a common and successful mode of hunting among the South African tribes" (2: 303).

From his previous hunting experiences, Cumming knew at the outset of his African expeditions that the life before him "was by no means likely to be one of luxury" (1: 35), and he encountered tangible hardships along the way. In particular, difficult and unfamiliar terrain and an inhospitable climate posed special challenges for Cumming, his team of dozens of oxen, and even his wagons. For example, to find elephants, Cumming had to trek over six hundred miles northeast from Colesberg on the frontier of the Cape Colony through "rugged and apparently impassable mountain ranges" and "extensive sandy deserts, which are destitute of water" to the unexplored "vast and trackless forests" beyond Bamangwato (1: 241). River-crossings were dangerous and time-consuming, and they had to be done carefully and in stages because of deep streams and strong currents, which could carry away cargo, livestock, and men. To make matters worse, Cumming's wagons often got stuck in mud or sand and needed frequent repairs, using what little could be obtained or made in the field. Because water could be difficult to find, Cumming and his entourage also occasionally suffered from severe thirst. At the opposite extreme, heavy rains caused delays, flooded rivers, and made already difficult roads (where they existed) nearly impassable. Cumming also had to endure hot days that left his nerves and constitution "considerably shaken" (2: 380), along with many cold nights.

In addition, the threat of war in South Africa was largely peripheral to Cumming but nonetheless real. In early October 1843, just over two weeks before Cumming left on his first hunt, Britain had signed treaties creating states for the Basutos, or mountain tribes of South Africa, and the Griquas, nomadic Dutch-

Hottentot hunters (Theal 211; Cumming 1: 21). Still, decades-long hostilities between Boer settlers and British forces, who clashed in 1842 in what was then the Boer republic of Natalia, put Cumming perilously close to danger. He remarks on the "unsettled state" of the country during his first expedition, which necessitated the presence of a garrison of about two hundred English troops in Colesberg (1: 87). A large party of Boer farmers remonstrated with Cumming for his "madness" in "living alone in an isolated position in such sharp times" (1: 202-3), but Cumming showed no fear of "hunting, with only a few followers, in the wilderness" (1: 177), and he went back to tracking lions. As Cumming remarks somewhat facetiously, small skirmishes between the emigrant Boers and British-backed Griquas threatened wildlife caught in the crossfire more than the combatants themselves (1: 217-18); indeed, the May 1845 Battle of Schwart Coppice ended with only four casualties (Theal 218-19). Later, Cumming's Hottentots, reluctant to advance farther into the interior, warned him of a possible attack from the "cruel and warlike" Matabele, who had reportedly raided some Bechuanas to the north just a few days before (1: 257-8). Cumming, however, stayed his course without incident. In March 1846, Cumming heard rumors of possible tribal wars involving kings who had hunted or traded with him, but he did not fear for his own safety (2: 156). Cumming's military background, along with the proximity of English forces, gave him a feeling of protection from, if not of invulnerability to, war in South Africa.

Cumming also had to contend with unreliable hired help from indigenous South Africans, many of whom he saw as lazy, cowardly, deceitful, and rebellious,

continuing a tradition of western discourse dating back to the European settlement of the Cape in 1652 (Coetzee 12-35). Three months after he set out on his first excursion, the desertion of Cumming's two Hottentot after-riders left him with just four attendants, all of them natives. While recounting how two of these servants left him to face a lioness alone, a disgruntled Cumming complains, "Such is ever the case with these worthies, and with nearly all the natives of South Africa. No reliance can be placed on them. They will to a certainty forsake their master in the most dastardly manner in the hour of peril, and leave him in the lurch" (1: 210). During his second expedition, Cumming suspected his interpreter of conspiring with a tribe of Bechuanas who wanted to mislead Cumming and bring him to their king. On his third trip, Cumming's four "rascally Hottentots" (2: 109) abandoned him on the borders of the Kalahari, leaving Cumming to yoke and drive his own oxen, with the assistance of the Bushman Ruyter and four Bechuana followers, for about a thousand miles (1: 52). Cumming comments that this "lonely expedition" taught him "what difficulties a man may surmount when he is pressed by adversity" (2: 43). Frustrated by the ineptitude of his hired guns during his fourth expedition, Cumming laments, "[M]y followers, instead of a help, were a very great hindrance to me" (2: 195).

Cumming's lack of trust in his men allows him to portray himself as not less but more heroic because of the increased danger he faces alone or nearly so.<sup>31</sup> Despite his problems with natives, Cumming benefited greatly from their assistance, though he assigns them a secondary role as guides, trackers, hunting companions, and

trading partners. Only in a footnote does Cumming hint at their large, if inconstant, presence in his retinue, and even then, he focuses on his own philanthropy:

It was ever to me a source of great pleasure to reflect that, while enriching myself in following my favourite pursuit of elephant-hunting, I was feeding and making happy the starving families of hundreds of the Bechuana and Bakalahari tribes, who invariably followed my waggons, and assisted me in my hunting, in numbers varying from fifty to two hundred at a time. (1: 321n)

Representing colonialism as mutually beneficial to the rulers and the ruled, Cumming assumes a paternalistic attitude towards indigenous Africans, depicting himself as their benefactor, as when he adopts the Bushman boy Ruyter as a sort of surrogate son. Yet Cumming gained at least as much as he provided through the hunt and in trade with local tribes. In fact, he admits to having taken advantage of natives in his commerce with them and even boasts about the bargains he obtains for himself. Cumming views these inequitable dealings with natives, like their reliance upon him for sustenance, as evidence of his superiority over them.

Ultimately, Cumming found animals to be more formidable than either natives or Boers. The very qualities that made African game worth pursuing for Cumming also spelled danger, from the speed, size, and strength of these animals to their teeth, horns, tusks, and claws, not to mention their sheer numbers in some cases. Despite what his accounts of long chases and close calls might suggest, however, Cumming risked neither life nor limb during much of his hunting, which was often carried out

from the relative safety of a shooting-hole next to a watering place, where he shot animals as they came to drink.<sup>32</sup> Still, Cumming relates three episodes during one particularly difficult week of his first expedition that nearly cost him his life.

Cumming's first narrow escape happened one night when he heard some creature, which he believed to be a mouse, moving in the earth under his pillow. The next morning at breakfast, two of his men showed him the large snake they had killed in his bed: "It was a large specimen of the black variety of the puff adder, one of the most poisonous serpents of Africa, death ensuing within an hour after its bite" (1: 187). A few days later, while lying in wait for blesboks, Cumming was nearly run over by a herd of some thirty wildebeests. The next night, a pack of forty wild dogs, attracted by one of Cumming's kills, surrounded him. Unarmed, he awoke with a shriek: "I expected no other fate than to be instantly torn to pieces and consumed. I felt my blood curdling along my cheeks and my hair bristling on my head" (1: 191). As Cumming explained, however, he had the presence of mind to wave his blanket at the animals, "at the same time addressing my savage assembly in a loud and solemn manner" (1: 191), which scared off the dogs.

Cumming was not always so fortunate in his encounters, however, and his hunting entourage suffered numerous casualties along the way. Over five years, Cumming lost many of his animals to disease or predators, including forty-five horses, seventy cattle, and seventy dogs (2: 366). Distemper killed many of his horses in summertime, while others were victimized by lions. Near the end of Cumming's fifth and last expedition, nearly all of his oxen died from sleeping sickness or hoof-

and-mouth disease (2: 282-4). His dogs were frequently in harm's way, and Cumming had to end the suffering of many a favorite himself. He endured an even greater loss when his wagon-driver and friend Hendrick Strydom was killed and devoured by a lion, which a vengeful Cumming in turn tracked down and shot. A leopard later attacked another one of Cumming's companions, who was badly injured and barely escaped with his life.

Even the stalwart hunter himself was not immune to illness and injury. On several occasions, Cumming suffered from acute rheumatic fever, which slowed but did not stop him. Hunting accidents were more common, if not more severe. Cumming endured a number of leg injuries, including the times that he was kicked by an ostrich and an ox (1: 126; 2: 54). Cumming was also hobbled when his own horse fell on him and when he stepped on a thorn during an elephant chase. On another occasion, an exploding rifle left Cumming shaken, burned, and temporarily deaf in one ear, though he fully recovered.

Despite the adversity he faced, Cumming suggests that his rewards far outweighed their costs. Cumming's response to his first encounter with thousands of springboks typifies his exhilaration with South African hunting, which provided him with recreation not to be found elsewhere, especially in Europe:

Delight at beholding so much noble game in countless herds on their native plains was uppermost in my mind, and I felt that at last I had reached the borders of those glorious hunting-lands the accounts of

which had been my chief inducements to visit this remote and desolate corner of the globe. . . .

As I rode along in the intense and maddening excitement of the chase, I felt a glad feeling of unrestrained freedom, which was common to me during my career in Africa, and which I had seldom so fully experienced; and notwithstanding the many thorns which surrounded my roses during the many days and nights of toil and hardship which I afterwards encountered, I shall ever refer to those times as by far the brightest and happiest of my life. (1: 63)

Cumming's exuberant account of his happy hunting grounds recalls Layard's joy and excitement in first finding buried treasures at Nimrud (Layard 1: 26, 40). Cumming's own feelings are intensified by his liberation from routinized colonial service, though his successful hunting relies upon many of the qualities of the soldier, including intelligence, skill, courage, and force (Ritvo 259, 270-1). In fact, the figures of the officer and the hunter unite in "the empire builder" Cumming (Ritvo 254), for whom the imperial frontier serves as the stage for personal conquest and dominion.

Fittingly, the soldier-hunter explicitly links the violence of hunting to that of the colonial battlefield by using military metaphors to describe his encounters with wild animals, including an early "campaign" against gemsboks (1: 112) and skirmishes with "vast armies" of springboks (1: 124) and "troop[s]" or "squadrons" of elephants (2: 125, 194).

Throughout his narrative, Cumming further appeals to expansionist sentiment at home by describing South Africa in terms of its virgin plenty, representing it as a "hunter's elysium" (2: 307) with untouched and unparalleled numbers and varieties of game, from the fabled oryx to the colossal giraffe, which would sometimes cover the plain in "a living mass" (2: 296). From the highest summit of the Kurrichane mountains west of Sestetabie, Cumming surveyed the surrounding landscape and its abundant wildlife:

Throughout all this country, and vast tracts beyond, I had the satisfaction to reflect that a never-ending succession of herds of every species of noble game which the hunter need desire pastured there in undisturbed security; and as I gazed I felt that it was all my own, and that I at length possessed the undisputed sway over a forest in comparison with which the tame and herded narrow bounds of the wealthiest European sportsman sink into utter insignificance. (1: 260)

Here, Cumming anticipates the rhetoric of later British travel writers in what has been called a "monarch-of-all-I-survey scene," "a brand of verbal painting whose highest calling was to produce for the home audience the peak moments at which geographical 'discoveries' were 'won' for England" (Pratt 201). Unlike subsequent explorers, for whom the symbolic conquest of discovery was a "purely passive experience" of seeing (Pratt 204), Cumming asserts his sovereignty over the landscape through his superiority in hunting, which he describes elsewhere as being "in accordance with the laws of nature, . . . one species, whether inhabiting earth, air,

or ocean, being produced to become the prey of another" (1: 171). He speculates on several occasions that the wildlife he is hunting has never seen a horseman or heard the sound of a rifle and more than once suggests that his trophies had roamed for the better part of a century "in peaceful security" (2: 249). In effect, Cumming envisions himself as a new Adam in an African Eden, and he exercises his privilege of naming when he discovers an antelope "utterly unknown to sportsmen or naturalists" (2: 168): "I christened him the 'Antelopus Roualeynei,' or 'bushbuck of the Limpopo'" (2: 169).

Cumming also becomes a kind of Noah with a gun, collecting a male and female of nearly every species he encounters. When he shoots his first waterbuck, Cumming suggests the possibility of completing his collection of regional trophies: "I had now shot noble specimens of every sort of game in South Africa, excepting a few small bucks common in the colony, and the hippopotamus" (2: 137). After obtaining a couple of sable antelope does, which was what he "most particularly required," Cumming reckoned his collection as "almost perfect": "I still wanted heads of the 'bluebuck,' or 'kleenbuck,' 'Vaal rheebok,' 'ourebi,' and 'reitbok,' but these were abundant in the colony, and were not hard to get" (2: 263).

Cumming's particular success as a lion hunter not only earned him that title back home but also allowed him to assert his claim as the true "king of beasts" (2: 111). Reigning supreme among African predators, the dangerous, powerful, and stately lion served as "the emblem of British might" (Ritvo 26), and it was featured on the royal coat-of-arms, which it was often shown supporting. Cumming's own representation of lions emerges as a kind of self-portrait, as he notes the ability of

these hunters to conquer much larger prey (1: 193); the habit of adult males to hunt together "in a happy state of friendship" (1: 195); and the male's possession of "a long, rank, shaggy mane" (1: 195), which Cumming emulated with his hair, said to have rivaled Absalom's (Casada xiii), and long beard.

Regardless of any resemblance between the hunter and his lions, Cumming still saw the big cats as man-eating adversaries to be confronted and conquered with courage, intellect, and, above all, skill:

[L]ion-hunting, under any circumstances, is decidedly a dangerous pursuit. . . . A recklessness of death, perfect coolness and self-possession, an acquaintance with the disposition and manners of lions, and a tolerable knowledge of the use of the rifle, are indispensable to him who would shine in the overpoweringly exciting pastime of hunting this justly-celebrated king of beasts. (1: 201)

Cumming assures his readers that he displayed a hunter's virtues during his first face-to-face encounter with a lioness:

I was cool and steady, and did not feel in the least degree nervous, having fortunately great confidence in my own shooting; but I must confess, when the whole affair was over, I felt that it was a very awful situation and attended with extreme peril, as I had no friend with me on whom I could rely. (1: 209)

Whereas Cumming credits his success as a lion hunter to his self-reliance, calm demeanor, and good marksmanship, he attributes a Hottentot wagon-driver's slaying

of a lion to "a lucky shot" (2: 106-7) and is quick to explain that this same companion lost his nerve upon hearing the roar of another lion.

Cumming views his main competition as a hunter to come not from other humans, but from the lion, as in the plate entitled "Stopping a Poacher," where a scavenging lion tries to make off with one of Cumming's wildebeests (facing 2: 112). Through language that recalls more than a century of enclosures and aristocratic privilege in the field back home, Cumming's caption implies that the lion has violated the rules of the hunt through its attempted theft. Cumming in turn usurps the lion's place in the natural order by asserting his right to the kill through violence. Dispatching the offending lion, Cumming also turns predator into prey in the corresponding narrative, where he admires his newest trophy, "the most magnificent old black-maned lion":

No description could give a correct idea of the surpassing beauty of this most majestic animal, as he lay still warm before me. I lighted a fire and gazed with delight upon his lovely mane, his massive arms, his sharp yellow nails, his hard and terrible head, his immense and powerful teeth, his perfect beauty and symmetry throughout; and I felt that I had won the noblest prize that this wide world could yield to a sportsman. (2: 113-114)

In this case, his conquered rival's supreme physical virtues imply Cumming's own preeminence among hunters.

Despite his many successes, Cumming longed for elephant encounters, which would provide the greatest test of his physical mettle as well as his ultimate reward as a hunter. Cumming portrays the African elephant as a formidable foe because of its sheer size and strength, describing it as "the most dangerous enemy, and far more difficult to conquer than any beast of chase" (1: 314). For Cumming, the elephant's "very shy and secluded disposition" (1: 151) only made it more desirable. Unlike its Indian counterpart, the African elephant was not "routinely tamed" (Ritvo 24), so it was seen by hunters as more challenging sport. The possession of tusks by both sexes offered added incentive to the pursuit, though Cumming's primary interest lay in the larger male of the species, as his gendered language reflects:

The appearance of the wild elephant is inconceivably majestic and imposing. His gigantic height and colossal bulk, so greatly surpassing all other quadrupeds, combined with his sagacious disposition and peculiar habits, impart to him an interest in the eyes of the hunter which no other animal can call forth. (1: 313)

Despite his predilection for bull elephants, Cumming's first elephant kill was a cow, which he represents himself as having taken single-handedly after risking his life by getting within a few yards of two elephants while on foot (1: 315-319). Cumming devotes twice as much space to the tracking and slaying of his first bull elephant, which proved much harder to kill, withstanding a barrage of ten shots before finally succumbing (1: 347-357). Any regrets suggested by the hunter's eulogy for this "mighty old monarch of the forest" are vitiated by his unmistakable excitement over

his rare accomplishment: "My feelings at this moment can only be understood by a few brother Nimrods, who have had the good fortune to enjoy a similar encounter. I never felt so gratified on any former occasion as I did then" (1: 357).

In terms of material rewards, Cumming understood ivory as his special prize for traveling great distances and undergoing extreme trials to find the elephant. He describes the love of ivory as characteristic of industrialized or "civilized" nations (1: 47), which fashioned luxury items like piano keys, knife handles, and billiard balls from this durable and versatile material (Alpers 356; Shayt 367-73). As a hunter and a trader, Cumming valued elephant tusks as both trophies and commodities, though he claimed that he allowed his profit-motive to become a secondary consideration to adorning his collection. Cumming viewed an "ordinary" bull elephant in terms of how many pounds and shillings he could get for its tusks, which typically weighed around fifty pounds each; at four shillings and sixpence a pound, such a pair would bring him twenty-two pounds (2: 249). He appraised more remarkable specimens more subjectively, however, as he explains: "[I]f, on the other hand, I shot an elephant with a pair of tusks of unusual size, perfection, or beauty, I at once devoted them to my collection, and valued them at a tenfold price" (2: 249). Despite his supposed dereliction of duty, Cumming still accumulated more ivory for trade than for display, partly through his obsessive hunting (he bagged more than a hundred elephants) and also through his shrewd trading. His fastidiousness as a collector also ensured that most of his ivory went towards financing his expedition. Of nearly eighty pairs of

elephants' tusks from his fourth expedition, he picked just ten pairs of bulls' teeth and two of cows' tusks for his collection (2: 255).

Still, Cumming showed the most pride in these singular specimens, which best embodied his unparalleled accomplishments in the field. He glories in the size of the largest tusks in his collection, which he valued at over forty pounds apiece: "I am in the possession of a pair of tusks of the African bull elephant, the larger of which measures ten feet nine inches in length, and weighs one hundred and seventy-three pounds" (1: 310). Though Cumming does not specify whether he obtained these tusks through trade or the hunt, they become a fitting symbol of his hunting prowess because of their unusual size and their male origin, which suggest the "perceived power" of the quarry (Ritvo 275). Likewise, Cumming praises the "ponderous, long, wide-set spiral horns" of a buck kudu (1: 154), and he finds the horns of a pair of water buffalo bulls to be in keeping with the animals' "size and powerful appearance":

Their horns reminded me of the rugged trunk of an oak-tree. Each horn was upwards of a foot in breadth at the base, and together they effectually protected the skull with a massive and impenetrable shield. The horns, descending, and spreading out horizontally, completely overshadowed the animal's eyes, imparting to him a look the most ferocious and sinister that can be imagined. (1: 246)

In each instance, Cumming's description of the threatening appearance of the phallic horns of his male prey can be seen as a corollary to the trophy itself, which "needed to

evoke the aspect of the animal that had provoked and justified the killing" to symbolize the hunter's "heroic appropriation" (Ritvo 253).

Cumming also exhibited a kind of connoisseurship in targeting animals that promised to yield rare or beautiful, and therefore desirable, trophies. He describes, for example, the horns of a gemsbok that had killed one of his dogs and severely wounded four others: "This was a first-rate specimen of the roan antelope, and carried a pair of superb scimitar-shaped horns, which were long and fairly set, and beautifully knotted" (1: 344). Of a sable antelope, Cumming writes, "I was transported with delight when I came up and saw the surpassing beauty and magnificence of the trophy I had won. This potaquine was very old, and his horns were enormous, fair set, perfect, and exquisitely beautiful" (2: 275). Condition was paramount; more than once, Cumming laments the loss of an otherwise perfect set of horns to breakage (2: 32; 2: 179).

Because Cumming conceives of his hunting prowess in terms of quantity as well as quality, he also represents his achievement through sheer numbers. During his final expedition, Cumming was so prolific that he ran out of room for his trophies and often had to settle for a small part of the animal, a synecdochic practice he had adopted earlier as an expedient for taking souvenirs from giraffes and elephants. Thus, he contents himself with just the head of a crocodile rather than "the entire skin" (2: 344), and he preserves "only the nails and tail" of a lion (2: 348). At journey's end, he inspects his spoils on a farm outside of Colesberg: "Here I found nine heavily-leaden waggons drawn up, which I had hired and laden up to transport

my collection of hunting-trophies to the sea" (2: 379). In his final sentence, he literally weighs his accomplishment at port: "My valuable collection of trophies and my Cape waggon, weighing all together upwards of thirty tons, were then carefully shipped . . ." (2: 381).

Cumming's impromptu exhibitions of his trophies at his base in Colesberg prefigured their eventual display and reception back home in Britain. Unpacking the wagons after his first expedition, Cumming drew a large audience by design: "[W]e off-loaded the waggons, and made a grand parade of my heads and hunting trophies in front of Paterson's house, which was situated in the centre of the village: this attracted crowds of persons throughout the day" (1: 215). Near the end of his third expedition, in December 1845, Cumming again put on a show at Colesberg: "All the forenoon I was busy off-loading two of the waggons. We spread out the curiosities in the market-ground, making no end of a parade: it was truly a very remarkable sight, and struck all beholders with astonishment" (2: 152). These previews of Cumming's trophies for colonial crowds documented his hunting exploits while revealing his collection's potential as spectacle.

After his return to Britain in 1848, a sun-scorched Cumming took advantage of the commercial possibilities of his collection through the 1850 publication of his hunting narrative and the subsequent exhibition of his trophies. Despite criticisms of the repetitive character of the incidents it recorded ("Mr. Cumming's" 3; "African" 246; "Hunter's" 74), Cumming's book was enthusiastically received by the public for the high adventure provided by his many perilous encounters.<sup>33</sup> Though some critics

repudiated Cumming's blood lust as inhumane ("Mr. Cumming's" 9, 17-18; "Hunter's" 74), others celebrated it as a component of British national identity; in Ritvo's words, "[I]t was both a sign and a support of imperial destiny" (270). In fact, one apologist for hunting and imperialism contended that Cumming was merely following laws of nature and supply and demand while serving "the cause of civilisation" by offering himself as one of its "pioneers" ("African" 211-212). No matter what their differences, Cumming's reviewers all insisted on the authenticity of his narrative and his accomplishments, which his collection corroborated. As a Blackwood's writer asserted, "[W]e know enough of what he has done to think him capable of doing anything" ("Illustrations" 695).

Indeed, Cumming's achievements, as represented by his book and museum, prompted comparisons with historical and legendary hunters alike. The American New Monthly Magazine named Cumming "the greatest hunter of modern times," stating, "The exploits of [William] Harris, at the Cape, of Giraud in Algiers, and of different Indian and American Nimrods, sink into insignificance before the skill and daring of the lion, elephant, and rhinoceros massacres of the gallant Highlander" ("Lion-Hunter" 504). Back home, Dickens's Household Words called Cumming "A Mightier Hunter than Nimrod" and questioned "whether, among all the sporting characters mentioned in ancient or modern story, there was ever so mighty a hunter" as Cumming ("Mightier" 218). A writer for the Eclectic Review characterized Cumming's achievements as no less than Herculean: "[S]ince the day when the Nemean lion was slain by the ancient hero, not many have equalled, very few have

surpassed, the achievements of our author" ("Hunter" 489). Meanwhile, a reviewer for Chambers's Edinburgh Journal ranked Cumming over his chivalric namesake for his hand-to-tail combat with a snake: "St. George's adventure with the dragon was nothing to this, either as regards the fearlessness of the knight or the marvellousness of the event" ("Hunter's" 74). Such hagiography extended Cumming's own life-writing by placing him firmly in the pantheon of storied hunters.

In case his readers had not heard of his collection, Cumming plugged it on the second page of his book's introduction, noting that it could be seen "in my South African Museum at the Chinese Gallery in London" (1: viii). Though Cumming's show was not the first of its kind,<sup>34</sup> it has since been called the "most celebrated" Victorian exhibition of African materials (Altick 290). A Blackwood's writer described his fellow countryman's museum at the fashionable St. George's Gallery as "such as never yet was achieved by the personal labour and energy of a single man" ("African" 233). Even the Blackwood's critic who in 1854 professed to have been "bored to death" with Cumming's trophies, which had been on tour for two years, conceded that they attested to his "courage and energy" ("Sporting" 228). As late as 1856, the year in which Cumming's book first appeared in a one-volume popular edition, his collection still attracted notice from The Illustrated London News, which recommended it to "holiday visitors":

The immense variety of tusks, antlers, horns, bones, skulls, teeth, &c., are interesting to the sportsman, to the naturalist, and to the every day observer. Each of these represents a select specimen of some fierce

and formidable, or shy and wary animal, and most of them were obtained by undergoing extraordinary perils, hardships, and fatigues.

("Mr. Gordon")

Emphasizing the dangers and difficulties Cumming experienced to obtain his trophies, this brief periodical account of his collection reflects his own narrative's approach. An accompanying engraving of a new painting from Cumming's exhibit, Richard Leitch's View on the River Limpopo, with a Herd of Hippopotami, is juxtaposed with an engraving of the breakfast-room in the late poet Samuel Rogers' house at St. James's Place, which featured paintings recognized for their good taste, variety, and provenance (Jameson 383-90). However "meritorious" in their execution ("Mr. Gordon"), Leitch's hippos did not vie with Rogers's paintings on artistic grounds, but rather as an adjunct to Cumming's popular narrative and collection. Reminiscent of contemporary life-sized panoramas representing natural and urban landscapes and historical scenes,<sup>35</sup> the large picture and at least one other from Cumming's exhibition adapted a familiar cultural form with a distant relation to the Italian, Dutch, and English landscapes in Rogers's collection. Such additions to Cumming's "hunting trophies, native arms, and costume" ("Mr. Gordon") kept his exhibition fresh by adding a visual arts element that appealed to a public interested in private galleries as well as panoramas.

Cumming further augmented his museum with Ruyter, the "unique and interesting specimen of a Bushman" whom he had brought back from Africa (1: 128). Though the English-speaking Ruyter's main function was to provide explanations for

visitors, he also served as an exotic attraction (Altick 291; "Lion-Hunter"). Like the Bushmen who were exhibited at the Egyptian Hall from 1846 to 1847,<sup>36</sup> Ruyter represented "a hapless aborigine race who had been the victims in turn of the Hottentots, the Bantu, and the Boers, the last of whom kept them as status symbols and domestic servants" (Altick 279). Having escaped from cruel Boers that massacred his people, Ruyter was captured by two of Cumming's Hottentot servants, who saw him hiding near their camp (1: 129). However, Cumming, representing himself as a benevolent "master" (1: 297), claims that Ruyter willingly remained with him and had "ever since faithfully followed my fortunes through every peril and hardship by land and sea" (1: 128). Cumming also expresses his amusement at the antics of this "funny little fellow":

[He] is at the moment that I write brandishing in the highlands of Scotland an imitation of a Cape waggon-whip which he has constructed, and calling out with stentorian lungs the names of the oxen composing the team which he, at a subsequent period, drove when he alone stood by me, all my followers having forsaken me in the far interior. (1: 128-9)

Cumming's portrayal of the loyal Ruyter as noble but also childlike reflects earlier Abolitionist depictions of Africans, which were likewise "patronizing" and "unintentionally derogatory" (Brantlinger 176). Though Cumming viewed Ruyter as superior to the "savages" that had accompanied him on the hunt (2: 245), the hunter's

proprietary claim to his "little Bushman" (1: 297) further reinforced the African's supposed inferiority to his chosen master.

Despite Ruyter's presence, the main attraction of Cumming's museum, dead or alive, still lay in the lion hunter himself. Back home, Cumming made a spectacle of himself more than once; as a reviewer wrote in Chambers's Edinburgh Journal in 1850, "Two or three months ago he visited Edinburgh, and thinking proper to parade our streets in the costume he had worn in the desert, he was of course an object of considerable interest to the idle class of inhabitants—and to the police" ("Hunter's" 76). Afterwards, in Dublin, Cumming's collection was impounded while he answered a charge of public indecency (Altick 291). Apparently, the unconventional and perhaps intoxicated Cumming also ran afoul of authorities in London "by promenading in a sailor's blue shirt, Highland kilt, and a belt garnished with knives and pistols, while his hair . . . was confined in a bag of silk netting" (qtd. in Casada xiii). Cumming's transgressive displays only increased his larger-than-life image and drew more attention to his exhibition, where he had begun to give his own formal lectures (Altick 291). By the late fifties, Cumming had earned enough from his books and tours to purchase his own permanent museum at Fort Augustus on the Caledonian Canal (Casada x). Cumming's days as collector and curator culminated in the 1866 sale of his trophies and related artifacts to the consummate American showman P. T. Barnum. Though Cumming's celebrity survived his death in 1867, his collection itself went up in smoke just a year later in a fire that destroyed Barnum's museum.

However, Cumming's narrative proved to be self-sustaining and widely influential. In African Hunting from Natal to the Zambesi (1863), fellow Scottish hunter William Charles Baldwin acknowledged Cumming as the inspiration for his trip to southern Africa from 1852 to 1860. As Baldwin explained, Cumming's book proved to be the deciding factor in his choice of destination, appearing "in the very nick of time," as he debated whether to travel to Canada or the western United States (3-4). To a large extent, Cumming's narrative furnished a template for Baldwin's hunting and narration alike: the two covered much of the same ground, hunted similar animals, and amassed extensive collections, though Baldwin had the "mortification" of losing all of his trophies when a servant left them hanging in trees to make room for a large load of ivory (442). Baldwin even met several of Cumming's acquaintances, including the Bamangwato king Sicomy and the Bechuana chief Sichely, and retained as one of his after-riders "[t]he far-famed Kleinboy," a Hottentot "of Gordon Cumming renown" (306). In narrative terms, then, Baldwin's journey is conceived of as a sequel to Cumming's adventures. With forty plates in the manner of Cumming's illustrations, Baldwin's narrative became an instant success and, in turn, incited a new generation of hunters: "The most famous of all African hunter-explorers, F. C. Selous, always acknowledged that Baldwin's was the one book that sent him to Africa" (Baldwin [ii]). Though Selous did not mount a public exhibition of the trophies he collected during his more than twenty years in southern Africa, he imitated Cumming by arranging select specimens to illustrate his public lectures, which followed on the heels of his second book, Travel and Adventures in South-East

Africa (1893) (Ritvo 251-2). Selous, in turn, has been described as a possible influence on H. Rider Haggard's creation of Allan Quatermain, the fin-de-siècle South African hunter-adventurer whose bag includes sixty-five lions, not to mention eight elephants in a single day (Butts x; Haggard 8, 60).<sup>37</sup>

In an even more immediate and direct way, Cumming's work helped to create a vogue for fictional hunting adventures, the most prominent being the Irish-born Captain Mayne Reid's boys' stories. Though most of Reid's fiction derives from his own travels throughout the Americas, his books on African hunting draw upon Cumming's narrative for character and incident. For example, the teenager Hendrik in The Bush Boys (1856) shares his first name with Cumming's ill-fated wagon-driver and, in The Young Yägers (1856), joins the Cape Riflemen, like Cumming himself. In Young Yägers, Reid also borrows many hunting episodes from Cumming, including a hands-on struggle with a python (Reid 312-18; Cumming 2: 129-30). Moreover, Reid's Yägers explicitly mentions Cumming in a derivative account of hunting a white rhinoceros known among natives as the "muchocho":

The other species of white rhinoceros is the "kobaoba," lately named Rhinoceros Oswellii; although in my opinion it should have been Rhinoceros Cummingii--since the great lion-hunter was not only the first to give any definite characteristics of this rare species, but more than any other man he has contributed to a knowledge of the South-African fauna. (291)

Besides making claims for Cumming's contributions as a naturalist, Reid indicates his enduring fame and glorifies the trophy-hunting that won him his reputation. As Reid's boy hunters accumulate "trophies of their expedition" (50) for the entrance-halls of their paternal mansions, they aspire to be like Cumming himself.

Cumming's lionization may have reached its apogee with the manufacture around 1860 of a Staffordshire pottery figure of Cumming in full Highland regalia, standing by a dead lion, whose hind paw he grasps in triumph.<sup>38</sup> Such Staffordshire pieces depicted a variety of subjects, including allegorical, religious, literary, theatrical, legendary, and historical figures. Because patriotic Scottish subjects from William Wallace to Rob Roy MacGregor were also popular, the heroic Cumming fit the mold well. His statuette domesticated the "Lion Slayer" of its name while also transforming the collector into a collectible himself. As with his narrative, Cumming's original collecting enterprise was extended and made accessible to a larger audience that could participate vicariously in it. In the process, collecting was validated and valorized as a potent source of British identity.

Through collecting and collectography, both Cumming and Layard provided their contemporaries with what was felt to be proof of British supremacy and Victorian progress. Like the authors of the Victorian discovery narratives that furnished the foundation of their heroic perspective, Layard and Cumming describe "the overcoming of all the geographical, material, logistical, and political barriers to the physical and official presence of Europeans" abroad (Pratt 202). Moreover, they depict their appropriation of exotic artifacts or specimens as the seemingly inevitable

outcome of a series of episodes in which they use superior knowledge, skill, and physical force to convert foreign objects into British possessions. The display of these collections, combined with the publication of Layard and Cumming's narratives, contributed to the unprecedented prominence of the imperial collector as a Victorian cultural hero.

As published authors, each of whom was "the type of his profession at its best" (Houghton 318), the archaeologist Layard and the ivory trader Cumming anticipated later Carlyle biographer James Anthony Froude's 1850 call for a series of the lives of modern heroes for contemporary audiences. Such Victorian hero worship functioned as a compensatory secular religion and a source of moral inspiration in an age of uncertainty caused by increasing commercialism, growing religious skepticism, and bourgeois democracy (Houghton 305-40). Layard's self-styled altruistic collecting for the nation and his perceived triumph over French adversaries helped to make him the object of patriotic idolization, while Cumming's preeminence among hunters likewise won him acclaim and admiration throughout Britain. Layard and Cumming also became models for imitation among collectors, even if most Victorians lacked the resources to duplicate their feats. As the next chapter explains and Dickens's writings suggest, less wealthy collectors, even among the working classes, were capable of improving their own social status through related strategies of collecting, display, and narration.

## Chapter Two

### Dickens and the Exhibitionary Complex

At about a quarter to four on the afternoon of February 7, 1845, just before closing time at the British Museum, the lingering visitors in the Gallery of Antiquities heard a loud crash from an upstairs ante-room that housed, among other objects, ancient Roman art on loan from Sir William Hamilton and antiquities from Nineveh and Babylon collected by Claudius Rich (see Chapter 1). When museum officials arrived, they discovered Hamilton's ancient Roman cameo glass Portland Vase, famously copied by Josiah Wedgwood, "scattered in fragments about the floor" and apparently "irreparably broken," as the Times reported ("Wilful").<sup>39</sup> Upon further investigation, officials were shocked to learn that the vase's destruction was no accident; it had been smashed to pieces by a young man who confessed to heaving a basalt sculpture from Persepolis at the vase. Later identified as William Mulcahy, alias William Lloyd, a Trinity College dropout and an impoverished theatrical scene-painter from Dublin, the perpetrator could offer no definitive motive for his actions, though he explained in court that he had been suffering at the time from paranoia after a week-long drinking binge. Because of a legal loophole, Lloyd was prosecuted not for harming the priceless vase, but for breaking its glass case, for which he was fined £3, in default of which he was sentenced to two months of hard labor, though he was released shortly afterwards when an anonymous benefactor paid his fine (Brooks 9-19).

Reactions to the incident ranged from outrage to perplexity. Before his trial, Lloyd's inexplicable behavior had prompted suspicions that he was insane, though the court affirmed his sanity. Meanwhile, the Times speculated that if Lloyd was not mad, he might have acted out of a desire for notoriety, "strengthened, no doubt, by straitened circumstances" ("Wilful"). Letters to the paper's editor decried what was felt to be an "inadequate punishment" for Lloyd's "late lamentable destruction," and recommended corporal punishment, preferably administered in public, as a deterrent for any future imitators ("Portland Vase," Letter). Along similar lines, the Spectator complained, "[T]he whole rascality of the empire is given to understand, that for three months' imprisonment (which some have incurred rather than go into the workhouse), they may at any time vent their spleen against the wealthier classes by wantonly destroying any of the valuable works of art daily exposed to public view in our national institutions" ("Destruction"). Much was made of the fact that Lloyd had only nine pence on him when he was arrested, suggesting his lower-class origins and presumed membership in a discontented rabble, but in court he seemed articulate and educated and presented a "respectable appearance," "well dressed and [wearing] a great coat," with "a fair complexion, thin, and apparently somewhat delicate" ("Portland Vase," Times 12 Feb. 1845).

Nevertheless, as the Spectator editorial suggests by alluding to issues of national security and class antagonism, Lloyd's actions revived longtime concerns about the potential risks of unrestricted public access to Britain's national museums. Indeed, the breaking of the Portland Vase exposed fractures within Britain's body

politic itself over the very conception of the British Museum and collateral cultural institutions as public places that were equally accessible to all, at least in theory. As Carol Duncan explains, agitation for increased access to public museums and monuments and proposals for public art galleries date from the 1820s and 1830s, when Britain's middle and upper-middle classes challenged aristocratic culture and rule in part by opening up traditionally restricted cultural spaces and redefining their contents, which often had an aristocratic provenance, as common property (40). As part of a larger campaign that disputed the ability of the privileged few to represent the interests of society as a whole, such nationalist projects were resisted by the ruling elite because they could provide the basis for a political demand to expand the franchise (C. Duncan 40-2). Further, the movement to make museums more public was accompanied by the redefinition of middle-class culture as the national culture and an instrument of social reform that would provide the necessities of a civilized life and strengthen the social order by uniting the nation, including the lowest social ranks, under common values and cultural rituals (C. Duncan 43-7). Opponents suggested the dangers that such change represented through the image of a violent and recalcitrant populace personified by Lloyd and his supposed ilk. Thus, the prosecuting attorney in Lloyd's case warned that "those restrictions that were formerly imposed upon the public" at the British Museum, including a lengthy ticket application process, a cap on daily admissions, extremely limited days and hours of admission, and mandatory accompaniment of all visitors by guides (Altick 440-2),

could be revived "by the frequency of outrages like that now under consideration" ("Portland Vase," Times 12 Feb. 1845).

Though the Portland Vase episode was the only one of its kind in the first century of the British Museum, it had been preceded a little over a year earlier by an incident at the newer National Gallery, where a lame young man and "watch-finisher" named William Adams damaged P. F. Mola's Jupiter and Leda,<sup>40</sup> formerly part of Lord Farnborough's collection, by striking it with one of his crutches "just as if he was knocking down a bullock," as an eyewitness reported ("Police," Times 25 Jan. 1844). Unlike Lloyd, Adams claimed that his breakage had been an accident that occurred when he was "pointing out to a friend the beauties of the picture," which was "broken to pieces by the force of the blow" ("Police," Times 24 and 25 Jan. 1844). Adams's case was brought up during and after Lloyd's trial not only as legal precedent but also as further evidence of the destructive tendencies of the masses and their challenge to an elite social order symbolized by current or former aristocratic possessions that had entered the public domain as museum pieces. The British Museum had anticipated this threat as early as 1780, when troops were quartered at its original home of Montague House to suppress arson and mob violence during the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots (Miller 86-7). In a later instance of the literalization of the museum as a Foucauldian instrument of surveillance, a planned Chartist rally in Russell Square in the revolutionary year of 1848 prompted a vigorous fortification of the neighboring museum, though the demonstration failed and no attack followed (Cowtan 145-57; Miller 167-71).

Among those who weighed in on the general public's contested place in museums during the first half of the nineteenth century, Charles Dickens prominently endorsed the working classes as a citizenry worthy of the local and national institutions in which they were shareholders. As Paul Schlicke states, "In his sympathy for the underprivileged, Dickens . . . had strong faith in their fundamental decency—their collective disposition to behave without resorting to excess or destructiveness—and he defended passionately their right to enjoy such harmless pleasures as they might choose" (212). In particular, Dickens supported educational and entertaining "rational recreation," including museums and mechanics' institutes,<sup>41</sup> for the respectable poor (Schlicke 212-19, 232-3). Addressing a *conversazione* of the Polytechnic Institution<sup>42</sup> of Birmingham in February 1844, Dickens alluded to the previous month's incident at the National Gallery:

[W]henver the working classes enjoy an opportunity of effectually rebutting accusations which falsehood or thoughtlessness have brought against them, they always avail themselves of it, and show themselves in their true characters; and it is this which has made the damage done to a single picture in the National Gallery in London, by some poor lunatic cripple, a mere matter of newspaper notoriety and wonder for some few days. This has established a fact evident to the meanest comprehension, that any number of thousands of persons of the humblest condition of life in this country, can pass through that same National Gallery, or the British Museum, in seasons of holiday

making, without damaging in the slightest degree, the smallest rarity, in either wonderful collection. (Fielding 63)

There is no record of Dickens's response to the later vandalism of the Portland Vase. Here, however, he presents working-class self-restraint as the norm and marginalizes the canvas-poking Adams as a madman, defective in mind as well as body, though a museum official at the time said he had no reason to suspect Adams's sanity ("Police," Times 24 Jan. 1844). Dickens insisted that working-class visitors be judged by the orderly and well-behaved "thousands," rather than by the anomalous individual, later represented by his violent and criminal Sloggins ("Stores" 137-8), who gives the populace a bad name and risks the "wholesale suppression of amusement" through his misuse and abuse of culture (Schlicke 200).

A champion of the working classes, but also an advocate for middle-class culture, Dickens envisioned museums as an effective means of instruction and social control, as suggested by his pamphlets and periodical writings. In Sunday under Three Heads (1836), which defends the people's right to Sunday recreation in the face of restrictive Sabbatarian legislative proposals, Dickens points out how museums could efficiently manage the populace while exposing the working classes to their contents, "all calculated to awaken contemplation and inquiry, and to tend to the enlightenment and improvement of the people" (352):

Why, if the British Museum, and the National Gallery, and the Gallery of Practical Science, and every other exhibition in London, from which knowledge is to be derived and information gained, were to be thrown

open on a Sunday afternoon, not fifty people would be required to  
preside over the whole: and it would take treble the number to enforce  
a Sabbath bill in any three populous parishes. (353)

Dickens's proposal to open museums on Sundays, the only day off for most of the  
working classes, sought not only to make museums more physically accessible to the  
public (Schlicke 212), but also to exploit them more fully as a spaces of  
representation, emulation, and observation and regulation, as Tony Bennett  
characterizes nineteenth- and twentieth-century museums (24-58). According to  
Bennett, besides combining display and discourse ("show and tell"), Victorian  
museums were designed as exemplary spaces in which the subordinate classes would  
civilize themselves according to middle-class codes of conduct by imitating the  
behavior and tastes modeled by their social betters through institutions and practices  
of high culture (6-7, 17-33, 47). As instruments of social discipline, museums also  
monitored visitor conduct through technologies of regulation that included  
impersonalized forms of surveillance, such as Dickens's "vigilant" Inspector Field,  
"the guardian genius of the British Museum" ("On Duty" 64), as well as exhibitionary  
architecture that allowed visitors to watch one another and ideally produced a self-  
transparent and self-policing crowd that exercised physical, moral, and political  
restraint (T. Bennett 48-58).

What Bennett labels as "the exhibitionary complex" developed over the late  
eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century as "a set of cultural technologies concerned  
to organize a voluntarily self-regulating citizenry" (63). It deployed new disciplines

and their progressivist taxonomies in state-administered institutions, including museums, that controlled and displayed both objects and people in increasingly more open and public contexts of visibility and inspection. Combining elements of spectacle, or "the display of objects to a great multitude" (65), and surveillance, the exhibitionary complex sought to render "the forces and principles of order," epistemological and social, "visible to the populace" (62), conceived of as a nationalized citizenry rendered as a spectacle for itself. Identifying with the power that produced this order and the people's place in relation to it, large and undifferentiated crowds became its subjects and objects as well as its beneficiaries, ideally functioning as a "constantly surveyed, self-watching, self-regulating, and . . . consistently ordered public" (69).

Dickens's early novels often reflect aspects of Bennett's exhibitionary complex in the management of objects, spaces, and crowds. Throughout the 1840s, Dickens depicts lower-middle- and working-class collectors who use proprietary collections to construct, inhabit, and manage museum-like spaces that become sites of both spectacle and surveillance where visitors are put on display for one another and for readers. Besides showing the populace's ability to oversee collections and themselves, these proto-museums suggest that the lower classes could successfully emulate not just middle-class museum-goers but museum culture itself. By imitating institutional forms and practices, Dickens's collectors and curators, whose objects confer professional authority upon them, claim a share of the social power inscribed within and conveyed through Victorian museums. In the process, Dickens envisions

collecting as part of a new, more inclusive concept of national identity, constructing a citizenry modeled on middle-class norms.

### **Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks**

One of the most accomplished of Dickens's collectors, the illiterate and itinerant Cockney entrepreneur Mrs. Jarley uses her waxworks to support her pretensions to gentility in The Old Curiosity Shop (1840-1). A fictionalization of Britain's women wax modelers and exhibitors up to the early nineteenth century, most notably Madame Tussaud's in its traveling "premuseum" form, Jarley is "a businesswoman who does not create the wax figures she exhibits; rather, she costumes them and makes them up" (Bloom 192). As such, she combines visual representation, which also provides publicity, with verbal discourse that establishes her professional credentials and explains her collection to patrons of all classes. Meanwhile, the intersection of commercial spectacle and museum culture in Jarley's exhibition incorporates both democratic and exclusive elements, reflecting the proprietor's social status and her aspirations as a purveyor of culture to both select and popular audiences.

As has often been noted,<sup>43</sup> Madame Tussaud, "one of the leading women entrepreneurs in nineteenth-century Britain" (Pilbeam 74), served as the immediate and primary source for Dickens's Mrs. Jarley and would have been recognized as such by Victorian readers. Born Marie Grosholz, Tussaud (1761-1850) learned wax

modeling from her uncle (or perhaps father) Philippe Curtius, her mother's employer and a Swiss native, whose waxworks was one of the fashionable attractions of pre-Revolutionary Paris. Through his involvement with the revolutionary national guard and the constant updating of his exhibition to reflect current events and contemporary politics, Curtius and his waxworks managed to survive the Revolution (Pilbeam 17-54). Tussaud took over Curtius's waxworks after his death in 1794 and married her husband a year later, but the couple became estranged by March 1802, when Tussaud left for England with her elder son Joseph. After her arrival, Tussaud went on tour with her best models in a "distinctly monarchist," "emphatically anti-revolutionary" display for English audiences (Pilbeam 68). Although exhibitions related to the Revolution were common at the time, Tussaud's distinguished itself through the novelty of figures made from the actual bodies, living or dead, of their subjects and the constant updating of her waxworks. Presenting herself to the British as "an artist who had moved in high society and politics in France," Tussaud used her "alleged royal links" as the self-described artist to Madame Elizabeth, the sister of Louis XVI, as a source of status in Britain (Pilbeam 68). After touring Ireland from 1803-1808, Tussaud traveled throughout Scotland and England until settling down in 1835 at London's centrally located and fashionable Baker Street Bazaar, where her waxworks became a longtime fixture because of its size and its extensive collection of related art and artifacts (Pilbeam 74-131).

Tussaud was the last and most prominent of the female wax sculptors and entrepreneurs in England who capitalized upon the popularity of waxworks as

celebrity portrait galleries before "cheap good quality lithograph illustrations" began to be widely used in the weeklies of the 1840s (Pilbeam 82). Her distinguished predecessors from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth century included Exeter Change's Mrs. Mills, who described herself as unequaled in her art; the toymaker Mrs. Salmon, who animated some figures with clockwork and claimed to have patrons from the aristocracy and gentry; Salmon's successor, Mrs. Clark, whose "perspiring waxworks" welcomed customers with figures at the door and were described by Dickens in David Copperfield; and the showman William Bullock's mother, whose waxworks toured the midlands from 1794 to 1807 (Pilbeam 11-13). Coincidentally, all of Tussaud's forerunners were widows who took over waxworks from their husbands, which may also be the case with the unmarried "Mrs." Jarley, though Dickens does not explore her matrimonial past.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Jarley, on the road sometime between the 1820s and the mid-1830s (Schlicke 103-5), borrows many of her strategies of publicity and exhibition from her predecessors, particularly Tussaud. As Michelle E. Bloom explains, among their many similarities, both Jarley and Tussaud strategically employ advertising and make claims to royal patronage (192-4). Like Tussaud, Jarley travels in caravans that bear her "great name" (Dickens, OCS 211). More important, the banners that advertise Jarley's waxen figures to the public "in enormous black letters" (207) are meant to inspire respect and even reverence for the proprietor and her supposedly incomparable collection. Indeed, one of the main functions of Jarley's

waxworks is to live up to the name that its owner makes for it, as she conflates herself and her collection:

[T]he lady of the caravan unfolded another scroll, whereon was the inscription, "One hundred figures the full size of life," and then another scroll, on which was written, "The only stupendous collection of real wax-works in the world," and then several smaller scrolls with such inscriptions as "Now exhibiting within"—"The genuine and only Jarley"—"Jarley's unrivalled collection"—"Jarley is the delight of the Nobility and Gentry"—"The Royal Family are the Patrons of Jarley."  
(207)

Such claims would have been as familiar to Dickens's readers as the competing waxworks they publicized. Besides Tussaud's famous itinerant and self-proclaimed "Unrivalled Exhibition" (Tussaud [1]),<sup>44</sup> there were hundreds of other traveling and permanent waxworks in the early nineteenth century (Cottrell 114), including a rather rundown one at Westminster Abbey. Like Madame Tussaud's, which was visited by French and English royalty and the Duke of Wellington, Jarley's lays claim to a distinguished patronage that includes "the Crowned Heads of Europe" (248). Her extensive collection, which approximates the ninety or so figures of Tussaud's traveling years (Pilbeam 81), pretends by its size to be like no other, although a few wax exhibitions of the day, including the Royal Waxwork at 67 Fleet Street with its two hundred figures, were much larger by far (Altick 332-33). Still, Jarley's makes a good show of promoting itself, from the "leviathans of public announcement" already

mentioned to "lesser fry in the shape of hand-bills" (207, 208), some of which contain converted acrostics or parodies of popular songs, made to order by the poetaster Mr. Slum and "judiciously distributed" to appropriate audiences (220). However dubious their character, these testimonials establish Jarley's credentials, bearing witness to the quality and authenticity of her collection as they speak for both it and her.

Jarley's "inventive genius" further manifests itself in her various other "devices for attracting visitors to the exhibition" (221). Besides her commissioned advertisements, which correspond to Tussaud's ghostwritten 1838 memoirs, Jarley also uses her figures, her employees, and herself to stimulate imagination and desire. A self-described public character, Mrs. Jarley parades through the streets "in an exceedingly bright shawl" just ahead of her caravan to announce her arrival in town (215). Outside her exhibition, Jarley gives prospective customers a free preview of her collection by using contrasting figures of femininity and masculinity, virtue and vice: "[A] nun of great personal attractions was telling her beads on the little portico over the door; and a brigand with the blackest possible head of hair, and the clearest possible complexion, was at that moment going round the town in a cart, consulting the miniature of a lady" (220). When business is lagging, Jarley, drawing upon Mrs. Salmon's wax automata, has her mechanical nun's internal machinery "cleaned up and put in motion" in an attempt "to stimulate the popular taste, and whet the popular curiosity" (248). Like Tussaud, who had her teenage son Joseph play the piano and lead a small orchestra during opening hours (Pilbeam 84), Jarley also takes advantage of her child assistant Little Nell's appearance by pairing her with the Brigand; the

girl's beauty makes her the show's "chief attraction" and appeals to adults and children alike (221). By moving Nell indoors, where she acts as tour guide, Jarley keeps her from becoming "too cheap" and further exploits her exhibition value (221). Later, Jarley sends Nell as an emissary to recruit visitors from Miss Monflathers' school. The waxworks' other employees offer related, though more limited, publicity. Jarley's two incognito carters, pretending to be satisfied customers, "constantly passed in and out of the exhibition-room, under various disguises, protesting aloud that the sight was better worth the money than anything they had beheld all their lives, and urging the bystanders, with tears in their eyes, not to neglect such a brilliant gratification" (248). Jarley herself supplements such word-of-mouth testimonials with her own banter, reminding potential customers of her collection's affordability, alleged royal clientele, limited engagement, and supposed uniqueness and authenticity. Like Tussaud, who included a figure of herself in her waxworks and personally greeted visitors at the entrance, Jarley thus becomes an attraction in her own exhibition.

Jarley's publicity campaign brings potential customers to, if not through, her door, but her exhibition gives substance to her rhetoric. Indeed, as Michelle Bloom suggests, "Jarley's labor is the production of spectacle" (192). The wax matron's creation and management of spectacle begins with the place of display; as she tells Nell, "[T]he exhibition takes place in assembly rooms, town-halls, large room at inns, or auction galleries" (210), all of which could accommodate both the waxworks and its visitors. In particular, assembly rooms "were designed for display, the relatively new playground where the wealthy, respectable middle class lived their indoor public

existence, when they were not in church, chapel, shops, or earning a living. . . . Inside the inevitably imposing exterior the rooms were often high-ceilinged and long, with rows of pillars . . ." (Pilbeam 81). Such surroundings served as "an impressive backdrop" for collections like Jarley's and allowed for the "prolific displays" of Tussaud's trademark candle-lighting (Pilbeam 81), which would have been necessary for Jarley to stay open "from noon to night" (Dickens, OCS 319). Moreover, Jarley's exhibition room is decorated "to the best advantage" with "red festoons and other ornamental devices and upholstery work" tacked to the walls (216).

Within this space, Jarley unveils her collection to Nell, who reacts with a child's "raptures" to the "glorious sight" (218). The narrator's response is somewhat more tepid, reflecting the impossibility of the exhibition's living up to the expectations that Jarley creates for it:

When the festoons were all put up as tastily as they might be, the stupendous collection was uncovered, and there were displayed, on a raised platform some two feet from the floor, running round the room and parted from the rude public by a crimson rope breast high, divers sprightly effigies of celebrated characters, singly and in groups, clad in glittering dresses of various climes and times, and standing more or less unsteadily upon their legs, with their eyes very wide open, and their nostrils very much inflated, and the muscles of their legs and arms very strongly developed, and all their countenances expressing great surprise. All the gentlemen were very pigeon-breasted and very

blue about the beards; and all the ladies were miraculous figures; and all the ladies and all the gentlemen were looking intensely nowhere, and staring with extraordinary earnestness at nothing. (218)

Even as this description parodies Jarley's "sublime" waxworks rhetoric (211) with its excessive use of superlatives ("stupendous," "miraculous," "extraordinary") and intensifiers, it nevertheless acknowledges her construction of a museum-like display in the elevation and physical separation of her figures from the audience. The unnatural appearance and expressions of Jarley's rickety figures make them less than lifelike, however. At the same time, Jarley's synchronous rendering of history in wax allows Dickens to satirize the artificiality and vacancy of the cult of celebrity and the fashionable "ladies" and "gentleman" who serve as Jarley's models and her intended audience. Taken another way, the "surprise[d]" gaze of the figures (218), which come to haunt Nell at night with their "death-like faces" and "great glassy eyes" (223), might reflect that of the middle-class museum crowd itself, which the girl serves in the daytime.

Jarley courts this select company by affiliating her show with rational recreation combining instruction and amusement. By assigning her waxworks a lofty pedigree, she distinguishes it from what she sees as lower forms of popular entertainment, especially the fairgrounds, with their "open-air wagrancy" and "tarpaulin and sawdust" (210). In speaking of her establishment to Nell, she assumes an air of refinement that complements the "uncommon dignity and self-esteem" and

"great natural stateliness and acquired grace" she exhibits as an aspiring woman of culture (211):

"It isn't funny at all," repeated Mrs. Jarley. "It's calm and—what's that word again—critical?—no—classical, that's it—it's calm and classical. No low beatings and knockings about, no jokings and squeakings like your precious Punches, but always the same, with a constantly unchanging air of coldness and gentility; and so like life that if wax-work only spoke and walked about, you'd hardly know the difference. I won't go so far as to say, that, as it is, I've seen wax-work quite like life, but I've certainly seen some life that was exactly like wax-work."  
(208)

Mrs. Jarley's comments belie the decline in the status of wax portraiture from high culture to popular entertainment in the late eighteenth century (Bloom 15-16).

However, her rhetoric of respectability forms "part of an overall strategy of expulsion which clears a space for polite, cosmopolitan discourse by constructing popular culture as the 'low-Other,' the dirty and crude outside to the emergent public sphere" (Stallybrass and White 87). As when she dismisses Punch as "a low, practical, vulgar wretch, that people should scorn to look at" (203), Jarley repudiates the contemporary association of her statues with "filthy" puppets (208), which she sees as crude, undignified, and disreputable. By contrast, her closing remarks about life imitating her art recall the tableaux vivants of the day, where live performers, frozen in expressive poses, typically represented familiar paintings (Altick 342-3). These

popular theatrical shows, said to have been inspired by Tussaud's groups of figures "in dramatic scenes that told a story without movement" (Pilbeam 85), emerged in the early nineteenth century, along with related poses plastiques, in which actors posed as figures from the Bible, classical mythology, and history (Altick 343-45). Through the early 1840s, both of these types of theater, in which people resembled wax figures, served as respectable entertainment (Altick 345). Thus, Mrs. Jarley associates herself and her exhibition with fashionable cultural forms that invoked the dignity of art and antiquity to establish their own worth.

To lend her waxworks a more explicit educational dimension, Jarley narrates her collection, enhancing it with stories and observations about the individuals represented there. In the process, she challenges the museum's "monologically male" voice of authority (T. Bennett 33). Jarley provides the definitive guide to her own figures, "help[ing] visitors make sense of the wax statues" by identifying them, "while the more ample historical information . . . offer[s] further knowledge of the personalities" represented there (Bloom 21). Her tours thus serve as the living counterpart to Tussaud's innovative catalogues, first published in 1803, which "provide[d] a numbered list of the models and the lay-out of each room, followed by highly dramatic biographies of each figure" (Pilbeam 82). Besides presenting "objective, matter-of-fact description" (Hüllen 272), Jarley's account of her collection reflects the "qualitatively different kinds of entries" in Victorian art museum catalogues, "biographical and historical, narrative and explanatory, hortatory and

spiritual" (Koven 31). When Jarley instructs Nell in her curatorial task of interpreting the collection for the public, she attaches a moral to each character:

"That," said Mrs. Jarley in her exhibition tone, as Nell touched a figure at the beginning of the platform, "is an unfortunate Maid of Honour in the Time of Queen Elizabeth, who died from pricking her figure in consequence of working upon a Sunday. Observe the blood which is trickling from her finger; also the gold-eyed needle of the period, with which she is at work." (218)

Modeled upon the misunderstood memorial to Elizabeth's goddaughter Lady Elizabeth Russell in Westminster Abbey, this figure serves as a gravely moralistic object lesson. In the original statue, Lady Russell points to a skull at her feet, which, as A. P. Stanley explains, "led to the legend that she had 'died of a prick of the needle,' sometimes magnified into a judgment for working on Sunday" (185). Emphasizing the accuracy and authenticity of her copy, Jarley calls attention to its trappings, including the drops of blood and the lethal needle, said to be contemporary with the real thing.

Thus, Jarley's commentary provides a double lesson in viewing and virtue, as do her notes on the next figure:

"That, ladies and gentlemen," said Mrs. Jarley, "is Jasper Packlemerton of atrocious memory, who courted and married fourteen wives, and destroyed them all by tickling the soles of their feet when they were sleeping in the consciousness of innocence and virtue. On

being brought to the scaffold and asked if he was sorry for what he had done, he replied yes, he was sorry for having let 'em off so easy, and hoped all Christian husbands would pardon him the offence. Let this be a warning to all young ladies to be particular in the character of the gentlemen of their choice. Observe that his finger is curled as if in the act of tickling, and that his face is represented with a wink, as he appeared when committing his barbarous murders." (218-20)

Literally tickling his wives to death, the otherwise innocuous Packlemerton offers an outrageous parody of Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors and its waxen representations of infamous murderers. Like the catalogue entries for Tussaud's killers,<sup>45</sup> Jarley's description combines horror and outrage with a morbid preoccupation with the case's most sensational facts. Here, Packlemerton's wives provide a cautionary example for a female audience, as if to justify Jarley's indulgence of the public's interest in great crimes. Moreover, by calling attention to the bad husband's deadly gesture and evident delight, Jarley gives us a definitive sense of his supposed depravity and lack of remorse. As with the figure of Lady Russell, Jarley's focus on physical detail supports her reading of personal character. Because we never see Nell's performance in her role as exhibition guide, Jarley retains her primacy as the explicator of her collection. Moreover, Jarley asserts control over Nell and her visitors by making them the objects of instruction.

Thanks to her collection, Jarley is visited for enlightenment and edification and even consulted as a moral authority. Using handbills that "distinctly proved that

wax-work refined the mind, cultivated the taste, and enlarged the sphere of the human understanding" (220-21), Jarley attracts audiences "of a very superior description, including a great many young ladies' boarding-schools" (221). "[A]t great pains to conciliate" the favor of these girls (221), Jarley alters certain figures to suit their tastes, though "she does so superficially, without recourse to wax modeling," using clothes and makeup (Bloom 193). For example, she "alter[s] the face and costume" of the pantomime clown Joseph Grimaldi to represent the eminent Quaker minister Lindley Murray "as he appeared when engaged in the composition of his English Grammar" and turns "a murderess of great renown" into the philanthropist and Evangelical tract writer Hannah More (Dickens, OCS 221). In addition, Jarley changes the former prime minister Pitt the Younger into the poet and hymnist Cowper and redresses the ill-fated Mary Queen of Scots as the celebrated and notorious Lord Byron. As Richard Altick observes, Dickens here "poke[s] fun at the duplicity whereby showmen, with only a minimum alteration of appearance, made a single figure do duty successively for several characters" (333). Jarley's comically incongruous transformations also help to make her collection somewhat more topical, as her exhibition incorporates the recently deceased Murray, More, and Byron within its walls. More important, by substituting model writers for figures from history, politics, and entertainment, Jarley attempts to give her collection more of a learned and moral character, which receives the approbation of Miss Monflathers, the head of the leading girls' school in town. Monflathers endorses the altered Murray and More

as "quite startling from their extreme correctness" (221), but apparently bases her judgment on propriety rather than an unlikely verisimilitude.

By contrast, the transgendered Queen of Scots, whose cross-dressing recalls that of Byron's Giaour and his Don Juan, so closely resembles her infamous countryman that the androgynous figure draws fanatic screams from Monflathers's students. The headmistress herself condemns this display while enforcing social decorum on her girls, who behave like the stereotypical mob or crowd:

Miss Monflathers, however, rebuked this enthusiasm, and took occasion to reprove Mrs. Jarley for not keeping her collection more select, observing that His Lordship had held certain free opinions quite incompatible with wax-work honours, and adding something about a Dean and Chapter, which Mrs. Jarley did not understand. (223)

While the girls' shrieks reveal their true reading interests, their mentor's restraint and disapproval hint at Byron's "[p]erceived transgressiveness" (Elfenbein 62), especially in sexual and religious matters. Refused burial at Westminster Abbey by its Dean and Chapter, in part, because of the poet's suspected incest with his half-sister Augusta Leigh, Byron is to be excluded from "wax-work honours" like those that once accompanied state funerals for England's royalty and its national heroes.<sup>46</sup> Viewed as bad company, Jarley's Byron seems closer in character to her Brigand than to her nun. In fact, his inclusion in the otherwise proper gallery has the effect of contaminating the whole, challenging Jarley's claims to respectability, as does the "suspicious bottle" (221) from which she habitually drinks. In a similar way, Monflathers' attack on Nell

as an ungentleel, "naughty and unfeminine . . . wax-work child" (240) and her threat to have the girl and her mistress punished for their unwelcome solicitations also serve as indictments of Jarley's establishment.

Not to be deterred by Monflathers, school break, or the loss of "the regular sightseers" who have already visited, the profit-minded Jarley redirects her efforts to "the General Public," who "want stimulating," according to her (247). In a marketing ploy to attract customers, she closes her collection on short notice, only to reopen the following day for a limited time only under the pretense of popular demand: "Mrs. Jarley produced another announcement, wherein it was stated, that, in consequence of numerous inquiries at the wax-work door, and in consequence of crowds having been disappointed in obtaining admission, the Exhibition would be continued for one week longer, and would re-open next day" (247). Despite an affordable sixpence admission charge that is a fraction of Tussaud's standard shilling entry fee, the norm for rational recreation (Pilbeam 73), "the first day's operations were by no means of a successful character" (Dickens, OCS 248). Dickens explains why in a passage that puts on display what he refers to, tongue-in-cheek, as "a discerning and enlightened public":

[T]he general public, though they manifested a lively interest in Mrs. Jarley personally, and such of her waxen satellites as were to be seen for nothing, were not affected by any impulses moving them to the payment of sixpence a head. Thus, notwithstanding that a great many people continued to stare at the entry and the figures therein displayed; and remained there with great perseverance, by the hour at a time, to

hear the barrel-organ played and to read the bills; and notwithstanding that they were kind enough to recommend their friends to patronise the exhibition in the like manner, until the doorway was regularly blockaded by half the population of the town, who, when they went off duty, were relieved by the other half; it was not found that the treasury was any the richer, or that the prospects of the establishment were at all encouraging. (248)

Accustomed to cheaper or free fairground, theater, and street entertainment (Pilbeam 94), Jarley's curious though reluctant crowd seems unwilling, rather than unable, to pay. Despite her "extraordinary efforts to stimulate the popular taste, and whet the popular curiosity" (Dickens, OCS 248), which include changing the grammarian Murray back into the clown Grimaldi<sup>47</sup> and displaying "fairground 'freak' trappings" of human oddities in wax (Pilbeam 131), the results are the same, which reflects Tussaud's own struggles to attract working-class customers with reduced fares at off-peak hours (Pilbeam 94). Paul Schlicke relates the "depressed state" of Jarley's "classical market" (Dickens, OCS 248) to the decline of early nineteenth-century itinerant popular entertainment in England, particularly in the summer of 1840, when the long-running Bartholomew Fair was effectively shut down (89-95, 124). However, the loitering crowd's lingering interest testifies to Jarley's success in creating a spectacle that captures the public imagination in part through its limited access (Bloom 200-01).

Moreover, by exhibiting Jarley's benign crowd for his audience, Dickens renders society as a spectacle in itself, opening it up "not merely to the gaze of power," as Tony Bennett explains, "but, in principle, to that of everyone: indeed, making the specular dominance of the eye of power available to all" (65). Put on show under the auspices of Jarley's waxworks, the general public emerges as a self-regulating entity under the watch of themselves and Dickens's readers, whose gaze is made literal by the two H. K. Browne illustrations that portray Jarley's audience. Following Dickens's instructions, the first depicts Nell's travels with the Brigand in a cart. As Dickens wrote, "I want the cart—gaily decorated—going through the street of the old town with the Wax Brigand displayed to fierce advantage, and the child seated in it also, dispensing bills—as many flags and inscriptions about Jarley's wax-work fluttering from the cart, as you please. That's the figure I want" (qtd. in Page xxvi). Besides these essentials, Browne includes Jarley's carters, dressed as a beefeater playing a drum and an equestrian courtier with a bugle, along with onlookers of various ages and classes. The other picture grants the reader-viewer a privileged perspective inside the waxworks from which not only the collection and its proprietor but also the crowd outside can be seen. Mrs. Jarley sits in front of "a grove of green-baize hung with the inscriptions she had already seen (Mr. Slum's productions)," at "a highly ornamented table" where she "preside[s] and take[s] the money," "in company with his Majesty King George the Third, Mr. Grimaldi as clown, Mary Queen of Scots, an anonymous gentleman of the Quaker persuasion, and Mr. Pitt holding in his hand a correct model of the bill for the imposition of the

window duty" (220). At the far right, three spectators peek in through the open curtains at the entrance, with one surreptitiously touching Grimaldi's extended arm. Together, the two illustrations provide for readers' inspection at close proximity a cross-section of English society that responds with curiosity and a more or less controlled enthusiasm to spectacles produced for them.

Besides representing Britishness through the historical figures it contains, then, Jarley's waxworks also evokes a sense of national identity as a form of mass culture and an emulative space. By juxtaposing historical figures from "different eras, domains, and social classes" in a non-hierarchical display and offering up-close access to them in an exhibitionary setting, Jarley encourages visitors "to fantasize about transcending class distinctions through upward mobility" (Bloom 181, 182), as she herself attempts to do. Though Jarley closes her unprofitable waxworks to refashion herself through marriage to her carter George, other Dickens collectors and their associates maintain museum-like curiosity shops that serve as sites of spectacle and surveillance even when they provide no visible means of support.

### **"Dead-and-Alive": Dickens's Curiosity Shops**

Historically, so-called curiosity shops proliferated during the nineteenth century in England, where their early spread was apparently related to the Napoleonic Wars, which temporarily kept British antiquaries from collecting on the continent (Wainwright, *Romantic* 27). Descendants of the antiquarian shops that had served

eighteenth-century collectors (Altick 428), these stores included a wide assortment of brokers dealing in a variety of old, used, and rare goods, from first-class furniture and art dealers to what the naturalist Frank Buckland called "swarms of smaller 'dealers in curiosities,' whose dens are to be found in out-of-the-way corners, in out-of-the-way streets" (2nd ser., 28). Though some of these sellers specialized in such items as ecclesiastical articles and Asian antiquities (Sala 518), others traded in "almost every imaginable kind of commodity," as George Dodd explained at mid-century:

Let a pedestrian walk through Monmouth Street and St. Andrew's Street, the New Cut, or any other part of London in a dense and poor neighbourhood, and observe the motley assemblage of articles, some to all appearances useless, yet all for sale, and he will acquire a general notion of the miscellaneous nature of the lower class of shop trading. Old furniture shops, or curiosity shops, such as we find in Wardour Street, are a new species--and among the most interesting. (398)

In an 1852 article for Dickens's Household Words, George Sala detailed the characteristic contents of Wardour Street's well-known stores, which sold "ancient furniture, armour, old china, cameos, and other curiosities and articles of vertu" (518). Among the dozens of Victorian London's curiosity shops, Wareham's at the corner of St. Martin's Court, Leicester Square, demonstrates the typical range of goods in which most traded. This well-known dealer in arms and objets d'art carried weapons and other artifacts from New Zealand and elsewhere, along with historical relics of old London and an occasional taxidermic oddity (Buckland, 3rd ser., 2: 63, 118, 156).

Not surprisingly, then, more than any other venues in Dickens's novels, his curiosity shops serve as repositories of a variety of old-fashioned, obsolete, and even grotesque objects that resemble or reflect their owners. In these storehouses of marginalized people and things, we discover an abundance of abandoned goods, preserved through a proprietary impulse in those who try to make a living from the material remains of the past. Take, for example, the curiosity-dealer's warehouse in The Old Curiosity Shop:

The place through which he made his way at leisure was one of those receptacles for old and curious things which seem to crouch in odd corners of this town and to hide their musty treasures from the public eye in jealousy and distrust. There were suits of mail standing like ghosts in armour here and there, fantastic carvings brought from monkish cloisters, rusty weapons of various kinds, distorted figures in china and wood and iron and ivory: tapestry and strange furniture that might have been designed in dreams. The haggard aspect of the little old man was wonderfully suited to the place; he might have groped among old churches and tombs and deserted houses and gathered all the spoils with his own hands. There was nothing in the whole collection but was in keeping with himself; nothing that looked older or more worn than he. (13)

Dickens's venerable collector is, like the contents of his shop, an aged remnant of bygone days. Still, he is quite at home with his "curious ancient things" (526), which

the narrator suggests he has rescued with great effort from obscurity or oblivion. Despite his apparently comfortable situation, Nell's entrepreneurial grandfather only manages to eke out "an anxious and precarious subsistence" (526) from his old-fashioned stock, and is later reduced to dusting Jarley's statues. Although the shop's inventory suggests otherwise, the old man saves nothing and lives in poverty. Consequently, the eponymous old curiosity shop fails to protect its owner from the ruinous gambling debts to which he falls prey. Ultimately, the shop's only worth is its value as collateral for the loans which Nell's grandfather cannot afford to pay back to his predatory creditor Quilp.

Trent's shop and its later curious counterparts might all be designated as what one Victorian writer called "dead-and-alive" shops:

A dead-and-alive shop is one devoted to a business in which the customers are few and far between. In the thronged, equally with the most secluded, thoroughfares you will meet with these shops; where the traffic is thickest, presenting a striking contrast in their tranquil placidity to the turmoil, the bustle, the uproar around them. They are not necessarily shabby shops, or poverty-stricken shops--they are simply dead-and-alive shops. The profits of their owners may be as certain as those of other tradespeople; but, for all the business you see doing, the shutters might as well be up and the name painted out. ("Dead-and-Alive" 460)

As Dickens remarks of Krook's rag, bottle, and general marine store in Bleak House, "Everything seem[s] to be bought, and nothing to be sold there" (99). Because little commerce appears to take place in shops of this sort, they emerge as singular curiosities in their own right. Their objects, removed from the commercial realm, become de facto collections, rather than displays of consumer goods. In fact, with their more-or-less permanent collections, such eclectic and sometimes exotic shops look strikingly like museums.

The resemblance of curiosity shops to some Victorian museums was compelling enough to attract the notice of at least a few contemporary observers. The twenty-five-year-old Beatrix Potter, who had a special passion for china and old furniture, memorably compared her March 1892 trip to a Falmouth shop to a museum visit:

Burton's old curiosity shop which makes the greatest display is quite a museum, crammed from floor to garret with odds and ends, but the great part absolute rubbish. The foreign things, which form the greater part of the stock, struck me as not so much bona-fide curios bought from sailors, as an inferior class of article imported wholesale.

Perhaps the oddest part of this collection was a great quantity of French cavalry sabres, pistols, helmets and bayonets from German battlefields and the surrender of Metz. How he got them I know not, but they were certainly genuine, any quantity of sabres at five shillings apiece and holster pistols, said to be Waterloo, and rusty enough for

Blenheim, at about the same price. There were hideous African idols and weapons labelled 'poisoned' in large letters, which is a novel way of attracting purchasers, but it seemed more of a museum than a shop.  
(223)

Besides the plenty and variety of this shop's exotic goods, the many labels throughout the place make it seem like more than a store. As in a museum, each object is carefully marked and identified and its provenance described.

Other writers of the day noticed the likeness between curio shops and museums, not only in their appearance, but also in their possible functions. As an anonymous enthusiast suggested in Chambers's Journal in 1857, shop-windows could reveal "museums of marvels" within, offering free recreation and even instruction:

[W]hat are to [others] simply shops, are to me galleries of art, science, and marvels, and treasuries of never-failing enjoyment; exhibitions where there is no fee for admission, where you are constrained to purchase nor catalogue nor programme of the entertainment, where there are no reserved seats and no fees to attendants. Pass with a glance, or linger for prolonged inspection, you incur neither liability nor obligation; and should you, on these unexpensive terms derive, in any measure, entertainment at the moment, or material for afterthought, how deep should be your gratitude to the source of the benefaction! ("Shop-Windows" 225)

By acting like a visitor to an exhibition, the consumer transforms the shopkeeper, whatever his true relationship to the objects he displays, into an unwitting collector, rather than a vendor. Along similar lines, a writer for St. James's Magazine in 1870 delighted in what the bric-à-brac shops near Leicester Square had to offer:

But what wonderful places are those Castle Street shops! How many months (or years) should I require to give you an inventory of the contents of only one of them? Such pistols, such helmets, such cups, such vases, such anything and everything that is delightfully suggestive and delightfully old! A shop like this, in my humble opinion, is an epitome of history in a tangible form; assisting us as it does in realising a vivid idea of the manner in which our ancestors lived and moved and had their being. ("Dead-and-Alive" 463)

Though this writer does not actually call the curiosity shop a museum, his description still connects the two through their similar effects on the viewer. The Castle Street shop becomes a de facto museum, providing entertainment and even edification for the unsuspecting shopper. The purpose of visiting such an establishment, in turn, becomes one of contemplation rather than acquisition; the shop embodies the material past for the spectator. As George Sala wrote in Household Words, even "humble dealers, whose stores resemble[d] more the multifarious odds-and-ends in brokers' shops than collections of antiquity and vertu," had important lessons to offer: "These bring home the savage tomahawk, the New Zealand boomerang, the rosary of carved beads, to the poorest door; and render old armour, old furniture, old lace, and tapestry,

comprehensible to the meanest understanding" (519). Like museums, small curiosity dealers could make what was ancient or strange both present and familiar.

Museums, in turn, were often likened to curiosity shops when they displayed a lack of organization. This comparison was invariably a derogatory one, as Professor W. A. Herdman of University College, Liverpool, made clear in an 1887 address:

In what respect is a Museum better or higher than a mere collection of curiosities made by an amateur, or than the confused assemblage of heterogeneous objects seen on the shelves of the bird-fancier's shop, if it is not that in the Museum the specimens are supposed to be arranged and labelled in a natural (that is, a scientific) manner? (180)

Because modern museums were distinguished by their specialization and classification (Murray 1: 231), the absence of these features made museums seem primitive or even provincial. In the 1880s, Thomas Greenwood described the chaotic arrangement of the typical local museum as "[c]onfusion worse confounded" (3):

The orderly soul of the Museum student will quake at the sight of a Chinese lady's boot encircled by a necklace made of shark's teeth, or a helmet of one of Cromwell's soldiers grouped with some Roman remains. Another corner may reveal an Egyptian mummy placed in a mediæval chest, and in more than one instance the curious visitor might be startled to find the cups won by a crack cricketer of the county in the collection, or even the stuffed relics of a pet pug dog. (4)

The early museum historian David Murray provided a very similar picture of dust and disorder around the turn of the century:

Local museums . . . are often crowded with what are popularly known as curiosities;—odds and ends connected with the town, furniture and utensils presented to the museum simply because they are old and out of date, gifts by friends in foreign lands,—birds, beasts, eggs, and fossils. (1: 265)

Likewise, Murray's contemporary W. Stanley Jevons describes the interior of the ordinary local museum as "a heterogeneous and absurd jumble" that might contain anything from a Roman altar "dug up in a neighboring farm" to "a glass-case full of butterflies, surmounted by poisoned arrows and javelins from the hill tribes of India":

A large cork model of a Chinese temple blocks up one corner of the room, while other parts are obstructed by a brass gun of unknown history and no interest, a model of an old three-decker, an Egyptian mummy, and possibly the embalmed remains of some person who declined to be laid under the turf. (76)

In short, the provincial museum, like an old curiosity shop, was an incongruous and unorganized agglomeration of old and new, foreign and domestic, natural and artificial.

Moreover, curiosity shops were also known to supply both public and private collections with rare and sometimes valuable artifacts and specimens. In fact, many prominent collectors, including Sir Walter Scott, Byron, and George IV, often turned

to dealers in antiquities to stock their own houses, shelves, and cabinets (Wainwright, "Curiosities" 1528). According to Dickens, John Gould's noted collection of hummingbirds, put on public display during the Crystal Palace year of 1851, was started "with a case of the most beautiful and curious, picked out of the odd groups of glass domes in curiosity shops" (Dickens and Knight 289). Collections of arms and armor, displayed in the great halls of ancient houses or newly built mansions, were also augmented by purchases from prominent dealers or obscure antiquarians like Dickens's old Trent (Wainwright, Romantic 61-2). In the 1870s, the nascent South Kensington Museum bought a number of important works in ivory from retired Bond Street dealer John Webb, who once specialized in furniture and works of art (Wainwright, "Curiosities" 1528-29; Maskell 121).

Although the intersections between museums and curiosity shops might have seemed coincidental to many Victorians, in Dickens's novels, these connections acquire "stupendous" significance, to borrow from Mrs. Jarley. In Dombey and Son (1846-8), the seafaring Solomon Gills's Ships' Instrument Maker's shop is implicated in the larger world of commerce around which Dombey's trading firm and the novel revolve, even if fails to turn a profit. As the store's name suggests, "[t]he stock-in-trade of this old gentleman comprised chronometers, barometers, telescopes, compasses, charts, maps, sextants, quadrants, and every kind of instrument used in the working of a ship's course, or the keeping of a ship's reckoning, or the prosecuting of a ship's discoveries" (28). However, Sol's maritime merchandise is hopelessly out-of-date, "presumably made virtually obsolete by the new industrial and commercial

developments" of the early nineteenth century (Hawes 90). Kept afloat by shrewd investments, Sol turns his "fiction of a business" (Dickens, Dombey 731) into what is best described as a proto-museum in which storytelling, spectacle, and surveillance give his anachronistic instruments a new life as evocative objects of wonder for family, friends, and window-shoppers.

In what his Mr. Venus would later call the shop's "general panoramic view" (Our Mutual Friend 88), Dickens emphasizes the amphibious Gills's efficiency in arranging his nautical stock into spaces for storage and display:

Objects in brass and glass were in his drawers and on his shelves, which none but the initiated could have found the top of, or guessed the use of, or having once examined, could have ever got back again into their mahogany nests without assistance. Everything was jammed into the tightest cases, fitted into the narrowest corners, fenced up behind the most impertinent cushions, and screwed into the acutest angles, to prevent its philosophical composure from being disturbed by the rolling of the sea. Such extraordinary precautions were taken in every instance to save room, and keep the thing compact; and so much practical navigation was fitted, and cushioned, and screwed, into every box (whether the box was a mere slab, as some were, or something between a cocked hat and a star-fish, as others were, and those quite mild and modest boxes as compared with others); that the shop itself, partaking of the general infection, seemed almost to become a snug,

sea-going, ship-shape concern, wanting only good sea-room, in the event of an unexpected launch, to work its way securely, to any desert island in the world. (28)

Dickens's narrative style here imitates Gills's compartmentalization of his "brass and glass" wares. Squeezed between commas and parentheses, Dickens's many participial phrases, qualifications, and descriptive elaborations syntactically mirror Sol's efforts to stuff as much as possible into a shop (or ship) that will never see water. However, Gills's seamanlike efficiency is not simply ironic or comic. His economical use of space and his wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling arrangement of marine objects evoke the salon style of hanging paintings as well as the overcrowded mammal galleries of the British Museum at mid-century, as described by Dickens's friend and the head of natural history, Richard Owen: "In this space, as is notorious, the specimens are packed as closely as they can be stored, often three, four, or five deep in the cases; or they crowd the floor like a herd of cattle; or they are attached to the wall, at heights inaccessible to the scientific observer" (13). By coping with a multitude of objects and limited space, Gills's shipshape shopkeeping reflects contemporary exhibitionary practices.

The instrument maker's store further resembles a museum through its lack of business, which threatens to render its old-fashioned collections permanent. Like old Trent's curiosity shop, which attracts no customers despite a variety of goods, Sol's store brings no purchasers, but only occasional visitors like "a man who asks change for a sovereign, and a woman who inquires the way to Mile-End Turnpike" (33).

Sol's other customers are little more than window-shoppers who, like Mrs. Jarley's reluctant crowds, are willing to look but not to spend. To give Sol paying customers from passersby, his desperate nephew Walter Gay is "half tempted to rush out, collar somebody, bring him in, and make him buy fifty pounds' worth of instruments" (96). In the absence of any sales, the instrument maker describes his shop as "merely a habit," rather than a living, though Sol is "so accustomed to the habit" that he says he "could hardly live" without it (32). Even so, he has no illusions about the shop's prospects: "[T]here's nothing doing, nothing doing" (32). He recalls a time when "fortunes were to be made" in his line, though those days are now past: "But competition, competition—new invention, new invention—alteration, alteration—the world's gone past me" (32).

Indeed, Gills blames his difficulties on changing times in an age where the railroad represents the turmoil of a disruptive and disquieting "progress" (53):

Tradesmen are not the same as they used to be, apprentices are not the same, business is not the same, business commodities are not the same. Seven-eighths of my stock is old-fashioned. I am an old-fashioned man in an old-fashioned shop, in a street that is not the same as I remember it. I have fallen behind the time, and am too old to catch it again. Even the noise it makes a long way ahead, confuses me.

(33)

Here, Dickens reflects on the effect of "the introduction of machine-shop, industrial methods into instrument-making in the early nineteenth century," a period in which

"instrument-making not only developed from handicraft to mechanical industry, but also from empirical practice to rational science" (Turner 23, 25). Moreover, by the end of the eighteenth century, London's leading instrument makers had lost their privileged position at the head of their trade to German manufacturers (J. A. Bennett 241). The sea-change Sol witnesses in commerce and commodities makes him seem, even to himself, as outdated as his dusty merchandise, most of which has outlived its original purpose. Consequently, Sol's old weather-worn wooden Midshipman, with its "obsolete" naval uniform, shoe buckles, waistcoat, and quadrant (27), serves as the fitting "guardian genius of his trade and shop" (218) and a metonym for the store. Unlike "the last bottle of the old Madeira" Sol saves to celebrate his nephew's anticipated good fortune (729), his store's other contents have not improved with time, making it difficult to sell them off to pay his debts, despite his instruments' supposed worth and his resignation to their liquidation "for ready money" (96).

Too old to be sold as useful commodities, but not yet historic enough to be sought as antiquities, Gills's instruments still accumulate subjective value in the eyes of their proprietor and his inner circle. Sol's storytelling session with his nephew reflects their mutual appraisal of the collection's evocative qualities. As a protective uncle and surrogate parent, Sol warns Walter, "As to the Sea . . . that's well enough in fiction, Wally, but it won't do in fact: it won't do at all. It's natural enough that you should think about it, associating it with all these familiar things; but it won't do, it won't do" (33). Though Sol tries to discourage Walter from a seafaring life with stories of shipwrecks inspired by his shop, he cannot help showing his enthusiasm for

the sea, even when he talks about its dangers. The provisions in Sol's store thus serve as visual prompts in his anecdotes of commerce and adventure, which have filled Walter's ears for years. In fact, Walter, like little Nell under Jarley's tutelage, learns these narratives of his uncle's collection by heart and recites them as if reading from a script. Walter eagerly joins Sol in one of these shared performances, anticipating his uncle's words throughout:

Solomon Gills rubbed his hands with an air of stealthy enjoyment, as he talked of the sea, though; and looked on the seafaring objects about him with inexpressible complacency.

"Think of this wine for instance," said old Sol, "which has been to the East Indies and back, I'm not able to say how often, and has been once around the world. Think of the pitch-dark nights, the roaring winds, and rolling seas."

"The thunder, the lightning, rain, hail, storm of all kinds," said the boy.

"To be sure," said Solomon, "—that this wine has passed through. Think what a straining and creaking of timbers and masts: what a whistling and howling of the gale through ropes and rigging:"

"What a clambering aloft of men, vying with each other who shall lie out first upon the yards to furl the icy sails, while the ship rolls and pitches, like mad!" cried his nephew.

"Exactly so," said Solomon: "has gone on, over the old cask

that held this wine. Why, when the Charming Sally went down in the——"

"In the Baltic Sea, in the dead of night; five-and-twenty minutes past twelve when the captain's watch stopped in his pocket; he lying dead against the main-mast—on the fourteenth of February, seventeen forty-nine!" cried Walter, with great animation.

"Aye, to be sure!" cried old Sol, "quite right! Then, there were five hundred casks of such wine aboard; and all hands . . . going to work to stave the casks, got drunk and died drunk, singing 'Rule Britannia,' when she settled and went down, and ending with one awful scream in chorus." (33-4)

The dialogue continues thus, with Sol feeding off his nephew's memory and enthusiasm. As the tales progress, Walter shoulders more and more of the imaginative burden. He repeats words and details that he has ostensibly heard many times before and even improvises with his own embellishments, helping Sol to spin his yarns. Eventually, the two exchange roles; Walter takes over the bulk of the narrative, showing how completely he has made these stories his own. Sol's evocative collection thus serves to inspire Walter with his uncle's supposedly "secret attraction towards the marvellous and adventurous, of which he was in some sort, a distant relation, by his trade" (34-5).

Besides Walter, Sol's old friend Captain Cuttle shows a great affinity for the instrument maker's many works. In fact, Cuttle views Sol as a technological virtuoso

with magical powers of creation. For instance, the Captain becomes "quite lost" in contemplating a clock he imagines Sol making, looking at Walter "as if his face were the dial" (36). This "ideal timepiece" (36) reflects Cuttle's appraisal of his friend's mechanical ingenuity through its fast pace rather than the accuracy of Sol's "unimpeachable chronometer" (29): "'And it would go!' said Captain Cuttle, making a species of serpent in the air with his hook. 'Lord, how that clock would go!'" (36). However, he is even more enthralled by the actual objects that surround him. These creations advertise Sol's technical wizardry instead of their own obscure uses, as Cuttle narrates:

"But he's chockfull of science," he observed, waving his hook towards the stock-in-trade. "Look ye here! Here's a collection of 'em. Earth, air, or water. It's all one. Only say where you'll have it. Up in a balloon? There you are. Down in a bell? There you are. D'ye want to put the North Star in a pair of scales and weigh it? He'll do it for you." (36)

In Cuttle's estimation, Sol is a godlike master of the universe, effortlessly gathering, transporting, and measuring its components through his instruments. Dickens continues, "It may be gathered from these remarks that Captain Cuttle's reverence for the stock of instruments was profound, and that his philosophy knew little or no distinction between trading in it and inventing it" (36). The Captain consoles himself for his lack of comprehension of Sol's instruments, saying, "[I]t's a fine thing to understand 'em. And yet it's a fine thing not to understand 'em. I hardly know which

is best. It's so comfortable to sit here and feel that you might be weighed, measured, magnified, electrified, polarized, played the very devil with: and never know how" (36). In this "prodigious oration," facilitated by an old bottle of Madeira and his excitement over Walter's newfound employment with Dombey, Cuttle "opened up to view the sources of the taciturn delight he had had in eating Sunday dinner in that parlour for ten years" (36). Moreover, his comments suggest the potential for Sol's shop to serve as a Foucauldian disciplinary institution, capable of turning its devices on unwitting spectators in a display of power. Cuttle's sense of awe and the company of friends temper any feelings of anxiety he might have in such a setting, though.

Cuttle's stewardship of Sol's instruments becomes more formalized when he takes over the shop in his friend's absence and eventually becomes a partner in the reconstituted firm of Gills and Cuttle. While developing pretensions as a man of both business and science, Cuttle also combines the functions of spectacle and surveillance that Tony Bennett identifies with the Victorian exhibitionary complex in its dual provisions for "the display of objects to a great multitude" and "vantage points from which everyone could be seen" (65). "Self-buried . . . among the instruments" (455), Cuttle constructs a "fortification" or "garrison" in which to hide from his former landlady, whom he leaves with three months' advance rent but no notice (303, 304). He makes himself into an invisible eye, seeing without being seen: "[T]he Captain curtained the glass door of communication between the shop and parlour, on the inside; fitted a key to it from the bunch that had been sent to him; and cut a small hole of espial in the wall" (303). Having established his observation post for the "crowd"

Walter predicts (96), Cuttle prepares the collection for viewing. After inspecting the stock, he has it "laborious[ly]" polished, "with the general idea . . . that too much friction could not be bestowed upon it, and that it could not be made too bright" (304). Cuttle also "ticketed a few attractive looking articles at a venture, at prices ranging from ten shillings to fifty pounds, and exposed them in the window to the great astonishment of the public" (304). Though Cuttle attempts to appropriate Sol's character as a businessman and scientist, his lack of expertise turns these objects into mere curiosities whose names and uses remain a mystery to him. As his assistant Rob the Grinder says, "He don't know nothing about it, the Cap'en don't. . . . He'll never make money" (450-1).

Although the Captain's arbitrary appraisal of Sol's things may be no more accurate than his valuation of their maker's abilities, Cuttle's appreciation for these objects gives them greater exposure and effect. Just as a ship's telescope earlier captures the attention of a powder-headed old gentleman, who stares at it "with all his might and main" until he "satiat[e]s his curiosity" (96), his new display inspires other onlookers with amazement. The language Dickens uses to describe the abstracted gaze of Cuttle and the venerable gentleman recalls contemporary accounts of mesmerism, in which subjects were induced into an insensible and sleeplike "trance" or "coma" through an operator's ostensible influence (Winter 2-3). Dickens had witnessed mesmeric demonstrations as early as 1838 and performed mesmerism himself in the early forties (Kaplan 36, 77-93). Although the instrument maker's "science" in Dombey and Son does not extend to such practices, the effect of Sol's

objects on some of their charmed viewers could be likened to a mesmeric state. Because Sol's visitors are entranced by an external visual stimulus rather than the magnetic, electrical, or mental influence of a mesmerist, their condition might be more accurately described as a hypnotic spell (Winter 185). In any case, Sol's audience at times displays the characteristics of an altered state of mind while viewing the contents of his shop. The emotional and intellectual response to Sol's ingenious instruments also forms an analogue to the quality of "wonder," elicited by "things so strange that they defied rational understanding" and prized in the early modern period (Swann 25).

Through its scientific and nautical character, the Ships' Instrument Maker's shop resembles the Gallery of Practical Science, mentioned by Dickens in his early pamphlet Sunday under the Three Heads, which makes Gills and Cuttle seem more like full-fledged curators. Located in the West Strand, at Adelaide Street and Lowther Arcade, this institution advertised itself as a form of rational recreation, "Blending Instruction with Amusement," as its 1834 catalogue claimed ([1]). Besides its many natural and artificial curiosities, including a "Model of a Human Skull wrought in Wood, with Teeth formed out of the Hippopotamus's Tooth" and "A Mouse Nest formed in a Bottle, in a Wine-Cellar, in the year 1815" (National 35, 38), the Gallery featured a number of technological innovations and improvements for ships and their navigation. There, Dickens would have seen such items as "Safety Tubes" to keep sinking ships afloat; an apparatus for raising sunken ships; life preservers and rafts; patent rudders; steam engines; model ships, guns, anchors, paddle wheels, and pumps;

and even "A Mouse in a Diving Bell" (National 9-14, 16-21, 23-5, 27-8, 30-32, 39-40). Although such inventions could very well be the sort that made Sol's inventory obsolete, the Gallery also had a few more traditional instruments, including "A Watch by Collins, dated London, 1645" (National 41), which brings to mind Sol's "tremendous chronometer in his fob" (29). Moreover, the "outlandish shells, seaweeds, and mosses" (28) decorating Sol's chimney-piece form a counterpart to the Gallery's many natural history specimens, including the wing and foot of an albatross and the saw of a sawfish.<sup>48</sup>

Geographically speaking, the Ships' Instrument Maker's shop is more in the neighborhood of another London museum. In fact, Dickens locates Sol's wooden Midshipman in the immediate vicinity of "the rich East India House, teeming with suggestions of precious stuffs and stones, tigers, elephants, howdahs, hookahs, umbrellas, palm trees, palanquins, and gorgeous princes of a brown complexion sitting on carpets with their slippers very much turned up at their toes" (27). Inside the India House, the Oriental Repository, later the India Museum, had opened in 1801 as a library for Indian manuscripts and "the first institution in Britain (and probably Europe) explicitly dedicated to non-European collections" (Jasanoff 108). In its inception and its collections, this repository also commemorated Britain's 1799 defeat of French ally Tipu Sultan at the South Indian capital of Seringapatam in the kingdom of Mysore, which was a landmark victory in "the war that technically brought about the British East India Company's final mastery over southwestern India and ultimately the rest of the subcontinent" (Breckenridge 198).

Seventy years after this conquest, a writer in Dickens's All the Year Round recalled the attractions of the early India Museum, in spite of its limited hours—three hours on Saturdays—and "dark poking rooms":

You entered the central vestibule; you wound about two or three passages, and ascended forty stairs; and then you found six or eight rooms, very scantily supplied with window-light. In these rooms the curiosities were stowed, some in very dark corners, and some on shelves too high up to be seen; but there was wherewithal to whet one's appetite in the doings and the products of the East. ("Oriental" 208)

Describing the vicissitudes of its parent company that had forced the museum's removal to cramped but well-lit quarters in the new India Office, the writer continues, "This Museum illustrates, more completely than the British or the South Kensington Museums can do, the habits and customs, the arts and sciences, the growths and products, the utilities and luxuries, of Oriental countries" ("Oriental" 209). Along with weapons, natural history specimens, native manufactures, arts and crafts, and musical instruments from India, the museum displayed technical devices from the Far East, including "an abacus, or Chinese counting-machine, Chinese implements and materials for writing, for drawing, for engraving on wood, and for printing; also Chinese weighing and measuring machines, a Chinese mariner's compass . . . and various Chinese trinkets" (Platt 63-4). The museum's most celebrated object, however, was Tipu's Tiger, a musical automaton that consisted of an Indian tiger

mauling a prostrate British soldier, now at the Victoria and Albert Museum. As a contemporary described it, "The interior contains pipes and other mechanism, which, when wound up by a key, cause the figure of the man to utter sounds of distress, and the tiger to imitate the roar of the living beast" (Platt 64). Said to be a favorite amusement of the former sultan, Tipu's Tiger vividly depicted Oriental brutality for its British audiences while encouraging a patriotic identification with the forces that had vanquished its owner (Jasanoff 178-9). Although Sol Gills's shop houses no such elaborate or exotic inventions, its many more familiar marine instruments connect the store to the India Museum's other gadgets. Moreover, Sol's instruments serve as throwbacks to the age when the India Company established and expanded its dominion abroad, linking the shop to British imperialism of the past and present.

Sol's shop also looks forward to other collections, as it anticipates the expanding collections of scientific instruments in Britain's national museums in the second half of the century. Despite the presence of mathematical instruments, largely surveying equipment, in Sir Hans Sloane's foundational collections at the British Museum, not until the middle of the nineteenth century did the museum begin a concerted effort to expand its holdings of scientific instruments, which reflected a growing institutional interest in medieval and later European antiquities (Anderson 211). Meanwhile, the 1876 Special Loan Collection at the South Kensington Museum revealed the value of a collection showing the history of scientific instruments as a supplement to the museum's scattered collections of mostly contemporary equipment (Anderson 214-221). Likewise, George Wilson, the first

director of the Industrial Museum of Scotland, later the Edinburgh Museum of Science of Art, suggested in 1857 that instruments used by prominent scientists could function as "personal relics, historical monuments, and objects of instruction" (qtd. in Anderson 222). The formation of such collections depended almost exclusively on individual initiative overcoming multiple obstacles, including institutional bureaucracy; the absence of an audience for scientific instruments except as antiquities or works of art; and the lack of a source from which to recruit historians of science as curators (Anderson 224). Ahead of their time as collection pieces, Sol's instruments show the foresight of his investments as Dickens describes them: "[I]nstead of being behind the time in those respects, as he supposed, he was, in truth, a little before it, and had to wait the fulness of the time and the design" (731).

Three years after the publication of Dombey and Son, the 1851 Crystal Palace exhibition (see Chapter 4), which drew over six million visitors without incident, demonstrated on a grand scale "the orderliness of the public" to which Jarley, Gills, and Cuttle belong (T. Bennett 72). Six years after that, the profits of the Great Exhibition were used to establish the South Kensington Museum, later the Victoria and Albert, which marked a departure from the curious aspects of Sol's shop and similar exhibitions and a turning-point in the evolution of British museums as an instrument of public education. It "detached art and culture from the function of bedazzling the population and harnessed them, instead, to that of managing the population by providing it with the resources and contexts in which it might become self-educating and self-regulating" (T. Bennett 40). Moreover, the South Kensington

was "officially dedicated to the service of an extended and undifferentiated public" (T. Bennett 71), accommodating the working classes through late-evening hours and three free days a week. Meanwhile, under the Museum Acts of 1845 and 1850, which allowed towns to use taxes for municipal museums and free libraries, Britain's public museums grew in number from about 60 in 1850 to around 250 by 1900 (Alberti 304; Pearce, Museums 107).

Dickens's later portrayal of the newly extended museum public through the upwardly mobile anatomist and taxidermist Mr. Venus of Our Mutual Friend (1864-5) shows an advance over his earlier representations of Jarley and Gills in relation to the exhibitionary complex. Despite appearances, particularly its location among Clerkenwell's "poorer shops" (83) and its virtual lack of visible customers, Venus's business is flourishing, unlike those of his predecessors, because he corners a lucrative market for his services. Combining the two cultures of art (Jarley) and science (Gills), Venus lives up to his namesake, the Roman goddess who brings the sculptor Pygmalion's statue to life, by figuratively animating the dead. Through his unrivaled skill in manipulating bodies and bones, Venus affirms his self-proclaimed identity as "the trade" (89). He preserves a macabre collection of lifelike "trophies" (472) and memento mori in a "musty, leathery, feathery, cellary, gluey, gummy" shop that Dickens explicitly refers to as his "museum" (84, 760). This designation, not used with either Jarley or Gills, suggests a continuity between Venus's wares and similar institutional collections, including the osteological, pathological, and physiological series at the College of Surgeons' Hunterian Museum, profiled in

Dickens's Household Words in 1850 ("Hunterian" 277-82). This family resemblance is reinforced by Venus's professional performance as his collection's curator; as he shows his handiwork by candlelight, "all [his] heterogeneous objects seemed to come forward obediently when they were named, and then retire again" (88). Moreover, the "winking and blinking" eyes of Venus's stock simulate the museum crowd's gaze (563), putting visitors like Wegg and Boffin under surveillance and on alert. More important, Venus contributes directly to the exhibitionary complex as a middle-man of sorts, purchasing parrots, rattlesnakes, and other "curios newly brought from distant lands by sailors debarking at the Thames wharves" (Altick 428) and preparing these specimens "for a Museum" (Dickens, Our Mutual Friend 492).

As a result of his profitable involvement in museums, Venus shows an increasing affinity for the middle-class culture his institutional clientele represents. As Bennett puts it, "[T]hose exposed to [culture's] influence were to be transformed into the active bearers and practitioners of the capacity for self-improvement that culture was held to embody" (24).<sup>49</sup> Venus himself abandons the articulation of women's skeletons out of a sense of propriety and a desire for matrimony and respectability, and his impending marriage to the felicitously named Pleasant Riderhood represents the final stage in the rebirth of Venus. An aspirant to middle-class values and culture who makes, not breaks, museum pieces, Venus thus serves as the culmination of Dickens's vision of the relation between collecting, Victorian museums, and British national identity.

## Chapter Three

### Mid-Victorian Pathologies of Collecting

By mid-century, collecting had achieved such widespread popularity in Britain that it was increasingly referred to in print, however lightheartedly, as a mania, linking it to psychological disorders and social contagions. According to one writer of the day, the infectious or "epidemic" nature of collecting posed a threat to society because it encouraged the irrational and competitive pursuit of objects whose value was determined solely by fashion:

There are . . . certain pursuits, which, like certain diseases—the influenza, for example—may be said to attack society. A long dissertation might be written for the purpose of proving this; but the existence of those well-known manias for collecting articles which are one day unthought of or neglected by all, and the next day sought after with frantic energy by hundreds, is a proof which is amply sufficient.  
(Noble 481)

The craze for acquiring such items as album portraits (cartes de visite), stamps, and coins was said to transform radically those affected by it: "[P]eople who are usually provokingly inert become painfully energetic; the timid, when they begin the great work of a collection, assume an air of boldness; the characters of all one's friends seem to be mysteriously changed; and the change is generally not a pleasant one" (Noble 481). Carried to extremes, collecting could produce such pathological effects,

turning people into their polar opposites and potentially interfering with personal and social relations.

In Victorian fiction of the fifties and sixties, the collecting mania was increasingly identified with the wealthy, who were represented as suffering from an excess of money and leisure. In the works of Henry Noel Humphreys, Charles Dickens, and Wilkie Collins, male heirs from the middle classes or gentry seek social legitimation by using their inherited wealth to collect in the tradition of the upper classes. This endeavor is discredited, however, because of its pathological aspects, which include obsessive, antisocial, and even immoral tendencies that are seen as antithetical to bourgeois domesticity. As Russell Belk suggests, when collecting is carried to an excess, its individual and private nature presents potential problems, "creating family strife, cutting the collector off from broader participation in the world, and substituting a focus on things for a focus on other humans" (151). The mid-Victorian representation of collecting to extremes reflects a growing concern with the possible detriments of elite modes of collecting for not only the individual and the family but also the middle and upper classes and the nation itself.

### **Victorian Bibliomania**

Epitomized by the celebrated 1812 sale of the Duke of Roxburghe's library of rare early printed books, the so-called bibliomania of Romantic Britain attracted, or rather afflicted, men of wealth and status, who competed for antiquarian books and

manuscripts at unprecedented levels in the auction-room. In Bibliomania; or Book-Madness (1809; rev. 1811, 1842), the Rev. Thomas Frognall Dibdin famously diagnosed bibliomania as a gender- and class-specific mock pathology which almost exclusively affected men, particularly those "in the higher and middling classes of society" (11). Dibdin describes eight primary "symptoms" of bibliomania, all of which show an obsession with particular physical formats (large paper, uncut, and vellum) or editions (unique, first, illustrated, black letter, and variant) (44-58). Dibdin's portraits of individual collectors also exemplify the physical and psychological excesses of the "ardent passion for books," including what one contemporary described as "ardour, eagerness, importunity, avidity, impetuosity, restlessness, anxiety, devotion, and insatiability" ("On the Bibliomania" 8, 12). These characteristics were most prominently displayed at the sales of renowned aristocratic libraries, where collectors battled over rare books, as reflected by Dibdin's frequent use of metaphors of combat to represent their bidding wars. These contests ultimately became displays not so much of literary taste but of wealth in action, as buyers who wished to distinguish themselves through their purchases often gave "extravagant sums . . . for certain curious and uncommon—but certainly not highly intrinsically-valuable—publications" (Dibdin 114). As antiquarian texts rose in cost, bibliomania came to be perceived as a "luxurious, privatized" form of cultural consumption, and bibliomaniacs were criticized for accumulating books for their rarity or appearance rather than their perceived literary or historical value (Connell 25, 27). After prices that had increased severalfold subsided in the wake of a banking crisis and economic

depression in the 1820s, the wealthy book collector became associated with the "capricious" financial speculation of the 17th-century Dutch tulip mania and the 18th-century South Sea Bubble (Connell 25).

However, as Philip Connell explains, "the early-nineteenth-century antiquarian book collector was also commonly depicted as making a valuable contribution to the preservation of literature and learning for the benefit of society as a whole" (27). The mid-eighteenth-century creation of a library at the British Museum from the collections of Sir Hans Sloane, George II, and earlier benefactors had already established the idea of the great library as a symbolic national resource. Moreover, following the end of perpetual copyright in 1774, the increased availability of works related to the nation's literary past contributed to the idea of literary history as a shared cultural heritage among a broader though stratified reading public. Apologists for great libraries suggested that the social elite could serve this collective cultural patrimony by creating material repositories of literature and learning for the nation (Connell 27-30). In fact, preserving the nation's literary heritage was seen in some quarters as an urgent matter and the exclusive and solemn duty of the upper classes; as one writer put it in 1821, "[D]estruction must very soon overtake the labours of the mind . . . unless the noble and wealthy become the efficient patrons, and the curators of literature, by adorning their mansions or palaces, with large collections of books" ("On the Bibliomania" 73). It was also suggested that, besides forming large libraries that could be bequeathed to the nation, such collectors might contribute further to a

national literary heritage as gentlemen scholars through their own publications (Connell 36-9).

The continuing ambivalence toward bibliomania as both a dissipating speculative force and a conservative cultural force was reflected at mid-century in its depiction in Victorian fiction. Though bibliomania began to be dissociated from landed property, it was still tied to mobile and speculative wealth in the person of upstart nouveaux riches "anxious to consolidate their social status through the creation—if not wholesale acquisition—of an impressive library of old books" (Connell 25). In the case of the eccentric Parisian bibliomaniac Dubois D'Erville from Stories by an Archaeologist and His Friends (1856), author and book artist Henry Noel Humphreys combines the manuscript mania of famous Victorian bibliophiles Richard Curzon and Sir Thomas Phillipps with the age-old search for the Holy Grail of ancient literature, the legendary lost books of Livy. The recipient of "a small patrimony which he inherited from a distant relation" (Humphreys, Stories 1: 24), Dubois uses his new wealth to pursue the long-lost decades of Livy's Roman history<sup>50</sup> in the hopes of restoring a monument of ancient literature and making a name for himself. His hard-won but short-lived success illustrates the hazards of high-stakes book collecting and the truth of the proposition "publish or perish." Humphreys reveals his bias against hereditary wealth, typically associated with the upper classes, by having Dubois pursue books with his fortune at the cost of not writing and publishing, which leads to the irretrievable loss of Dubois's own unwritten books.

Humphreys' Stories reads like a Victorian version of the Canterbury Tales, with a miniature society of storytelling archaeologists at Naples touring Italy, from which travelers' interest had been diverted to northern Europe by the Gothic Revival (1: 4-5). Humphrey's introduction, which takes the place of Chaucer's General Prologue, attempts to modify the public's image of the archaeologist as a venerable but dry-as-dust gentleman specializing in arcana, suggesting that "there are young archaeologists as well as old" and that their pursuits and discoveries are the stuff of "true romance" (2, 4). Humphrey's international men's club consists of, among others, an English botanist, an Italian numismatist, and a Spanish poet, whose prologues involve the presentation of an artifact that relates to the story that follows. The first storyteller and the narrator of Humphreys' "Lost Books of Livy," a "semi-insane" Parisian bibliophile (7), exhibits a "small fragment of one of the lost books of Livy, on papyrus; which he had detected serving as the inner lining of a cover to a folio Psalter of the tenth century in the monastery of La Cava; but which had lost much of its interest from being a portion of one of the passages quoted by Priscian . . ." (1: 15-16). Of Livy's original 142 books, which cover the history of Rome from the city's foundation to the beginning of the reign of Augustus, only thirty-five have survived in their entirety, and of those, six were discovered after the fifteenth century (Ullman 60; Humphreys 1: 22). As Humphreys' French bibliomaniac goes on to tell, his friend Dubois D'Erville becomes attracted to "the charms of classical literature" in general and to Livy in particular for his style and the "grandeur of [his] subject" (20, 21), the growth of an empire from humble origins, which also had a special resonance with

Humphreys' British readers. As a student, Dubois reads about the recovery of Livy's books with great interest, and from then on, he devotes himself to finding the rest, convinced "that the remainder, or a great portion of them, were still destined again to see the light, if but sufficient energy and perseverance were devoted to the search" (22).

As B. L. Ullman explains, Livy's lost books "symbolize that continued hope of uncovering more and more of ancient literature which has been one of the characteristics of [Western] culture for six centuries" (Ullman 61). The revival of interest in Livy during the Renaissance dates from the discovery between 1318 and 1324 in Padua, the city of his birth, of a sepulchral inscription from the church of Santa Giustina that was mistakenly identified as Livy's epitaph, an error that persisted until the end of the seventeenth century. The fifteenth-century discovery of what were thought to be Livy's bones in a lead coffin from an adjoining monastery led to a new wave of excitement and controversy. Spurious though these finds were, they gave scholars hope that Livy's lost books, missing since the fifth century, would come to light like his supposed corporeal remains. Though rumors arose during the fifteenth century of a complete Livy in northern Europe, not until 1517 were parts of Books 33 and 40 of Livy found at Mainz, the birthplace of modern printing, in a manuscript that itself has since vanished. Ten years later, Books 41 to 45 were uncovered in Lorsch, near Worms, in Germany, the most significant find of the last six centuries. Another German find followed in 1615, when the rest of Book 33 turned up in an eleventh-century manuscript at Bamberg. Despite recurring rumors of a complete Arabic

version somewhere in the Mediterranean, including a fraudulent report of one in Italy toward the end of the eighteenth century, there was only one more bona fide discovery, the 1772 find of a small palimpsest fragment of Book 91 in the Vatican Library (Ullman 53-70).

The latest success in the quest for Livy most likely suggested to Humphreys as well as Dubois that the rest of Livy might have survived in palimpsests, "manuscripts containing two texts, one written over the top of an imperfectly erased lower text" (Greetham 273). Products of the cost of parchment and its ability to be scraped down for reuse, medieval palimpsests were often created when monastic scribes overwrote classical texts with Christian ones, thereby obliterating many pagan works (Greetham 53, 178, 306).<sup>51</sup> In fact, Humphreys' Dubois is said to be heartened by the "wonderful" 1828 recovery "of one of the finest works of Cicero, his 'republic,' discovered in palimpsest, nearly scraped out to make way for a commentary of St. Augustine on the Psalms of David" (24). Dubois becomes convinced that he will find the lost Livy in palimpsest after reading about the recovery "by some erudite enthusiast" of "long lost works" from such manuscripts, where "some half mystic, half religious treatise, or interminable dissertation in monkish Latin" hid "treasures of classic literature" (23). Humphreys' description of these palimpsests as a "desecration" of classical writings rhetorically grants these secular works the sacred status of the texts that supplanted them, making Dubois's recovery efforts a kind of holy mission.

Despite his noble cause, a sense of destiny, and great personal sacrifices, Dubois's extended "pilgrimage" (26) across Europe and Asia does not turn up the object of his search: "Year after year, many years of indefatigable travail and research were passed in this vain pursuit" (24). Having abandoned "family, friends, and acquaintances" (24), Dubois spends his youth and middle age far from home, accompanied only by a devoted wife of whom little is known, seeking out ancient manuscripts in libraries and convents from Paris to Syria in hopes of finding more of Livy. His pursuit of ancient manuscripts in the monastic libraries of the Near East reflects their attraction for scholars and collectors since the seventeenth century, as A. N. L. Munby explains: "Their venerable antiquity, their continuous existence since the earliest days of the Christian Church, the remoteness of many of them, the dangers attendant upon reaching them, the lack of any sort of catalogue of their contents—all these have served to raise high hopes of epoch-making discoveries" (3: 122-3). Dubois follows in the wake of travelers such as Lord Prudhoe, the discoverer of the monastery of Souriani's ancient Syriac library, which was later purchased for the British Museum, and Robert Curzon, later Baron Zouche, who in the 1830s acquired a group of ancient Coptic and other manuscripts for the British Museum, as recorded in his famous Visits to Monasteries in the Levant (1849). In fact, Dubois's travels "among the wild and half-savage tribes of the mountainous districts of Asia Minor, and Syria; where he had sought out lonely and long-forgotten Christian convents" (26), resemble Curzon's "arduous field-work," "dangerous journeys in bandit-infested countries," and "interminable parleys with suspicious monks" (Munby 3: 124) in all

but their outcome. As a speculative venture, Dubois's unavailing quest for Livy is compared to earlier profitless schemes: "In this wandering pursuit, in search of an ever-escaping treasure—like the dreams of the gold-seeking alchemists—was the remainder of the middle portion of the life of Dubois worn away in wandering obscurity" (26). Ironically, Dubois's life comes to resemble one of his fabled palimpsests, as his early and unproductive years of "trial and adventure" (32) are largely concealed from the few who know him later, including the narrator: "None ever knew the particulars of these passages in his strange career . . . . None ever learnt the epoch or manner of his supposed marriage; nor of the loss of his devoted partner, which left him to follow out his pursuit in lonely widowhood. Neither did any know the precise reasons which determined the wanderer at last to settle permanently in Paris" (27).

The narrator speculates that Dubois moved back to his birthplace to provide a home for his growing daughter and because of the city's post-Napoleonic revival as "a great central mart for the traders in antiquities" where his collecting could continue in earnest (32). Dubois's residence, a suite of apartments in the somewhat dilapidated "hotel of a noble of the old Régime" in the rue Cassette (28), associates him and his fortune with France's defunct upper classes. However, his "piles of old-written vellum, and dusty and worm-eaten MSS. of all descriptions" (29), connect him to British bibliomania. The dissolution of many monasteries throughout Europe in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, coupled with political and social upheaval in France that led to "the obliteration of the aristocratic native collector," created

unparalleled opportunities for English and other collectors to acquire the scattered remains of private and monastic libraries on the Continent at the end of the Napoleonic wars (Munby 3: 19). In particular, illuminated manuscripts, "of which the English were very fond . . . and which are of so much importance in the history of painting" as a record of medieval European art, had made their way to England in large numbers by the 1830s (Herrmann 152). As Alice H. R. H. Beckwith explains, such manuscripts not only were revered as art treasures and studied as cultural documents but also were emulated by modern illuminators as design specimens during the Gothic Revival (12-14). In fact, Humphreys himself, who researched illuminated manuscripts in Italy, illustrated his Art of Illumination and Missal Painting (1847) and Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages (1849) with chromolithographed facsimiles of pages from English and Continental examples and used medieval illuminations as a model in his elaborately bound and illuminated gift books of the forties and fifties.<sup>52</sup>

Dubois accumulates many illuminated manuscripts, not for their own intrinsic interest, but as potential palimpsests. In fact, Dubois regards the "exquisite illuminations" of manuscripts thought to be palimpsests "as so many abominations, covering and concealing some treasure of classic literature" (34). He erases such offending matter to recover what he suspects lies beneath:

[T]he medieval romance, with its matchless miniatures and intricate borderings, sparkling with gilding, purple and crimson; and its ornaments blending and intertwining with curious art, would soon

disappear, along with the fine Gothic text, beneath the sponge and the acids, and the soap, of the indefatigable seeker of the lost books of Livy. (34)

Dubois's misguided "enthusiasm" (34) for this work suggests parallels with Dibdin's anxious bibliomaniacs as well as other speculators; as Humphreys writes, "[T]he sponge trembled in his hand to begin the work of obliteration; as a speculative miner might dig ruthlessly through waving fields of luxuriant corn, all beautiful with parasitic flowers, seeking for some fancied vein of gold, or the hiding-place of some buried treasure" (35). As beauty becomes a blight for Dubois in the pursuit of literary riches, his artistic vandalism reveals the cost of his labors; as Humphreys' Spanish poet later puts it, "All this archaeological research is certainly destroying, as well as creating . . ." (1: 246).

Dubois's destruction is somewhat mitigated by his daughter Marcelline's counterefforts. An amateur painter, Marcelline develops an interest in "the quaint beauties of medieval art" from "the opportunities which her father's mania had afforded her of examining the exquisite miniatures and ornamental illuminations with which important manuscripts from the fourth to the sixteenth century are frequently enriched" (33). Marcelline sees a "cruel desecration" in her father's "ruthless obliteration of all those quaint and delicately beautiful works of art" (35), which leads to her preservation of them through a collection of her own careful and accurate copies. Moreover, Marcelline's "almost daily" examination of new manuscripts for noteworthy illuminations (33) gives her the ability to date these documents through

their art, making Dubois's daughter an unexpected resource for her father in his researches. As Humphreys writes, "[B]y the continual study of the beautiful art of decorating manuscripts . . . she could identify the age of a codex so enriched, with greater certainty, by the style and certain delicate peculiarities in the manner of its ornamentation, than the most learned paleographers by the character of the writing; or the bibliophilist by the nature of the subject" (49). Marcelline's interest in illumination reflects the art's emergence as a pastime for many women and a profession for some in mid-nineteenth-century England (Beckwith 14). In fact, women "were often the target audience for the numerous manuals of illumination" (Beckwith 14), beginning with Humphreys' own 1847 Art of Illumination. As the work of her own hands, Marcelline's fresh "collection of exquisite facsimiles" (41) represents a constructive alternative to her father's mutilated and sepulchral library of "musty" manuscripts and "disinterred inscription[s]" (40). Marcelline even begins a collection of "detached pieces, cut from the pages of illuminated volumes" of unknown origin (43), gifts of her cousin and Dubois's only other surviving relative, his nephew by marriage, Hyppolite de Debaye. However, Marcelline and Dubois's "deep preoccupation in their own cherished works" signifies their "somewhat oppressive" devotion to the past (39), which manifests itself in the "filial and holy affection" that prevents Marcelline from acknowledging Hyppolite's declarations of love (47).

Dubois's collecting is further problematized by his resemblance in several respects to the most famous—or infamous—book collector of the day. During his

lifetime, the Worcestershire baronet and self-described "Vello-maniac" Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872) accumulated some 60,000 manuscripts and over 50,000 printed books in what has been called "the greatest library of unpublished historical material ever brought together by one man" (Munby 4: 170). Phillipps's antiquarian interests, and especially his concern with genealogy and historical documents related to descent and origins, have been ascribed to his own birth out of wedlock to a wealthy calico manufacturer and a servant and his compensatory desire to establish a flattering pedigree for himself and enhance his social status (Muensterberger 73-100). In his manuscript "Preface to My Catalogue of Manuscripts" (c. 1828-37), Phillipps identified more altruistic motives for paying "any price that was asked" for "everything that lay within my reach" in the way of unpublished historical manuscripts, "particularly those on Vellum": "My chief desire for preserving Vellum MSS. arose from witnessing the unceasing destruction of them by Goldbeaters; My search for charters or deeds by their destruction in the shops of Glue-makers & Taylors" (Munby 1: 18). Through his voracious appetite for written and printed matter, which often strained the substantial income from his father's estate, Phillipps became a much sought-after customer who lavishly purchased manuscripts from auctioneers and booksellers, though he had a reputation as a hard bargainer who paid slowly (Munby 2: 1-43). As an illuminator and historian, Humphreys was familiar with the so-called Bibliotheca Phillippica and the library's owner, even if he never visited them. In his Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages (1849), Humphreys refers to Phillipps's copy of the illustrated eleventh-century Gospels of Matilda of Tuscany,

"described by Ottley in Archaeologia, vol. xxiv" (26),<sup>53</sup> in his catalogue of "The Most Remarkable Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages" (24), though he admits, "I have not myself examined the whole of the MSS. inserted in this list . . ." (30). Moreover, Phillipps's much-despised son-in-law, the Shakespearean scholar and suspected book-thief James Orchard Halliwell,<sup>54</sup> has been identified, along with the author and antiquary Thomas Wright, as a contributor to Humphreys' Stories,<sup>55</sup> although the grounds for this attribution are unclear.

By the time Stories by an Archaeologist was published in 1856, Phillipps estimated the size of his library at about 20,000 manuscripts and 30,000 printed books (Munby 4: 86). Though there is no indication that Dubois collects on such a grand scale, he certainly has the resources to do so. Besides his inheritance, Dubois's sale of several Eastern codices and literary palimpsests gives him the means "to purchase, and even sacrifice if necessary, after due examination, almost any manuscript that appeared in the market" (42). As with Phillipps, Dubois's renowned acquisitiveness and spendthrift habits make him a favorite of booksellers: "He had become, in fact, so well known, that almost every dealer took their new batches, procured from sales or by importation, to Dubois; before offering them elsewhere; as he frequently paid a high price for an apparently valueless book, if he suspected it of being a palimpsest . . ." (42). Moreover, Dubois encounters what Phillipps calls "vast treasures upon the Continent in consequence of the dispersion of Monastic libraries by the French Revolution" (Munby 1: 18). Despite not sharing Phillipps's social stigma, Dubois displays a similar desire for social legitimation through the preservation of old

manuscripts, and he receives many visiting scholars at his library, much like his counterpart (Munby 3: 142; 4: 29-42).

However, perhaps the most striking difference between these two collectors relates to their own scholarship, which is either supported or supplanted by their collecting. Phillipps, who is said to have displayed a "genuine veneration for scholarship" (Munby 4: 169), was an occasional contributor to antiquarian journals, including Collectanea Topographica, where he served as the "erratic" co-editor from 1833-43 (Munby 3: 109), and the capricious proprietor from the 1820s to the 1860s of the Middle Hill Press, which printed Phillipps's library catalogues and manuscript material on English topography, genealogy, and local history. Many of Phillipps's own publications were delayed by his quarrels with printers and hampered by the triviality of their subject matter, faulty editing, poor sales, and Phillipps's lack of sustained effort, though he published some Anglo-Saxon texts for the first time (Munby 3: 11-18, 69-72, 118-21; 4: 47). By contrast, Dubois never publishes, despite "talents [that] might have rendered him remarkable in any walk of literature" (19). Dubois's overspecialization and collecting prevent him from fulfilling his scholarly potential; his search for Livy "so filled every moment of his existence, that the vast pile of erudition which he had accumulated, [was] allowed to lie waste . . ." (19). Ultimately, the narrator laments Dubois's lost books more than Livy's because the former were never even written: "Poor Dubois!—hosts of projected works, full of the deepest erudition, the most curious learning, long lay teeming in his brain; but, absorbed by one engrossing pursuit, he has never found time to commit even the

introduction of any one of them to paper" (19-20). Committed to rescuing another's writings, Dubois sacrifices his own in the bargain.

Dubois's literary legacy, if not his reputation as a collector, thus comes to rest entirely on his success in recovering Livy's lost books. Dubois's persistence is finally rewarded when he uncovers—in a "disentombed palimpsest" (61), of course—what he identifies as "a portion of the second decade of the annals" (50), which had been entirely lost. He celebrates his apparent triumph, exclaiming, "The name of Dubois . . . will go down to future generations joined with that of Livy!! Yes! [T]he 'Lost Books' are in my grasp; and my life has been well—nobly—spent!" (50). Dubois goes on to explain to Marcelline the significance of his find:

"To read the story of that turning point in the early history of Rome; that of the extension of her conquests in the south of Italy and Cisalpine Gaul, and the defeat of Pyrrhus, and the first Punic war, in the long-lost words of Livy, is a privilege which modern Europe will owe to Dubois D'Erville! . . . and then my own great privilege . . . to be the first among moderns to read the whole of the noble history of Livy: for I believe the whole is there . . . ." (51)

Far from being the vindication he expects it to be, Dubois's discovery becomes, ironically, a Pyrrhic victory because of what follows. First, during a celebratory reception for his learned friends, Dubois's attribution of the books to Livy is challenged on the grounds of style, orthography, arrangement, and even content, though he parries these objections to attain, if not a victory, at least a standoff.

However, more damaging to Dubois's legacy is the overnight robbery of all his manuscripts, presumably by two "repulsive and suspicious" peddlers who tried to sell him some "valueless" manuscripts earlier that same evening (59). Despite some promising leads from dealers to whom the stolen manuscripts were offered, Dubois is unable to save the books from being boiled down as "old parchment" in, of all places, the gelatin factory where Hyppolite works (67).

The "destruction of his cherished discovery," the now "twice lost books of Livy" (68), proves to be personally devastating to Dubois: "[H]e began to accumulate fresh bibliographical treasures around him. But he never recovered the old enthusiasm, the rapid flow of ardent words, that used of old to be brought forth by any new event of moment in the field of his research" (67-8). His failure to preserve the antiquarian text keeps it from further transmission through the original or printed copies. Moreover, Dubois's loss of the apocryphal Livy foreshadows his own extinction; as the narrator tells his listeners, "[A]ll the erudition, all the vast learning, that poor Dubois D'Erville had collected during a life of truly gigantic labours, has perished with the brain in which it was stored" (69). His only tangible contribution to posterity is Marcelline, "the last representative of the ancient family" (69), whose marriage to Hyppolite after Dubois' death at least holds the promise of survival for the D'Erville line.

### **Boffin's Books**

Whereas Humphreys' Dubois specializes in a single author in manuscript form, his counterpart in Dickens's Our Mutual Friend (1864-5) falls victim to a monomania for ancient history and, later, eccentric biography in printed books, again with mixed results. Dickens's characterization of dust-contracting heir Noddy Boffin's book collecting as a "curious pursuit" (461) aligns the Golden Dustman's pastime with the acquisitive activities of eighteenth-century aristocratic virtuosos, whose collecting was described in similar terms. More important, the secretive, speculative, and neurotic aspects of Boffin's behavior affiliate him with the bibliomaniacs that had been alternately celebrated and disparaged in the early nineteenth century. Early on, Boffin's desire to use his inheritance from his employer to furnish himself with an impressive library and a quasi-classical education manifests itself in indiscriminate and extravagant book-buying that profits him little in terms of actual learning. Moreover, Boffin's adoption of an elitist, if not outdated, mode of consumption undermines his relationships with others as husband, father, and employer. Thus, the upwardly mobile but miserly Boffin appears to be corrupted as much by his books as by his fortune.

Boffin's bibliomania derives in part from Dickens's own collecting and reading of early nineteenth-century books. Dickens owned several works of anecdotal literary history by Isaac D'Israeli, the co-founder of the conservative Quarterly Review and father of the Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, including both series of Curiosities of Literature (1791-1823), The Literary Character (1795, rev. 1818), and Quarrels of

Authors (1814). Unlike his contemporary Thomas Dibdin, D'Israeli did not show a fondness for the bibliomania, which he describes in his Curiosities as the "collecting [of] an enormous heap of books without intelligent curiosity" (117). D'Israeli explains that the library of the bibliomane, or "the mere book-collector" (117), is distinguished from that of the bibliophile, or "the lover of books" (122), by its lack of use: "Some collectors place all their fame on the view of a splendid library, where volumes, arrayed in all the pomp of lettering, silk linings, triple gold bands, and tinted leather, are locked up in wire cases, and secured from the vulgar hands of the mere reader, dazzling our eyes like eastern beauties peering through their jalousies!" (117-18). According to Philip Connell, the "purely obsessional and acquisitive impulse" of D'Israeli's bibliomane represents "a perversion of the legitimate and productive impulse to accumulate and preserve knowledge" (34). For D'Israeli, the focused and systematic acquisitions of men of letters like Humphrey's Dubois, who collect and read books but do not write them, serve as a corrective to the indiscriminate accumulations of bibliomanes like Dickens' Boffin: "Their expansive library presents an indestructible history of the genius of every people, through all their eras—and whatever men have thought and whatever men have done, were at length discovered in books" (125). Whereas D'Israeli credits the man of letter's useful bibliophily for the preservation of "the monuments of vanished minds" and the philanthropic foundation of public libraries (125, 128), he associates the bibliomane with an uncontrollable multiplication of books that is the product of "the increase of literature" in commercial society (120).

An article dramatizing the destructive effects of bibliomania was published in Bentley's Miscellany in June 1838, during Dickens' tenure as its editor (1837-9). In "The Bibliophilist," an early Victorian true-crime narrative about a serial killer, the city merchant, diarist, and dandy Thomas Raikes recounts the criminal career of Father Don Vincente, a Spanish monk and librarian turned homicidal bookseller.<sup>56</sup> Vincente's willingness not only to pay "exorbitant price[s]" for rare books but also to resort to murder suggests that he will go to any lengths to obtain "a scarce or precious edition" (567). The possible victim of a "deranged" intellect (566) in the wake of the dissolution of his Cistercian monastery and the loss of its "magnificent" library of scientific, literary, and historical manuscripts to dispersal and destruction (565), Vincente enters the speculative and competitive book trade in a symbolic act of restoration and recuperation. Vincente's bibliographic proclivities identify him as what D'Israeli calls a bibliognoste, or one who specializes in publication history (122): "He never read as a matter of study, but his life was spent in turning over leaves, examining title-pages, collating dates, and scrutinizing editions . . ." (Raikes 566). Vincente's preeminence among Barcelona's booksellers and his unwillingness to part with his most valuable books motivate a league of dealers, led by his neighbor Augustin Patxot, to ruin him. By pooling their resources, Vincente's competitors manage to outbid him at all the local auctions, which keeps him from adding to his stock; moreover, "it violently exasperated his temper, inasmuch as it thwarted his darling passion, as well as ruined his trade" (567). After Vincente loses out to his archrival on a supposedly unique copy of a 1482 first edition published by Lambert

Palmart, Spain's Gutenberg, he kills nine men of learning, including Patxot, and robs them of their most important books. The authorities' accidental discovery of Patxot's Palmart in Vincente's house leads to his confession, but only after he is assured that his library, including the ill-gotten books, will be preserved intact, "and kept as a monument of literature for future ages" (573). At his trial, Vincente explains the motive for his murders as a product of bibliomania and his aspirations as a literary and cultural conservator: "It has been my sole object to promote the neglected interests of science, and preserve for posterity those inestimable treasures which the Vandalism of the present age is daily seeking to destroy,—treasures which, once lost, can never be replaced" (574). After his guilty verdict is read, Vincente's final defeat comes when he learns that his Palmart, for which he started his killing spree and which served as evidence against him, is not a unique copy after all. Though Dickens' Boffin does not match Vincente's violent passion for books, the miserliness that accompanies his own bibliomania may owe something to the insanity of Raikes's mad monk.

Another bibliognoste, and one of the most famous of Dibdin's collectors, appears to have served Dickens as an even more direct model for Boffin. Known as "The greatest Collector of curious Books of his time" (Kirby, plate facing 5: 382), the Rev. Isaac Gosset would at first seem to have little in common with Boffin besides his love of books. Unlike the unlettered Boffin, Gosset was classically educated and possessed a remarkable memory, which contributed to his facility with languages. A scholar and a preacher, Gosset specialized in classical and theological works, but his

extensive knowledge of "the titles and contents of books of all denominations" earned him a place among Dibdin's upper class of bibliomaniacs, under the alias of Lepidus (Kirby 5: 384-5; Dibdin 121-2, 578). Even if Dickens did not read Dibdin, he would have encountered Gosset in R. S. Kirby's Wonderful and Eccentric Museum (1803-20), which he, like Boffin, owned.<sup>57</sup> Like the parsimonious Boffin, Gosset showed great domestic economy, taking "particular care that nothing should be wasted" (5: 383), not even a pile of crooked old nails that he straightened for some home repairs. Moreover, Boffin's apprehension over the transportation of his books (473-4) seems to derive from Gosset's similar worries, as recorded by Kirby: "So exceedingly attached was he to his library, that when it was to be moved, he worked and fretted himself almost to death; and when carried away, he actually sat on the steps, and cried like a child, for fear that any of his best editions might be damaged" (5: 387). Finally, both Boffin and Gosset are the beneficiaries of inherited wealth, with Gosset "having had a handsome fortune left him by his own father, which, like his father, he improved by dabbling in the stocks" (Kirby 5: 388).

Despite sharing Gosset's financial circumstances, Boffin lacks the minister's prodigious knowledge of books and editions, which makes his initial acquisitions somewhat haphazard. Boffin's indiscriminate love for books both old and new develops out of his newfound interest in books as reading matter and objects alike. His passion for books as material possessions is equaled in Dickens only by the Veneerings, whose unread "library of bran-new books, in bran-new bindings liberally gilded" (27), is meant to cover up their rapid social rise in the world (Rheims 23).

Like the Veneerings, Boffin tries to "keep up appearances" (61) by matching his sudden acquisition of wealth with things that befit his new station in life. Wrestling with a personal literacy that is rudimentary at best (Friedman 40-1), Boffin compensates for his limited education by acquiring books that he feels will provide him with a more "[f]ashionable" level of learning and culture (95). However, his purchase of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire at auction seems to be guided more by the appearance of its fine binding "in a gorging Lord-Mayor's-Show of wollumes" (58) than by the author or title, which evokes the bibliomane's "scopophilic tendencies" (Connell 36). In a statement that reflects the growing commodification of the literary past, Boffin conflates Gibbon with the physical product of his labors: "'Bought him at a sale,' said Mr. Boffin. 'Eight wollumes. Red and gold. Purple ribbon in every wollume, to keep the place where you leave off. Do you know him?'" (59). Impressed by the physical features of this set, Boffin literally judges his books by their covers, which he puts on display by arranging the books "flat, in a row, like a galvanic battery" (62). Moreover, he assumes that others will recognize these "wollumes" by their distinctive looks rather than by their title, which he mangles. The ballad-monger Silas Wegg's failure to identify the "Decline-And-Fall-Off-The-Rooshan-Empire" (59) from its outward appearance suggests the inadequacy of Boffin's description, which is more aesthetic than bibliographic.

Despite his lack of familiarity with books and their contents, Boffin shows the wonderful capacity to be affected and even absorbed by Wegg's inadequate and mechanical readings. Though the utilitarian Wegg approaches books as mere tools or

"implement[s]" (59) and puts Boffin's wife to sleep with his "rote" literary performances (66), Boffin himself responds with enthusiasm, if not understanding, to what he hears. A former handler of rubbish or "dust," Boffin is fascinated by the literary and historical remains of the past, though his comprehension is somewhat limited, due in part to Wegg's stumbling over "the hard words, biographical and geographical" (66). After Wegg's first session on Gibbon, Boffin is "both excited and frightened by ancient Rome's violence and turmoil," though he fails to follow the historian's chronology and responds with awe rather than outrage to Commodus' cruel gladiatorial exploits (Friedman 42-3). After over a year of Wegg's Gibbon, Boffin briefly turns to other narratives of ancient history, including Charles Rollin's Ancient History and Josephus's Wars of the Jews, both of which disappoint under Wegg's management and are mercifully abandoned. In a move to biography, which he conflates with fiction, a perplexed Boffin finds Plutarch's Lives "in the sequel extremely entertaining, though he hoped Plutarch might not expect him to believe them all" (470).

It is with his lives of misers, however, that Boffin comes to feel most at home. In fact, these books transform Boffin from a reader by proxy into a full-fledged collector and an apparent miser, as he comes to resemble those eccentrics whose biographies he covets. As Dickens ultimately reveals, Boffin only goes through the motions of avarice to serve as an object lesson to his ward Bella and to test Wegg's moral character. In effect, Boffin studies to become a miser, reading about the haunts and habits of his supposed brethren in order to make his performance as one of them

all the more convincing. This mission does not make Boffin's interest in misers any less real, though Stanley Friedman insists that Boffin "feign[s]" his bibliomania for books about them to make his miserly behavior more credible (52). Here, it is necessary to distinguish between Boffin's pretended miserliness and his genuine love for books generally and miserly tales in particular. Boffin's previous purchases cultivate his habit of reading through Wegg, and his discovery of books about misers provides a new field of literature for him to pursue physically, financially, and intellectually. Moreover, Boffin's reading promises to add to his already extensive firsthand knowledge of misers, gleaned from years of serving as foreman for the elder Mr. Harmon, "a flinty-hearted rascal" who refuses to spare "a sixpence coach-money" when he sends his seven-year-old grandson John to study abroad (95). Ultimately, the difference between Boffin's short-lived interest in history books and his passion for miserly literature is one of degree. Whereas Boffin becomes bored with classical history and Wegg's rendition of it, his monomaniacal "appetite for Misers" is "whetted instead of satiated" with each new acquisition, no matter how large (463). In this respect, Boffin resembles Dibdin's voracious Gosset, whom Dibdin describes as being "insatiable in his bibliomaniacal appetites" (121), as well as his misers, whose increasing wealth only augments their desire for more riches (Merryweather 175).

In Boffin's case, his illicit love affair with books produces what Maurice Rheims calls "a clandestine atmosphere of intrigue and deceit" (32). Partly to hide his books and the secret behind his miserliness from his wife, Boffin moves into an "eminently aristocratic family mansion" (293) and turns his former residence, the

aptly-named Boffin's Bower, into a repository for his library and a retreat from his family. In addition, as an ersatz bachelor, Boffin takes on his young protégée Bella as his window-shopping companion, collecting assistant, and confidante. As Boffin explains, Bella can "read at sight," and her eyes "are as sharp as they're bright" (461), making her an indispensable resource for Boffin in the continuing pursuit of his desiderata. Bella also lends a hand in the physically demanding task of hauling Boffin's books back to the Bower. Before long, she becomes Boffin's second self, at least in a collecting sense: "It very soon became unnecessary to tell Bella what to look for, and an understanding was established between her and Mr. Boffin that she was always to look for Lives of Misers" (463). As Bella services Boffin's collecting needs, she becomes in some sense closer to him than his own wife, who seems unaware of her husband's peculiar "taste" (463) for either Bella or his misers.

As with his earlier acquisitions, the accumulation of Boffin's books also poses certain logistical challenges. Physically, Boffin's books take up a great deal of space and are difficult to move. Since a book's size seems to imply its substance to Boffin, he shows a penchant for multi-volume works even before he begins to collect his misers. The bulkiness of Boffin's books makes their serial acquisition and transport a virtual necessity, though he somehow manages to cram himself and his growing library of miserly literature into a single cab. Despite the trouble that Boffin takes to move his books, he does not immediately make use of the dozens of volumes of the Annual Register or its lengthy companions, but instead has Wegg read from Frederick Somner Merryweather's Lives and Anecdotes of Misers (1850), the "little book"

which Boffin carries over in his breast-pocket (475). Thus, Boffin goes to extraordinary lengths to impress the avaricious Wegg with the number of his purchases and the extent of his expenditures.

As Dickens emphasizes, the mere acquisition of Boffin's books requires a great deal of time and trouble, not to mention money. Of necessity, Boffin expands his narrow initial search for books about misers to "any Lives of odd characters who may have been Misers" (461). Boffin's willingness to purchase "[a]ny book that seemed to promise a chance of miserly biography" (461) suggests a parallel with gambling and financial speculation, in which some misers are said to have engaged. Further, Dickens associates Boffin's speculative collecting with the hysteria and enthusiasm that characterized the mania for buying stocks following the establishment and extension of limited liability in the fifties and sixties.<sup>58</sup> As with "Shares," whose addictive influence Dickens likens to that of "henbane or opium" (118), Boffin's eccentric biographies incite rampant acquisition with no guarantee of a reward, much like the palimpsests of Humphreys' Dubois:

The moment [Bella] pointed out any book as being entitled Lives of Eccentric personages, Anecdotes of strange characters, Records of remarkable individuals, or anything to that purpose, Mr. Boffin's countenance would light up, and he would instantly dart in and buy it. Size, price, quality, were of no account. Any book that seemed to promise a chance of miserly biography, Mr. Boffin purchased without a moment's delay and carried home. (461)

Despite their joint efforts, it still takes Boffin and Bella weeks to turn up such accounts: "Morning after morning they roamed the town together, pursuing this singular research" (463). Their routine is seen as a singularly inefficient, if not unproductive, undertaking: "Miserly literature not being abundant, the proportion of failures to successes may have been as a hundred to one; still Mr. Boffin, never wearied, remained as avaricious for misers as he had been at the first onset" (463). The redundant nature of Boffin's searches and acquisitions is reinforced by his habit of repeating instructions to Bella and rereading the misers' lives he finds. Boffin's eccentric but nonetheless predictable collecting thus becomes a symptom of "an increasingly mechanized culture that implicated individuals in the mass production of goods and repetitive patterns of consumption" (Vrettos 402).

Rather than celebrating Boffin's perseverance in collecting, Dickens describes how his costly pursuit makes him, in reality, more like one of his misers. As Dickens writes of Boffin, "He seemed to save up his Misers as they had saved up their money. As they had been greedy for it, and secret about it, and had hidden it, so he was greedy for them, and secret about them, and hid them" (463). By suggesting that the book collector and the miser devote themselves to accumulation for its own sake, Dickens echoes contemporary critics who also noted similarities between these two cultural types. For example, an 1862 review in Sharpe's London Magazine lamented the fate of rare books which were consigned to oblivion by their owners, who resembled misers in their propensity for useless stockpiling: "Too often, when a jealous collector has bought a unique or unknown volume for its weight in gold, he

shuts it up under lock and key, never reads it, never shews it, and death only can separate it from him" (25). In his Memoirs of Remarkable Misers (1863), which would have found a welcome place among Boffin's books, Cyrus Redding connects the miser and the collector even more directly when he writes, "There is a species of miser in society that will accumulate particular things whether of use or not, merely to have the pleasure of possessing them; but then such individuals do no social mischief, however idle the indulgence of their fancies may be" (1: 342). Redding classifies the collector as a particular kind of miser, though his collector displays a tendency to convert money into possessions rather than to hoard it as wealth. Moreover, the collector is usually said to have a rational purpose which the miser lacks, though collecting often begins as mere accumulation or hoarding (Pearce, On Collecting 21).

Dickens associates Boffin's bibliomania with not only miserliness but also madness when he writes, "[A]s he pursued the acquisition of those dismal records with the ardour of Don Quixote for his books of chivalry, he began to spend with a more sparing hand" (463). As Boffin's literary forebear, Quixote famously gives himself up to reading books of knight errantry, acquired at the great personal cost of both property and reason. Like Cervantes's middle-aged collector, who follows "in every way the practice of the knights he had read of" (33), Boffin begins to imitate his misers, whom Dickens describes as "wretched lunatics" (463). Thus, Dickens suggests that Boffin's book-madness is both a form of insanity and a contributing factor in his apparent avarice.

Boffin's acquisitiveness also attracts others who would encourage his new

pastime, thus threatening to expand his sphere of malign influence. As John Hill Burton observes in The Book-Hunter (1863), "Your affluent omnivorous collector . . . naturally brings about him a train of satellites, who make it their business to minister to his importunate cravings" (30). Though Burton specifically addresses the dealer as a speculative agent, his statement can be extended to other figures who associate themselves with Boffin's bibliomania. Like Bella, Wegg and Mr. Venus also participate in Boffin's collecting enterprise and are affected by it. Under Boffin's anxious direction, the two manage to carry a cab load of his books on misers into the bachelor's paradise of the Bower. Together, Wegg and Venus also enjoy an intimacy with Boffin and his new books that is denied to Bella and Mrs. Boffin. Showing an interest in old Harmon's possible hiding places for money and papers, Boffin selects a number of passages from his books which describe misers' "secret hoards" (476). He thus encourages his companions' avarice by inviting their speculations about what may lie hidden at the Bower.

Whereas the moral Venus shows an interest in Boffin's misers without becoming like one of them, Wegg demonstrates that great wealth is not a prerequisite for avarice. Indeed, the "thankless" Wegg attempts to blackmail his employer with what he believes to be the final version of the Harmon will, only to discover that Boffin has been "leading him on" with his miser's masquerade (755). Acting as the younger Harmon's agent, Boffin uses his books of misers to torment Wegg with false hopes of striking it rich, "in order that [his] disappointment might be the heaviest possible" (768). Thus, collecting comes to serve, however indirectly, as a means of

punishment. The chastened Wegg responds by blaming Boffin for his own avarice: "[I]t's not easy to say how far the tone of my mind may have been lowered by unwholesome reading on the subject of Misers, when you was leading me and others on to think you one yourself, sir" (769). However, Wegg's conspiracy against Boffin predates his employer's pretenses, and he fails to recognize that Boffin's miserly tales present their protagonists "as negative exemplars, people who experience great unhappiness as a result of their greed" (Friedman 51). As Henry Wilson writes in the preface to his Wonderful Characters (1821), one of Boffin's books of misers, "It will not unfrequently fall to our lot to direct the attention of our readers to characters remarkable for their avarice and other vices, but their failings will not be held forth as worthy of imitation" ([iii]). Wegg himself is made into an object lesson through his misreading of Wilson and others and his unsuccessful emulation of real-life misers.

Meanwhile, Boffin's bibliomania, if not his feigned avarice, seems bound to persist. After owning up to his charade as a miser, Boffin still shows signs of his "depraved appetite for miserly characters" (641) when he corrects Bella's mistaken reference to one miser in passing: "[B]y-the-by, my dear, he wasn't Blackberry Jones, but Blewberry" (755). Though at least a remnant of his former obsession survives, Boffin deprives himself of the means necessary to continue expanding his library of misers when he relinquishes his fortune to its rightful heir, the younger John Harmon. Even if Boffin thus escapes the worst effects of bibliomania as described by Dibdin and others, Dickens suggests the potential of this pursuit, especially among the newly

wealthy, to become a lasting obsession and to deprive its victims of their fortunes, their friends and family, and even their sanity.

### **The Heir of Limmeridge**

Five years before Our Mutual Friend, Dickens's portrayal of collecting as both a symptom and a supposed cause of what Merryweather calls the "disease" of avarice (159) was anticipated by his friend and colleague Wilkie Collins's depiction of collecting and psychosomatic illness among the idle rich. In The Woman in White (1859-60), the middle-aged bachelor-invalid Frederick Fairlie's collection of coins, prints, paintings, and objets d'art provides one of his two hobby-horses, the other being the hypersensitivity to movement, sound, and light that leads to his withdrawal from family and society. As his solicitor remarks, Fairlie's decades-old obsessions constitute an unaltered routine: "His talk was to the same purpose as usual—all about himself and himself and his ailments, his wonderful coins, and his matchless Rembrandt etchings" (114). In the course of Collins's narrative, Fairlie's collecting, which is intertwined with his hypochondria, emerges as his real affliction, turning him into a selfish and sedentary recluse who "will do anything to pamper his own indolence, and to secure his own quiet" (275). Like other fanatic collectors, the antisocial Fairlie "turn[s] away from people as a potential source of affection and support and seek[s] gratification instead through possessing things," on which he "bestow[s] love and devotion" (Goldberg and Lewis 115).

Despite his detachment from others and his professed indifference to rank and title, Fairlie shows the utmost concern for his perceived position in society. In fact, his collecting, like his imaginary ailments, may have begun as a compensatory strategy and means of distinction for him as a younger son who long stood second-in-line as heir to the family estate and fortune. As a member of a landed and leisured gentry that was constantly being infiltrated by nouveaux riches (Macleod 25), the master of Limmeridge House turns to art collecting, which had its origins in aristocratic practice, to clarify his place in the social order. Rather than allowing Fairlie to consolidate his social status, however, his adoption of elitist modes of collecting cultivates habits of luxury and self-indulgence that alienate him from the gentry as well as his family. By condemning Fairlie's excesses, many of which are associated with a profligate aristocracy, Collins endorses bourgeois social mores and demonstrates the personal consequences of imitating the wrong social models.

Like later Aesthetic patrons, whose collections provided "places of retreat and reverie" (Macleod 273), Fairlie constructs an artful sanctuary and idealized refuge for himself with his objets d'art, which offer him solace and silence. Fairlie's lavish living quarters in his Cumberland mansion display the qualities of what Clive Wainwright calls the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Romantic Interior, an elite mode of interior decoration that employed an eclectic mix of classical, medieval, or Renaissance art and antiquities (1-25). In the tradition of such interiors, the overall character of Fairlie's room is still modern for its time, from the carpet and curtains to

many of its furnishings. Walter Hartright, Limmeridge's drawing-master and art conservator, describes this spacious chamber as Fairlie's luxurious private museum:

I found myself in a large, lofty room, with a magnificent carved ceiling, and with a carpet over the floor, so thick and soft that it felt like piles of velvet under my feet. One side of the room was occupied by a long bookcase of some rare inlaid wood that was quite new to me. It was not more than six feet high, and the top was adorned with statuettes in marble, ranged at regular distances one from the other. On the opposite side stood two antique cabinets; and between them, and above them, hung a picture of the Virgin and Child, protected by glass, and bearing Raphael's name on the gilt tablet at the bottom of the frame. On my right hand and on my left, as I stood inside the door, were chiffoniers and little stands in buhl and marquetterie, loaded with figures in Dresden china, with rare vases, ivory ornaments, and toys and curiosities that sparkled at all points with gold, silver, and precious stones. (31-2)

This individual arrangement of priceless materials and objects and their equally precious means of display exhibits Fairlie's aesthetic sensitivity as well as his privileged status as a rich connoisseur.

Fairlie's personal and social distinction is further represented by the cabinet of coins he is inspecting upon Hartright's arrival:

Placed amid the other rare and beautiful objects on a large round table

near him, was a dwarf cabinet in ebony and silver, containing coins of all shapes and sizes, set out in little drawers lined with dark purple velvet. One of these drawers lay on the small table attached to his chair; and near it were some tiny jewellers' brushes, a washleather 'stump,' and a little bottle of liquid, all waiting to be used in various ways for the removal of any accidental impurities which might be discovered on the coins. (32-3)

As someone who can afford to have money that is not being used as capital, Fairlie is typical of the coin collector of his day, as described by J. Ashcroft Noble in the 1860s: "The [coin] collector is generally a man of learned leisure. As a rule, he is past middle age, and has settled down after the toil of life in some quiet country mansion, or old-fashioned town house in a street with no thoroughfare, to enjoy the well-earned otium cum dignitate" (486). Though Fairlie shares the resources and retirement of Noble's affluent and educated numismatist, he shows no real interest in his coins as archaeological objects or art, particularly portraiture. Unlike the antiquarians of the past, who valued their coins as illustrations of classical or national history (Lightbown, "Some Notes" 194), Fairlie focuses mostly on the condition and rarity of his coins. Besides cleaning his coins to improve their appearance, Fairlie seeks out uncommon examples, though his Assyrian "[c]opper coin of the period of Tiglath Pileser" (179) is either misidentified or a fake, since early Near Eastern societies did not use coins (Burnett 9). For Fairlie, then, his coins are, like the rest of his objets

d'art, a sign not so much of his learning as of his wealth and leisure and a demonstration of his refined tastes.

Fairlie's ownership, if not connoisseurship, of Old Masters also shows him to be fairly typical of his gentry class in terms of his possessions. However, his ownership of a few singular works places him in the upper echelon of collectors of such art during the mid-nineteenth century. Fairlie's Madonna and Child by Raphael, the physical centerpiece of his collection, is also his most precious possession; as Anna Jameson observed in the 1840s, "To possess one Raphael, is to go crowned and crested among collectors" (83). According to art historian John Steegman, Raphael reigned supreme in the 1850s and for many years after as "the ultimate authority by which excellence was judged" among English connoisseurs (Herrmann 316). The presence on Fairlie's walls of one of Raphael's iconic Madonnas, then, signifies Fairlie's membership in a collecting elite.

Fairlie's pursuit of such works is not limited to Raphael or paintings. He shares with his Italian brother-in-law Count Fosco a passion for Rembrandt, whose etchings had been popular in Britain since the 1750s. In fact, Rembrandt's prints became preeminent among English collectors towards the end of the eighteenth century. Later, their appeal spread from Victorian connoisseurs to the general public and even led to the revival of etching as a fine art in the 1850s (Griffiths 164, 196; G. White 151). In 1844, J. Maberly wrote, "At the present, the works of Rembrandt stand the prime favourite of collectors. There has never, indeed, been a time when this artist was not highly prized; he has endured while others have passed away" (54).

Throughout the nineteenth century, Rembrandt enthusiasts sought rarities, variations, and fine impressions, and they paid increasingly high amounts for them, though many common prints were available to the middle class at the moderate price of a few pounds (Maberly 139). However, the most esteemed albums of these etchings were assembled by aristocratic collectors, from the Lord Viscount Fitzwilliam of Richmond—like Fairlie, a man of "extremely retired habits" (Dibdin 509)—to Lord Aylesford, whose collection was considered to be the world's finest in terms of condition and completeness (Griffiths 300).

Though Fairlie to some extent follows popular tastes with his Rembrandt etchings, he achieves international stature by acquiring a great rarity that eludes even his aristocratic rivals in collecting. Fairlie's extensive collection of Rembrandts is distinguished by a "[u]nique" print, "[k]nown all over Europe, as The Smudge, from a printer's blot in the corner which exists in no other copy" (179). In designating this etching by a slight imperfection, Collins follows Thomas Dibdin's satirical description of what he calls the "burr" in some Rembrandt prints. "It is only a sombre tinge," writes Dibdin, "attached to the copper, before the plate is sufficiently polished by being worked; and it gives a smeared effect, like smut upon a lady's face, to the impression" (507). Despite the diminished aesthetic appeal of such printer's flaws, their rarity made the impressions on which they occurred more valuable. Consequently, Fairlie's singular etching is valued at three hundred guineas, which would have been fairly representative of similar rarities among Rembrandt etchings at the time. In fact, the British Museum's "exceeding fine impression" of Rembrandt's

portrait of "Advocate Toiling," esteemed for both its rarity and its beauty, was valued at over three hundred pounds in the 1840s (Maberly 71-2).

Fairlie's portfolio of Rembrandt prints is juxtaposed both physically and ideologically with the one it sits next to on his shelf. The presence in Limmeridge of English watercolors, an increasingly popular art form that was purchased by a financially and socially ascendant middle class eager to display and invest its surplus wealth (Macleod 230-232), might be taken as a sign of Fairlie's transcendence of class-based collecting practices. More likely, though, these affordable and fashionable works reflect the infiltration of the gentry by nouveaux riches and their tastes. Indeed, Fairlie's friendship with a "mighty" London merchant who is "up to his eyes in gold" (7) suggests a possible and potent source of upper middle-class influence upon Fairlie's collecting habits. Despite Fairlie's apparent emulation of this businessman's possessions, he repudiates the market through which he has obtained the drawings. As he says to Hartright, "They have come from a sale in a shocking state—I thought they smelt of horrid dealers' and brokers' fingers when I looked at them last. Can you undertake them?" (35). Fairlie's disgust over the hands through which his works of art have passed aligns him with the eighteenth-century construction of a pure and ideal art produced independently of the marketplace (Macleod 244). It also emphasizes the increasing importance in the nineteenth century of the dealer as a middleman between artists and collectors, as an open market in watercolors for the rising professional and industrial classes replaced earlier direct patronage by the nobility and landed gentry (Clarke 123-5, 134, 143). In this light,

Fairlie's desire to have Walter restore his neglected watercolors seems motivated primarily by his desire to remove from them the taint of commerce, which Hartright mockingly refers to as the undetectable "odour of plebeian fingers" (35). Even as Fairlie follows upper middle-class collecting trends, he maintains a careful distance from the source of the new prosperity, trade. Defining himself in terms of his status and inutility, Fairlie proudly proclaims that he is "not a man of business" (96). Far from revealing their new owner's progressive tastes, Fairlie's watercolors reinscribe his acute class consciousness, as he turns them over to his hired hand for repair.

Hartright is just one of several men whom Fairlie acquires to service his collections and enhance his social standing. In his typically superior fashion, Fairlie considers his assemblage of paid subordinates to be in his possession as well as his employ.<sup>59</sup> By greeting Hartright with the phrase "So glad to possess you at Limmeridge" (33) and repeating it later, Fairlie asserts his proprietary claim to the drawing-master as both an employee and an adjunct to his collections. Despite Fairlie's liberal promises to treat Hartright on equal terms, he almost immediately asks him to perform menial physical tasks related to his objects: "Do you mind putting this tray of coins back in the cabinet, and giving me the next one to it? In the wretched state of my nerves, exertion of any kind is unspeakably disagreeable to me" (34). Fairlie handles his domestic servants with even more condescension, correcting and scolding his Swiss valet Louis for not reading his mind when he tells him to retrieve other collection pieces. Worse yet, Fairlie objectifies Louis when the valet is holding a heavy volume of etchings for his inspection. When Gilmore asks Fairlie to dismiss

"that man," Fairlie insists on calling Louis "a portfolio stand," reducing him to a mere instrument like the magnifying glass Fairlie uses to examine his etchings (140-41). Fairlie's niece Marian predicts a similar fate for the professionals hired to help him catalogue his collection: "With this new interest to occupy him, Mr. Fairlie will be a happy man for months and months to come; and the two unfortunate photographers will share the social martyrdom which he has hitherto inflicted on his valet alone" (179).

Fairlie's creation of a photo album "of all the treasures and curiosities in his possession" (179) for presentation to the Mechanics' Institution of Carlisle<sup>60</sup> lends his collecting a higher purpose, though his gesture also serves as an act of self-legitimation, as Fairlie makes a strategic claim for his identity as a cultural benefactor. Fairlie's visual documentation of his collection exploits new technologies of reproduction to extend his objects to a wider audience, which he hopes to instruct and edify:

"I had the photographs of my pictures, and prints, and coins, and so forth, all about me, which I intend, one of these days, to present (the photographs, I mean, if the clumsy English language will let me mean anything)—to present to the Institution at Carlisle (horrid place!), with a view to improving the tastes of the Members (Goths and Vandals to a man)." (310)

The misanthropic Fairlie's deprecation of "the barbarous people in [his] neighborhood" (310) includes not only the working classes, who were typically the

target audience for such improving measures as his album (see Chapter 3), but also his social peers, especially benefactors of the local mechanics' institute. Seeking to distinguish himself from the haves as well as the have-nots, Fairlie rhetorically sets himself apart from his gentry neighbors, whom he calls "sad Goths in Art" (33). Moreover, by making culture only partially available to his perceived subordinates through representations of his objects rather than through the objects themselves, Fairlie retains his social authority as an owner and a member of a dominant status group (Macleod 52). Fairlie's union of photography and philanthropy also creates for posterity a record of his collecting, potentially making for a peculiarly modern form of immortality.

In addition, Fairlie tries to give his objects a life beyond his own by conserving the originals for future generations. His decision to have his watercolors and etchings mounted in portfolios rather than placed in frames allows them to be not only more efficiently stored but also more effectively preserved. Besides saving wall space, Fairlie's albums give him more convenient access to and physical control of his pictures. Moreover, this early means of storage and display is superior to framing as a means of conservation; as art historian Michael Clarke notes, "[D]rawings which have been kept in portfolios are generally in better condition than those hung in frames, due to their not having been exposed to the damaging effects of light" (125). Fairlie shows a similar, albeit comical, concern for the welfare of his possessions when he worries that Count Fosco, "an alarmingly-large person," will "shake the floor, and knock down my art-treasures" (319).

Fairlie's obsession with preserving and protecting his collections and himself contrasts conspicuously with his utter neglect of his estate and family. His solicitor, Mr. Gilmore, laments the disrepair into which Limmeridge has fallen under Fairlie's custodianship: "The house was not what it used to be in the time of Mr. and Mrs. Philip Fairlie. I . . . looked about at some of the places which I first saw when I was staying at Limmeridge . . . more than thirty years since. They were not what they used to be, either" (114). Gilmore attributes Fairlie's indifference as the guardian of Limmeridge to his marital and property status: "[H]e was a single man, and . . . he had nothing more than a life-interest in the Limmeridge property" (114). Because he has neither any children nor an estate as a permanent and personal legacy, Fairlie troubles himself as little as possible with family affairs, including Laura's marriage, typically leaving his duties and decisions for others. Eager to be rid of the "dreadful responsibility" of both his nieces (316), who plan to live together after Laura's wedding, Fairlie sanctions the marriage at all costs, "in the interests of peace and quietness" (143). He refuses to listen to Gilmore's concerns about the debt-ridden Glyde's "mercenary motives" for marrying Laura and instead turns to his "sweet etchings" (142) to regain his composure, inviting Gilmore to do the same. Fairlie's failure to act as the head of the family and his retreat into his collections expose the sisters to Fosco and Glyde's scheme of identity theft and incarceration (Lulves); as Marian explains, "We two women had neither father, nor brother, to come to the house, and take our parts" (279). Without her uncle's intervention, Marian develops typhus after eavesdropping on the two co-conspirators from a verandah roof in the

rain, leading to her secret confinement at Blackwater Park and Laura's disappearance and supposed death. Ultimately, Laura herself is cheated out of her fortune of twenty thousand pounds and placed in an asylum under the alias of her other half-sister and look-alike, Anne Catherick. By doing nothing, Fairlie condemns his brother's daughters to suffer as "solitary prisoner[s]" like himself (96).

Fairlie's refusal to acknowledge his nieces' claims upon him reveals his inability or unwillingness to deal with women in particular. He reserves his affection and praise for his art, including his Raphael and its cherubs, whom Fairlie sees as ideal children: "Quite a model family!" said Mr. Fairlie, leering at the cherubs. "Such nice round faces, and such nice soft wings, and—nothing else. No dirty little legs to run about on, and no noisy little lungs to scream with. How immeasurably superior to the existing construction!" (37). Fairlie's reference to Raphael's "family" of angels overlooks the actual family of the painting's Madonna and Child, revealing Fairlie's aversion to children and family alike. His preference for "our delightful Raffaello's conception" of children over the "horrid" village brats he imagines in his garden likewise confirms his identity as a lifelong bachelor (36-7). Viewing the painting's sacred subject in a secular way, Fairlie reads into it a nightmarish though personally reassuring fantasy about clean and heavenly children without legs or voices. As an idealized depiction of motherhood, the painting also renders femininity less threatening to Fairlie by distancing it from sexuality in the person of the Virgin. Moreover, Fairlie's idolization of the Madonna as art helps him to dissociate it from

the feminine "to create a kind of domesticity from which women are excluded" (Watson 75).

In her study of the bibelot as a literary object in later nineteenth-century French fiction, Janell Watson explains that such encoding of domestic collections as "artistic" masculinizes them, providing the bachelor-collector with what she calls "macho domesticity," which is an alternative to "the domestic interior comfort associated with the bourgeois or the woman, beings with which he tends to be fundamentally incompatible" (75-6). Along similar lines, Fairlie's "presentation copies of [his] art-treasures" (Collins 318) for the neighborhood mechanics' institute illustrate an interior "masculinized through an erudite aesthetics, thus culturally legitimized for a . . . male artistic elite" (Watson 76), or at least one in the making. When he speaks of "coquetting" with his coins (318) and admires the "heavenly pearliness" in the lines of his "sweet etchings" (142-3), Fairlie's gendering of his curiosities as feminine defines his collecting in terms of womanizing in yet another effort to reinforce his masculinity in the absence of women (Watson 76-7).

However, Hartright's first impression of Fairlie shows him to be unmanly, even in the midst of his objects:

His feet were effeminately small, and were clad in buff-coloured silk-stockings, and little womanish bronze-leather slippers. Two rings adorned his white delicate hands, the value of which even my inexperienced observation detected to be all but priceless. Upon the whole, he had a frail, languidly-fretful, over-refined look—something

singularly and unpleasantly delicate in association with a man, and, at the same time, something which could by no possibility have looked natural and appropriate if it had been transferred to the personal appearance of a woman. (32)

Hartright's assessment of Fairlie is reinforced by others' appraisals of him, including Marian's description of him as "weak," "pamper[ed]," and "indolent" (275) and Sir Percival's remarks on "his effeminate tastes and amusements" (200). Through these statements, Collins relates Fairlie's collecting directly to his degeneration into an effete aesthete and languid connoisseur. He resembles his "nervous and sensitive" niece Laura rather than his brother Philip, a veritable ladies' man (30). Submissive, easily fatigued, overdelicate, and vain, Fairlie displays traits that Collins stereotypically identifies with women. Whereas Marian's masculine characteristics (if not her features) win the respect of even her adversaries, Fairlie's transgression of gender norms handicaps him in his role as guardian, a role which he resists—passively, of course.

The ironic construction of the misogynistic Fairlie as a kind of counterfeit woman ultimately suggests his unsuitability as Limmeridge's male heir. Only with his paralyzing stroke and final demise does Fairlie fulfill his purpose, not as a collector, but as the family patriarch. In death, Fairlie provides the newly married Laura and Hartright with his income and serves as the means by which the son of a drawing-master and an heiress without a fortune will someday become "one of the landed gentry of England" (584). Thus, Collins reworks the gentry in the image of the

middle classes rather than that of the aristocracy, which Fairlie had aspired to do through his collections.

Besides putting an end to his social pretenses, Fairlie's death signals the failure of his collecting to preserve his name, which Hartright incidentally does by documenting events in order to recover Laura's own identity and place in society. Through the deceased Fairlie and others, Collins repeatedly associates collecting with decay and death, including Hartright's near-fatal experiences as draftsman for a "private expedition to make excavations among the ruined cities of Central America" (160); generations of "hideous family portraits" within the dingy Elizabethan galleries of Glyde's Blackwater Park (182); Fosco's homemade mummies (199); and the "famous carvings," "broken, and wormeaten, and crumbling to dust," from Old Welmingham church (460). Only in Laura's "little treasures from Limmeridge" (191), those "relics that reminded her of Hartright" (159), is one of the novel's collections redeemed by the domestic connections and personal memories it maintains.

The narrative's distrust of elitist collecting is consistent with its overall antipathy towards "rank and title" (18), beginning with Anne Catherick's mysterious fear of a baronet and compounded by the deceptions of the morally and financially bankrupt Glyde and Fosco. Fairlie's self-imposed isolation resembles the "suspiciously-unsocial secluded life of Sir Percival's parents" (457), whose withdrawn habits hide the secret of their son's illegitimate birth. Fairlie's vanity as a would-be benefactor is mirrored by Fosco's enormous self-satisfaction in teaching the "barbarous English people" something about opera (530) and his homage to himself

in offering his avian menagerie to the London Zoo (555). Moreover, Fairlie's mention of having spent much of his early life abroad suggests that he may have developed many of his tastes and habits from aristocratic Continental models like Fosco during the early nineteenth century. By showing the unhealthy and even fatal consequences of Fairlie's solitary and sedentary breed of collecting, Collins rejects its social and national sources, as he looks to revitalize England's gentry through middle-class and domestic influences.

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Mid-Victorian representations of newly wealthy collectors who emulate aristocratic traditions of collecting reveal concerns about the origin and effects of their profligate practices. Despite ostensibly altruistic or philanthropic motives, Dubois and Boffin's bibliomania and Fairlie's art collecting promote antisocial or misanthropic tendencies, as manifested by the deterioration of the collectors' professional and personal relations, including the neglect or loss of family and friends. In particular, the collectors' vulnerable young female relatives are exposed to the unhealthy influence or negative consequences of obsessive collecting; to varying degrees, Dubois' daughter Marcelline, Boffin's ward Bella, and Fairlie's nieces Marian and Laura are placed in jeopardy by negligent paternal figures whose collecting takes precedence over their parenting. At its worst, the mania of sixties' collecting becomes symptomatic of personal degeneration, which anticipates by thirty years the physician

Max Nordau's fin-de-siècle diagnosis of the "present rage for collecting" as part of a more pervasive social "degeneration" (27), a mental and moral decay mainly associated with "the rich inhabitants of great cities and the leading classes" (2), including the decadent collector-protagonist of Oscar Wilde's Picture of Dorian Gray (1891).

According to Bookworm writer Walter Hamilton at the end of the century, single women of wealth and leisure were especially susceptible to the collecting mania connected to Nordau's degeneration: "[U]nmarried ladies, having private means, easily fall victims to it, and with them the disease generally assumes its most virulent character, and is practically incurable" (44). The most prominent example of such a woman is Queen Victoria herself, who began her "most urgent" collecting for "therapeutic reasons" after Prince Albert's death in 1861 (Black 44). The next chapter considers how Victoria, through her collections of foreign jewels at mid-century, provoked her beloved and otherwise faithful poet laureate to question the value of those acquisitions for herself and the nation.

## Chapter Four

### The Stones in the Sword: Tennyson's Crown Jewels

Of all the illicit affairs in The Idylls of the King, none is more unusual than "bold" Sir Bedivere's relationship with Excalibur (PA 207).<sup>61</sup> Commanded to cast the kingdom's founding sword into the lake where it surfaced, the Round Table's first knight finds himself dazzled by the brand's moonlit handle, which "twinkle[s] with diamond sparks, / Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work / Of subtlest jewellery" (PA 224-26).<sup>62</sup> Thinking of how the gems might please "the eyes of many men" by being preserved for posterity "in some treasure-house of mighty kings" (PA 259, 269), an enthralled Bedivere tries to salvage the sword through disobedience and deceit. Only when Arthur threatens to slay the faithless knight does Bedivere return Excalibur to its source. The precious stones in the sword, as objects of desire, thus become an obstacle almost as difficult to overcome as the very vows that make and break Camelot.

The conversion of Excalibur from sword into stones is hardly an anomaly in the Idylls. Tennyson's poem is itself a collection like Arthur's sword, encrusted with a dragon's hoard of jewels. These gems are more than colorful baubles, as they come out of nature to become part of the king's commerce with his wife and knights. As I will explain, the qualities of rarity and reflection that recommend Excalibur's pommel and haft to Bedivere help to distinguish gems as uncommonly precious possessions in

the Idylls. In fact, these ornaments for person and property become, after the Grail itself, the most sought-after of all objects in Tennyson's Camelot.

Arthur's kingdom, however, is founded on disciplining the body, not on adorning it. The body is, after all, a distraction from "high thought, and amiable words / And courtliness, and the desire of fame, / And love of truth, and all that makes a man" (G 478-80). Even in Camelot, these masculine ideals typically come into conflict with more worldly matters and material interests, including sexual desire. If women are to be worshipped by chaste love and won "by years of noble deeds" (G 473), then the quest for precious stones would seem to be superfluous, if not actually antagonistic, to Arthur's project of keeping the kingdom together. Yet Tennyson's gems, which articulate the body, become a locus of value recognized and even accumulated by the very king who tries to keep bodies under wraps. Although Arthur expects his bachelor knights to lead celibate lives, he also encourages them to decorate their maiden loves with hard-won gems, making these women's fair charms even more difficult to resist. Because it does not profit Arthur to tempt his Table in some dearly-bought war of "Sense . . . with Soul" ("To the Queen" 37), the very visible presence of Camelot's stones seems problematic, to say the least.

The virtual absence of gems from the rest of Tennyson's work makes their ubiquity here all the more conspicuous.<sup>63</sup> Yet this is not to say that these jewels are misplaced; indeed, they amass significance by being gathered in this textual treasury. In particular, four prominent collections of Camelot's precious stones—Arthur's gemmed sword, Elaine's pearl sleeve, Lancelot's nine diamonds, and Nestling's ruby

carcanet—all emerge as storied objects of desire in the Idylls. Although Tennyson borrows the first two of these collections from the Morte d'Arthur, his jewels nonetheless provide a model of consumption that Malory only begins to suggest.

Appointed to specific uses, Tennyson's gems obtain symbolic value through their connection to particular owners. As Arjun Appadurai states, however, "[E]ven though from a theoretical point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context" (5). To write the social history of Camelot's jewels, then, I will trace how its gems shift in meaning and value as they move from one frame of reference to another. When these collections change hands, they acquire an unexpected agency by being improperly displayed, given, or obtained; used in a manner contrary to custom, conduct, or character, they bring disappointment and even death to those who would make them their own. If, as Walter Benjamin suggests, "the most distinguished trait of a collection will always be its transmissibility" (66), then Camelot's jewels are defined by the very failure of the transactions in which they figure.

Because Victoria, as queen and collector, had taken possession of many foreign jewels at the height of her reign, Tennyson's gems offer an implicit warning to the monarch about her own acquisitions. In particular, the great diamond of Lancelot and Elaine speaks directly to Victoria by virtue of its close resemblance to one of her recently acquired Indian jewels. In 1849, English officials in the Punjab seized the famed Lahore Treasury's most prized gem, the 186-carat Koh-i-noor diamond, for the

Queen, in accordance with the treaty imposed on the teenage Maharajah Dhulip Singh and his regents by the British (Howarth 126-7). This new crown jewel was presented to Victoria in 1850 by the governing East India Company, and it was later featured at the Great Exhibition of 1851 as the epitome of empire's rewards. Despite the conquest symbolized by this celebrated diamond, the Indian Mutiny of 1857 soon made Britain's hold on the stone's native land a tenuous one. When Tennyson decided to make a large diamond the centerpiece of Elaine only a year later, just after British troops had restored order to India, the idea of a queen who needed to control her possessions was a matter of sovereign interest.<sup>64</sup>

Ultimately, then, Camelot's gems, collected incessantly, afford the so-called poet of empire a rare chance to question the validity and permanence of England's own acquisitions. By portraying gems as fickle forms that often abandon their owners, especially women, Tennyson implicates Queen Victoria's own crown jewels as failed representations of imperial dominion. If England could hardly hold what it had, the suggestion was, it could not afford to obtain even more costly possessions. This reading of the Idylls expands our sense of the imperialist anxieties that Tennyson's epic exhibits throughout, revealing greater apprehensions than those expressed in the dedication "To the Queen."<sup>65</sup> Moreover, my focus on precious stones in the Idylls shows that Tennyson's poetic reflections on material culture were not confined either to "brands" (in the sense of swords and commercial names alike) or to issues of his relationship with the Victorian literary marketplace. As vehicles of dissent, Camelot's gems offer Tennyson, in his self-conscious role as poet laureate, a

way of voicing concerns about the state without the conspicuous appearance of contradicting his Queen.<sup>66</sup> By subtle yet effective means, then, Tennyson attempts in the Idylls to make Victoria, as consumer and queen, more aware of the costs of her own possessions in the imperial marketplace.

## I.

Even as Camelot's gems look forward to Victoria's reign, Tennyson looks back on collecting precious stones during the Middle Ages for his own instruction and inspiration. Inherently attractive and relatively rare, gems were valued, then as now, for their durable looks and scarcity alike. However, of nearly a dozen different kinds of jewels mentioned by Tennyson, only pearls, mostly of a misshapen or dully opaque and worthless variety, are indigenous to Britain (Kunz and Stevenson 166-7). Since gemstones had to be brought at considerable cost to England, usually from the East via Italian ports, they became the special prerogative of those of high social and economic standing (Lightbown, Mediaeval 26). Thus, the wealthy and powerful, from royals and nobles to great ecclesiastics and rich merchants, all accumulated stores of precious and semi-precious stones. Although these exotic gems were sometimes kept as a financial reserve, their main purpose was wear and display, especially on ceremonial occasions (Pomian 18-19; Lightbown, Mediaeval 63-4).

Hard to come by and highly esteemed, jewels also represented many different aspects of what Krzysztof Pomian refers to as "the other side of the boundary

separating the sacred from the secular," or "the invisible" (22). Spatially and temporally distant, the invisible is a timeless, autonomous, and otherworldly, fantastic, or ideal realm articulated through a culture's narratives. This world and its meaning are made materially accessible through "semiophores," or collection pieces, endowed with special significance, which have been removed from everyday use and are kept out of the economic circuit (Pomian 29-34). As Pomian explains, gemstones, as semiophores, are as multifaceted in their meaning as they are in their appearance. For one, they encapsulate the natural world in all its power and beauty. In Western medieval societies, gems were also variously identified with mythical figures and events, exotic origins, and alimentary powers. Moreover, jewels served to legitimate a specifically male authority. According to Pomian, precious stones, like precious metals,

were noble and extraordinary substances used to produce or decorate images, reliquaries and more generally everything the king used, including his dishes, clothes, furniture, weapons, armour and regalia, in short, everything which represented either the realm as an undivided whole or else the power and wealth of its sovereign. Put another way, the contents of treasure-houses belonging to kings and princes represented the invisible firstly because of the materials from which they were made, secondly because of the forms they were given, such as the crown, as these were the legacy of an entire tradition, and lastly because they had been acquired from a particular individual and thus

constituted a reminder of past events, or else were either very old or came from exotic places. (Pomian 23)

Despite its apparently comprehensive character, Pomian's reading of jewels as the exclusive province of princes and kings overlooks their intimate association with womanhood in its real and idealized forms, as we see in the Idylls. Like the gems on Excalibur's hilt, which come from the Lady of the Lake, virtually all of Camelot's precious stones pass through some woman's hands. Men may handle jewels that are on loan or in transit, but women are the ones who make a lasting impression on Camelot's stones through their traffic in them.

This commerce in gems expresses what Susan Pearce describes as a characteristically feminine collecting interest in the female body "and its enhancement and adornment through ornaments" (On Collecting 203). As one of Tennyson's contemporaries observed, women's looks were universally highlighted with precious stones:

[W]omen . . . wreathe [gems] in their tresses, clasp them round their throats, their arms, their waists, decorate their bosoms, ears, fingers, ankles, and even in some lands, their very toes and nostrils with them; using these sparkling trinkets to attract attention to the charms they deem most worthy of admiration. (Barrera 3)

Even the fairest maiden could profit from such embellishment, as Enid's mother suggests in The Marriage of Geraint. Although Enid might suffer from her father's loss of fortune, she can still outshine any "great court-lady" by being "set forth at her

best" (MG 723, 728). It may be that Enid's unadorned beauty first enchants Geraint, but her gowns and gems are what promise to win her lasting acceptance at King Arthur's court.

Throughout the Idylls, then, gemstones become identified with the women who own and wear them. In Merlin and Vivien, the earliest of Tennyson's idylls, "the fair pearl-necklace of the Queen" (449) becomes a supremely treasured possession through its association with Guinevere. When the queen's necklace accidentally "burst[s] in dancing," its pearls are split up, "[s]ome lost, some stolen, some as relics kept," and they subsequently live "dispersedly in many hands" (450, 451, 455). In a metonymic sense, Guinevere is possessed through these unstrung pearls, which serve as souvenirs of and proxies for her. As Merlin's anecdote of the necklace reminds us, the appropriation of the queen's jewels comes at an additional cost to Guinevere herself: "nevermore the same two sister pearls / Ran down the silken thread to kiss each other / On her white neck" (452-54). Because Guinevere's serial arrangement of pearls is never restored, her body no longer serves as the privileged site for displaying this special collection. Deprived of a valuable and intimate possession in her crown jewel, Guinevere becomes less of a sight herself. Although the immediate consequences of this loss might appear trifling, the queen's inability to manage her image ultimately helps to bring down Camelot. In fact, Guinevere's broken necklace, which was once as sound as Arthur's kingdom, provides a glimpse of that later, larger dispersal that the queen also precipitates.

Moreover, what happens to Guinevere's pearls points to the pervasive connection between women, jewels, and violence in the Idylls. In fact, Camelot is established upon these grounds; the bejeweled Excalibur, "Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake" (PA 272), becomes the very instrument with which Arthur "beat his foemen down" (CA 308). In a similar fashion, Arthur's emerald cameo of the Virgin Mary channels divine agency for the king on the battlefield near Castle Gurnion. With this talisman, Arthur becomes a holy warrior, strengthened by divine intercession; in Lancelot's words, "[I]n this heathen war the fire of God / Fills him" (LE 314-15). In typical chivalric fashion, Arthur's knights also joust for gems, doing battle to win their ladies precious stones that are literally beyond price. In particular, the champions Lancelot and Tristram brave deadly blows to win jewels for other men's wives. Thus, Tennyson's women authorize male violence through the gems with which they are associated and, at times, equated.

These gems themselves tend to be obtained at a great price, like Lancelot's diamonds, which are "Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow" (LE 1158). Whenever precious stones happen to emerge from heaven or earth in the Idylls, Tennyson makes his readers aware of the individual and social costs of these artifacts. As with Victoria's Koh-i-noor, Lancelot's diamonds are said to be the spoils of past fratricide and regicide. The ruby necklace of The Last Tournament comes to Camelot at the price of the life of the child who bore it, having been "smitten in mid heaven with mortal cold" (27). Moreover, when the curatorial Bedivere imagines putting Arthur's gemmed sword on exhibit for posterity, he provides a narrative of its

production by the Lady of the Lake: "Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps / Upon the hidden bases of the hills" (PA 273-74). Although this account of Excalibur's origins does not demystify the sword's "jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt, / Bewildering heart and eye" (CA 298-99), it at least acknowledges the hard labor behind this museum-piece.

In his stories of Camelot's precious stones, then, Tennyson suggests that there is always a price to be paid for them. As acts of exchange give voice to otherwise silent stones in the Idylls, those who take what is not theirs through illicit transactions suffer grave consequences. Where gems are given, found, earned, or inherited, the exercise of individual taste becomes for Tennyson a paramount necessity in dealing with these prestigious objects from foreign lands, whether medieval or Victorian.

## II.

The predominantly royal and female passion for collecting gems in the Idylls had its parallel in Victorian England, where the Queen herself emerged as an arch-collector of beautiful objects of all kinds. From her childhood, when she assembled, dressed, and played with a large collection of dolls,<sup>67</sup> Victoria showed a great zeal for acquiring everything from exquisite lace to fine art. The many sculptures at Osborne House, the Queen's residence on the Isle of Wight, included portrait busts, copies of classical works, and subject-pieces commissioned from fashionable sculptors of the day, along with a few antique marbles. In painting, Victoria's collecting interests

usually followed her husband's progressive tastes. Albert commissioned works from many contemporary painters, including Winterhalter and Landseer, who grew in popularity through the Prince Consort's patronage (Ames 133-4, 145). Victoria herself made the more expensive purchases, including early Italian and German paintings, as gifts for Albert, who also gave her works of art.

Victoria received public recognition as a collector and benefactor at the 1851 Crystal Palace exhibition, for which she loaned a number of articles from her own private collections. Nearly three dozen of these items were among the first listed in the exhibition's Official Illustrated and Descriptive Catalogue, which describes such royal objects as portraits of Victoria and Albert on Sèvres china; a jewel-case in the cinque-cento style; ornate furniture and domestic decorations, including several elegant carpets; and specimens of Abyssinian clothing, saddlery, jewelry, and arms. Victoria's Indian artifacts on exhibit included several richly adorned canopied seats and ivory palanquins, which helped to capture the splendor and luster of the latest jewel in England's imperial crown.<sup>68</sup>

As Victoria's female counterpart in Camelot, Guinevere handles many of Camelot's jewels, though she manages to accumulate or preserve very few. Whereas Guinevere's loss of her pearls is merely accidental, her later divestments of precious stones are purposeful performances: she tries to send a message through her gems. The first of these stones are the diamonds of 1859's Elaine, in which Lancelot tries to complete a unique collection of gems as a gift for the queen. Having won eight crown diamonds in a series of annual jousts, Lancelot goes after the "central diamond and

the last / And largest" (LE 73-74). Once he has finished his task, Lancelot plans to "snare" Guinevere's "royal fancy" (LE 71) with unexpected and unequalled largesse; he will give her the diamonds "all at once" (LE 70), expecting her love and more in return.

Though Tennyson adopts the device of a diamond joust from Malory (Book 18, Chapter 21), he borrows the great diamond of his idyll from Victoria's own crown collections. By the time of the Exhibition, the story of the Koh-i-noor, which had made its way to England after the annexation of the Punjab, was already well-known. When the diamond arrived in England in the summer of 1850, the Times devoted a leading article to the history and adventures of this unrivaled jewel. Recognizing the diamond's symbolic importance, the paper announced:

Her Majesty's steam-sloop Medea has just arrived at Portsmouth, with a freight more precious, in nominal value, than was ever carried from Peru to Cadiz. Major Mackeson, one of her passengers, a meritorious and distinguished officer, brings with him that famous diamond of the East called, in the fondness of Asiatic hyperbole, the Koh-i-noor, or Mountain of Light, which, after symbolizing the revolutions of ten generations by its passage from one conqueror to another, comes now, in the third centenary of its discovery, as the forfeit of Oriental faithlessness and the prize of Saxon valour, to the distant shores of England. ("Major")

As the Times noted, this unique trophy of empire carried a host of associations with it. First and foremost, the Koh-i-noor seemed to hold "the sovereignty of Hindostan" within itself. Over three hundred years, this gem had "pass[ed] in the train of conquest and as the emblem of dominion from Golconda to Delhi, from Delhi to Mushed, from Mushed to Cabul, and from Cabul to Lahore." Everywhere it traveled, the diamond stood out "in lustre, esteem, and value." In England, it was said to be the largest known diamond in the world, "[e]xcepting the somewhat doubtful claims of the Brazilian stone among the crown jewels of Portugal," and its worth was estimated at a whopping two million pounds. Moreover, since England had obtained this jewel "in virtue of conquest and sovereignty," this diamond was held to be "a fitting symbol of that supremacy" which Britain had so "fairly" won ("Major"). Even before the Koh-i-noor was seen at the Crystal Palace by over six million visitors, then, the diamond occupied the Victorian popular imagination as visible proof of England's prosperity and an important symbol of Britain's imperial power.

The diamond's contemporary celebrity is further reflected in its use by Coventry Patmore as a model for value and virtue in his 1856 bestseller The Angel in the House. In the late section entitled "The Koh-i-noor" (Vol. II, Canto VIII), Felix responds to his beloved Honoria's desire "[t]o know what mind [he] most approved" by contrasting "man's hard virtues" with "sweet and womanly" ones (Patmore 183). What is most striking about Felix's ideal woman is, according to him, "not that she is wise or good, / But just the thing which I desire" (183). Likewise, Patmore's title diamond was valued for how it fulfilled Victorian fantasies of conquest and

sovereignty, becoming what the British wanted it to be, if only for a time. When Felix says of his "gentle Mistress," "The more I praised [her] the more she shone" (184), he could just as well be speaking of the Koh-i-noor. Both appreciate in value according to what others see in them; in Felix's words, "[A] woman, like the Koh-i-noor, mounts to the price that's put on her" (185).

However, at the height of Felix's reverie, Patmore hints at the trouble with such exotic possessions. In the section following "The Koh-i-noor," he writes, "A woman is a foreign land, / Of which, though he settle young, / A man will ne'er quite understand / The customs, politics, and tongue" (Patmore 186). As Victoria was soon to discover, her own diamond, like its native land, could also be a hard mistress. After all, the Hindus from whom the stone was taken believed that it brought disaster upon those who possessed it (King 68). Previous owners of the diamond had been variously robbed, betrayed, blinded, dethroned, imprisoned, and even assassinated, giving rise to the diamond's legendary curse (Streeter 116-35). Not long after the Koh-i-noor was presented to Victoria, she was herself attacked and struck on the head by a deranged ex-cavalry lieutenant named Pate; at least one observer blamed this assault on the Queen's unlucky charm (Howarth 142). Moreover, in 1860, Charles William King, whose books on precious stones provided source material for George Eliot and Wilkie Collins,<sup>69</sup> noted that the "usual consequences" of the diamond's possession had been "manifested in the Sepoy revolt, and the all but total loss of India to the British crown" (68).

Because Lancelot's gem is big enough to stand out in the king's costly canopy, it bears more than a passing resemblance to Victoria's jinxed jewel, which was said to have decorated the legendary Peacock Throne of the Moguls, completed by the same emperor who built the Taj Mahal ("Koh-i-noor" 49). Like its historical counterpart, Tennyson's fictional diamond is both large and costly; Lancelot's entire collection, of which it is the centerpiece, is valued at "the price of half a realm" (LE 1157). The treasured gem also adorns a king's crown, matching the Koh-i-noor's use by sultans, monarchs, and emperors in various personal ornaments. In addition, the two stones become gifts fit "for queens, and not for simple maids" (LE 230).

More important, Lancelot's diamond, like the Koh-i-noor, proves to be an unstable possession, passing through many hands in a series of doomed exchanges. Before Arthur wins his throne, he happens upon the skeleton of a king slain by his brother, along with "a crown / Of diamonds, one in front, and four aside" (LE 45-46). Setting the crown on his head, Arthur takes his discovery as a sign that he "likewise shalt be King" (55). Of course, the future king little suspects the mordant irony of this premonition, which portends his own violent passing at his nephew Modred's hands in Camelot's civil war. Later, Lancelot nearly loses his own life in winning the final diamond from this same crown, whose jewels Arthur turns to "public use" as tourney-prizes (60). Moreover, Gawain, "surnamed The Courteous" (553), ruins his good name with the king by mishandling this same stone. Commanded to "take / This diamond, and deliver it, and return" (543-44) with news of the knight with the red

sleeve, Gawain gives up his mission before it is complete, turning the gem over to Elaine, partly as a sign of his own fondness for her.

Gawain's personal appraisal of Lancelot's diamond reveals a distinction between its potential worth as a gift and its supposedly intrinsic value:

"[I]f you love, it will be sweet to give it;  
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it  
From your own hand; and whether he love or not,  
A diamond is a diamond." (688-91)

As Gawain suggests, even if Lancelot and Elaine do not share the kind of attachment that would lend meaning to the exchange of this diamond between them, the stone can still circulate at some future date within a personal economy of meaning or according to its fair market value. Gawain's treatment of Lancelot's diamond as a present for Elaine brings to mind not only Victoria's Koh-i-noor, which was bestowed upon her by colonial officials, but also the Queen's many Indian artifacts received as offerings from foreign potentates. Amidst the sumptuous Indian regalia at the Crystal Palace, the carved and jeweled ivory throne given to Victoria by the Rajah of Travancore was admired as a specimen of design, and it received pride of place as Albert's seat during the Exhibition's dazzling closing ceremonies (Breckenridge 203-4). In addition, the presents of the Nawab Nazim of Moorshedabad included an ivory howdah, fully loaded with elephant trappings, all worked in gold and silver (Official Catalogue 4: 929). Such imperial gifts showed generosity towards the Queen, but they also served as a self-interested display of wealth and power, exhibiting the giver's wealth for all

the world to see. Moreover, these gifts invited reciprocation from Victoria, who could be expected to give back even more because of her lofty imperial rank.

Such mutual exchange helped to enhance solidarity among peoples and nations within the British realm, even if it does not do so in the *Idylls*, where gems repeatedly suppose what Susan Pearce calls "an unbecoming degree of intimacy" between giver and recipient (*On Collecting* 73). The lack of reciprocity in Camelot's gift-exchange signals the failure of jewels, as exemplars of material culture in Tennyson, to validate socially or sexually transgressive relationships and unrequited loves. Thus, in *Geraint and Enid*, Earl Doorm's offer of a thickly gemmed gown, like his other unwelcome advances, is met with Enid's refusal rather than her acquiescence. In Elaine's case, her gift of pearls fails to win her the favor of Lancelot's diamond, through which she seeks to possess its proprietor. Although Lancelot is willing to give Elaine anything she desires, save himself, Elaine only wants what she cannot have, and so loses both diamond and knight without recompense or reward. Since Lancelot's gem is destined for Guinevere, Elaine's nightmare about this capricious stone proves prophetic: "some one put the diamond in her hand, / And . . . it was too slippery to be held" (211-12).

Because of Elaine's pearls, Lancelot's idealized transaction with Guinevere also fails to materialize. By wearing Elaine's pearl sleeve as an accessory to his jousting disguise, Lancelot accumulates surplus meaning for his diamonds and himself. His secret identity earns the fury of his own kinsmen, who ambush and critically wound the "stranger knight" (466) who threatens to outshine their Lancelot.

After Lancelot's ruse is discovered, Elaine's pearls speak clearly through Camelot's gossip: "The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot, / Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat" (720-21). Guinevere, of course, is not deaf to these rumors; in fact, she anticipates them, taking Elaine's favor as a sign of Lancelot's devotion to this apparent rival for her affections.

Still, Lancelot invites Guinevere to make use of the meaningful properties with which his labor invests the diamonds. He instructs her to customize them according to her taste:

"Take, what I had not won except for you,  
These jewels, and make me happy, making them  
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,  
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's  
Is tawnier than her cygnet's . . . ." (1174-78)

The possession ritual Lancelot describes would allow Guinevere to personalize the diamonds, just as Victoria did with the Koh-i-noor by having its setting changed from an armlet into a brooch. In so doing, she made the diamond that had been worn by a long succession of male rulers into a queen's jewel. In Guinevere's case, however, no alteration of form can make her diamonds into what Lancelot wants them to be. To the queen, the stones appear not as a sign of long-suffering devotion, but as a bribe for her affections, which she refuses to ransom any further. Here, the Koh-i-noor's association with Lancelot's large diamond contrasts strongly with its proximity to idealized and faithful married love in Patmore. Cast out of the realm of ideal values,

Lancelot's gems become, like the jeweled knight in Percivale's vision, an emblem of mere materialism (HG 409-20).

Too late, Lancelot learns that the peril of using a gift as a sign of possession lies in its transmissibility. With a sense of drama and irony, Guinevere lays claim to the diamonds, only to discard them after she has instilled the stones with her own meaning. In a final act of dispossession, Guinevere empties the diamonds of their former significance by handling them with scorn. Like Victoria at her Golden and Diamond Jubilees, Guinevere makes quite a spectacle with her gems. However, this queen's display is a furious and irrevocable gesture:

she seized,

And, through the casement standing wide for heat,

Flung them, and down they flashed, and smote the stream.

Then from the smitten surface flashed, as it were,

Diamonds to meet them, and they past away. (1225-29)

Guinevere's violence, reminiscent of that used to win her jewels or the Koh-i-noor itself, forces a rupture in the meaning of the diamonds that accompanies their transferal. By discarding the indestructible tokens of Lancelot's love, Guinevere breaks her bond with him. When she lets go of the jewels, Guinevere also robs Lancelot of an important means of expressing his attachment to her supposed rival. In addition, the queen's disposal of the diamonds deprives Lancelot of the hard-won signs of his knightly prowess and, by extension, of his masculinity. Even if, as Clyde de L. Ryals notes, Lancelot has earned the gems "in a honorable combat at a

tournament where courtesy and manners prevailed" (127), he forfeits his title to them by virtue of his infamous conduct towards both king and queen.

Despite the seeming finality of her act, not even the queen herself can decree the ultimate meaning of her diamonds. Once they leave her hands, the diamonds again take on a life of their own, as Harold Littledale noted more than a century ago:

There is a grim irony of fate in the fulfillment of Elaine's dream when the Queen in jealous wrath flings the diamonds into the river.

[Elaine's] barge is approaching, and the vanished gems become an offering to the spirit of the dead maiden. (204)

Indeed, Elaine's ineffable smile seems to mock the thwarted queen as she surrenders her jewels. Though Guinevere attempts to deprive Elaine of Lancelot's diamonds, she all but gives them to her former rival, who symbolically lays claim to the gems. However, in death, as in life, actual possession of these jewels eludes Elaine, who is bereft of Lancelot's diamond, along with her own pearls. Unlike her "pearl-garland[ed]" counterpart in the 1832 "Lady of Shalott," Elaine does not apparel herself in a "crown of white pearl," nor does she clasp "one blinding diamond bright" (33, 46, 49). Having yielded her treasured gems, Elaine holds only a lily, a sign of her purity, and a letter to Lancelot, asking him for the favor of prayer and burial. Like so many of Camelot's gems, the lost diamonds sink into a literal and textual void, never to be seen again.

Through their linked destinies, Elaine's pearls and Lancelot's diamonds alike emerge as what Jacques T. Godbout terms dangerous or "poisoned" gifts (Godbout

and Caillé 8-9). These either harm the recipient directly, like Snow White's apple, or pose a threat through the connections they offer, like the Trojan horse (Godbout and Caillé 54, 211; Hyde 72-3). Elaine's pearls are tainted as gifts by the surreptitious way in which she offers them to Lancelot, which in turn ruins the value of his gems in Guinevere's eyes:

"What are these?

Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their worth

Being your gift, had you not lost your own.

To loyal hearts the value of all gifts

Must vary as the giver's." (1204-8)

Threatened by Lancelot's gift, Guinevere refuses it, "because to accept it would be to tacitly endorse an unwanted relationship" (Godbout and Caillé 9).<sup>70</sup>

Tennyson's portrayal of Camelot's poisoned gift jewels in Lancelot and Elaine shows his awareness of the ill-fated character of Victoria's own dangerous diamond, which soon became a burden for the crown. Because the Koh-i-noor was taken from its Indian owner, even its very status as a gift proved to be a lasting source of contention; in 1882, the maharajah who was forced to surrender the diamond petitioned Parliament for its return, without success. Besides its supposed curse, this corporate gift of Britain's former Indian administration made great demands upon its new owner. For one, the Koh-i-noor had to be guarded closely and kept "safelier" than the elusive diamond of Elaine's dream (LE 217). When Victoria's diamond was exhibited at the Crystal Palace, it was placed within a glass bell-jar, inside what was

popularly described as "Mr. Chubb's 'iron cage'" (Horne 438). This intricate London locksmith's invention was meant to protect the Koh-i-noor from the very kind of violence with which it had so recently been won. The exhibition catalogue declared this mechanism, which was on display as a technological wonder, to be impregnable: "This case . . . contains an arrangement for elevating and depressing the diamond without unlocking. It is considered to be impossible to pick the lock or obtain an entrance into this receptacle" (Official 3: 663). Rigged to lower the diamond automatically into an iron-and-steel safe upon any threat to the stone, this device was a feat of engineering ingenuity and manufacturing prowess, meant to defeat a would-be thief both physically and intellectually. The challenge and reward presented by these defenses inspired R. H. Horne to write a short story for Dickens's Household Words about an imaginary attempt to steal the diamond. In what turns out to be a dream, the author's alter-ego, a self-described "private gentleman of small means" who takes great pride in his modest collection of gems, successfully mines the Koh-i-noor by burrowing underneath the Crystal Palace at night and drilling through its renowned safe to gain his prize, only to discover later that "the greatest Treasure of the earth" is a fake (Horne 436, 441). Despite its whimsy, Horne's story reminded contemporary readers that what was won and kept by force could also be taken by it, thus necessitating constant surveillance.

Moreover, the Koh-i-noor brought with it increased obligations in the costly and difficult administration of expanding regions in India. After the Indian Mutiny had, in one historian's words, "shaken any easy hopes in the steady conversion of non-

English peoples to English civilization" (Webb 356), the Koh-i-noor hardly seemed like an ideal representation of imperial dominion. Just as Guinevere believed that she had won Lancelot's diamonds only to lose his heart, Victoria had acquired perhaps the world's greatest gem, only to have its motherland nearly slip through her fingers. Moreover, since the East India Company, which obtained the diamond for the Queen, handed over its administrative duties to the crown in 1858, this colonial possession beckoned to past glory rather than future conquests. Even if Victoria's ownership of the gem seemed like "an appropriate and honourable close to its career" for the writers of the official Crystal Palace catalogue (Official 3: 696), holding the Koh-i-noor did not necessarily grant Victoria absolute sovereignty over India.

Guinevere's lost diamonds also provide an oblique commentary on some of Victoria's other crown jewels. Early in Victoria's reign, there was a dispute between the Queen and her uncle Cumberland, the King of Hanover, and later with his successor, her blind cousin George, over the Hanoverian crown jewels. Ever since Hanover was made a kingdom at the 1814 Congress of Vienna, George IV and William IV had held these jewels as rulers of both it and Britain. However, as a woman, Victoria was excluded from the Hanoverian throne and its trappings, including the renowned Hanoverian pearls, which had belonged to Catherine de' Medici, Mary Stuart, and Queen Elizabeth (M. Wilson 138). Despite the crown's efforts to purchase the jewels as early as 1841, no compromise could be reached, due in part to varying appraisals of these treasures. Thus, in 1858, the very year in which Elaine was written, Victoria, like Guinevere with her diamonds and pearls, was

dispossessed of the jewels, which were surrendered to the Queen's foreign relatives. The throne's failure to hold onto its treasures surprised even the Hanoverian emissary, Count Kielmansegge, who had expected England to come up with the funds necessary to retain the regalia (Ames 132).

Besides being a personal disappointment for the Queen, Victoria's lack of success in keeping the Hanoverian jewels in England was a loss to the nation. Indeed, her surrender of precious objects that had formed part of the English regalia for decades suggested a symbolic relinquishment of power. Even if Victoria's ornaments remained in the family, so to speak, their departure from Britain signaled the inability of the monarchy to maintain its possessions by diplomatic or economic means. As Tennyson was to suggest in The Last Tournament of 1871, the jewels of empire, like the Koh-i-noor or even India itself, could not be bought but with blood.

### III.

Like Lancelot's great diamond, the ruby carcanet won by Tristram in The Last Tournament closely resembled one of Victoria's newest crown jewels. The Timur Ruby, which once belonged to the conqueror Tamerlane, had also lately arrived from the Lahore Treasury. Like the Koh-i-noor, the ruby appeared at the Crystal Palace in 1851, but with little fanfare. Whereas the exhibition catalogue devoted a full two pages to the history of Victoria's great diamond, the Timur went unnamed as part of a "Short necklace, of four very large spinelle rubies" (Official 4: 919).<sup>71</sup> The semi-

triangular Timur served as the center and largest of three rubies in the middle of Victoria's carcanet, with a smaller gem on the snap at the back. Even by itself, the Timur would still have been as visually and historically distinguished as the Koh-i-noor. Weighing over 350 carats, the stone, like its diamond counterpart, had once decorated the fabulous Peacock Throne. Described as "upwards of three fingers in breadth and nearly two in length," the gem was so highly valued that it was long known as the "Tribute of the World" (M. Wilson 150). Its provenance was even engraved on its surface, though one Mogul emperor, in a memorable gesture of appropriation, had this inscription altered to remove the names of three of the jewel's former owners (Bruton 131-2).

More important, the Timur Ruby had long been a companion piece to the great Koh-i-noor itself. As Eric Bruton has noted, "There is a close historical association between the famous diamond and the great 'ruby' because, although they have been fought over and presented for services rendered, they have remained in common ownership . . . since 1612" (133). Victoria's custodianship of the jewels ensured that this legacy would continue. As the Edinburgh Review observed in 1866, the Timur, an "enormous stone, time-honoured in Indian tradition," accompanied the Koh-i-noor "into the possession of Her who is now the Sovereign of India" (Story-Maskelyne 243).<sup>72</sup>

With a longer history than even the Koh-i-noor, the Timur Ruby also witnessed more violence than any other storied stone. As Mab Wilson writes, "For close to a millennium it watched the savage games of kings, noted their unconcealed

pleasure in cruelty, saw greed that was senseless in its magnitude, patricide, fratricide, torture, and rapine" (146). The Timur's documented past goes back as far as the eleventh century and the Hindu dynasties of Delhi, from where it passed by conquest to successive Muslim sultanates, and from them to the great Tamerlane and his Tartar line. The venerable ruby came by way of Persia as a tribute to the Indian Moguls in 1628, soon after which the Koh-i-noor joined it (M. Wilson 146-7; Howarth 11).

Although Tennyson's ruby carcanet may lack these particulars, it too sees and even occasions great bloodshed as it acquires a sense of agency. Even more than Lancelot's great diamond, the rubies of The Last Tournament prove to be stubbornly resistant to manipulation, and they earn the character of cursed stones whose very ownership means death. Their path of destruction begins with Nestling's passing, after which the queen tries to redeem "the jewels of this dead innocence" (LT 31) by making them a tourney-prize. Cursing her lost diamonds, Guinevere assures her husband that the rubies will bring "rosier luck" (45) because of their more propitious origins. However, the blood-red of the rubies fails to remind the queen that these jewels are to be won with violence that she herself commissions.

Far from being the token of purity or talisman of virginity envisioned by Guinevere (49-50), the rubies become a fitting emblem of the victorious Tristram's perceived transgressions: he is literally caught red-handed, covered in someone else's blood. When Tristram declines to give his prize to some lady on the field, he violates custom and courtesy, adding to his crimes. As Marcel Mauss writes of taonga gift exchange among the Maori, "To keep this thing is dangerous, not only because it is

illicit to do so, but also because it comes morally, physically, and spiritually, from a[nother] person. . . . [I]t retains a magical and religious hold over the recipient" (10). Even if Tristram owns the jewels, he does not fully possess them because he fails to lay immediate claim to their symbolic properties through timely and appropriate exchange.

Moreover, through their appearance, Tristram's red rubies acquire an ominous association with Pelleas, the ruthless "Red Knight" who travesties Arthur's court and brutalizes the king's knights and subjects. Rather than conveying innocence, then, the jewels begin to carry the taint of sin and death, as Tristram's dream about the ruby necklace shows. Like Elaine's vision of the elusive diamond, Tristram's nightmare focuses on a collection that cannot be held or even preserved. In Tristram's imagination, the two Isolts, his wife and his lover, struggle for possession of the ruby-chain. The women do violence for and to the gems, which melt like "frozen blood" in the queen's intemperate grasp (412), leaving her hand with the same telltale stain that incriminated Tristram. The broken circlet also reflects Tristram's divided love, which is split between the sensual attractions of Queen Isolt and the spiritual ministrations of his wife (Kincaid 205). Sensing that he has sullied the sacred memory of the innocent infant by tarnishing her jewels (Gray 116), Tristram hears "a rush of eagle's wings, and then / A whimpering of the spirit of the child, / Because the twain had spoiled her carcanet" (416-18). As one critic has suggested, this subdued protest from beyond the grave shows Tristram's mind "pronouncing judgment upon itself."<sup>73</sup> Because he has not lived up to the spirit of his trophy, Tristram suspects that these gems, like Elaine's

diamond, will surely slip away. Tennyson's juxtaposition of this dream with the slaughter of the Red Knight and his followers in a river of blood further foreshadows the misfortune that the matching rubies threaten to bring.

Despite his misgivings, Tristram still attempts to claim the rubies for himself in a divestment ritual dedicated to erasing the meaning associated with their previous owner (McCracken 87). As he shows a consumer's anxiety of influence, Tristram implicitly acknowledges that the personal properties with which an object is invested can persist even after it changes hands. Hoping to free up the jewels' symbolic dimensions for his own use, he carries the stones to Queen Isolt and presents them to her at sunset. Though he does not believe in eternal love or any "inviolable vows" (683), Tristram places the trappings of his disowned ideals in the best light possible to seduce Mark's queen, who is unmoved by Tristram's half-hearted professions of constancy. To redeem the gems, Tristram provides a mystical account of their origins. Calling the rubies "the red fruit / Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-heaven" (738-39), Tristram effaces their former owner and her part in the jewels' history and meaning. He then brings the carcanet down to earth and personalizes his prize by identifying the rubies as the fruits of his labor, "won by Tristram as a tourney-prize" (740). By calling the rubies his "last / Love-offering and peace-offering" to Isolt (741-42), Tristram makes yet another attempt to arbitrate the use and meaning of the carcanet. In a concluding act of appropriation, Tristram tries to take possession of Isolt herself through the necklace, which he flings around her neck.

However, just as Tristram's lips touch Isolt's "jeweled throat" (745), the rubies symbolically contaminate this transaction, revealing the couple's complicity in sin. As he tries to trade the tokens of dead innocence for living vice, Tristram falls victim to his own sexual excesses (Reed 120). Though Mark may not have witnessed his wife's previous transgressions, he catches Isolt and Tristram in the act this time and voids their illicit exchange by striking his rival dead. Thus, Tristram's rubies connect sexual rivals more directly than Lancelot's diamonds; Mark encounters his adversary face-to-face, rather than through his jewels. Though the carcanet's story ends with its owner's life, its malign influence appears to linger on: immediately after Mark kills Tristram, Guinevere flees Arthur's court, precipitating Camelot's final battle.

The immense personal and social costs of Tristram's rubies call to mind a related passage from Tennyson's primary source for The Last Tournament. Sharon Turner's History of the Anglo-Saxons records a legend of King Alfred about the discovery of the infant "Nestingum," a foundling abandoned, like his namesake in Tennyson, in a tree, though "dressed in purple, with golden bracelets, the marks of nobility, on his arms" (2: 119).<sup>74</sup> More important, Turner's history also cites King Alfred's translation of a paragraph on jewels from Boethius that could hardly have escaped the poet's notice:

Why should the beauty of gems draw your eyes to them to wonder at them, as I know they do? What is then the nobility of that beauty which is in gems? It is theirs; not yours. At this I am most exceedingly astonished, why you should think this irrational, created

good, better than your own excellence: why you should so exceedingly admire these gems, or any of those dead-like things that have not reason; because they can, by no right, deserve that you should wonder at them. Though they be God's creatures, they are not to be measured with you, because one of two things occurs; either they are not good for you themselves, or but for a little good compared with you. We too much undervalue ourselves when we love that which is inferior to us, and in our power, more than ourselves, or the Lord that has made us and given us all these goods. (2: 26)

As Turner notes in his own more succinct translation of the excerpt, Alfred embellished extensively upon the original. The same could be said of Tennyson, who elaborates upon this passage in The Last Tournament, which serves as an extended admonition against taking material things at face value. In fact, Alfred's translation might provide a fitting postscript to the Idylls as a whole, since Tennyson repeatedly portrays gems there as seductive and potentially dangerous objects of uncertain worth.

Moreover, Tristram's attempts to remake Nestling's rubies in his own image mirror Victoria's extensive efforts to transform the Koh-i-noor for her personal use. In form and setting, the famous diamond had been materially changed since its arrival, taming its foreign aspects and making it seem like more of an English possession. Upon the unaltered diamond's debut at the Great Exhibition, a writer in the Illustrated London News commented that the Koh-i-noor was "gigantic but somewhat rough and unhewn" in appearance and even "ungraceful" or awkward in its

form ("Guide" 426). The diamond's lack of polish was attributed to the Eastern predilection for size over looks in gems; Indian tastes were said to consider "the magnitude of too great importance to be submitted to the great reduction necessary to show the beauty of a stone" ("Guide" 428). Other cut stones from India at the Crystal Palace were supposed to give visitors an idea of "the rich and lavish magnificence of the East, and also of the barbarous nature of this magnificence, since the gems [were] little altered from the rough state in which they occurred in nature" ("Guide" 428). These responses to the Koh-i-noor and its companions reflect the Victorian perception of the East as a diamond in the rough, alluring but yet to be tamed.

As for the Koh-i-noor itself, the diamond was said to lack "the best form for exhibiting its purity and lustre" ("Guide" 428). Despite the various and expensive means used for displaying the stone to its best advantage, it came far from satisfying public anticipation, leading to suggestions that the diamond's appearance and value alike had been exaggerated ("Lady's" 242). The Times itself had compared the Crystal Palace at its opening to Victoria's diamond in a simile that only heightened expectations; as the paper reported, "[T]he blazing arch of lucid glass' with the bright hot sun flaming on its polished ribs and sides shone like the Koh-i-Noor itself" ("Opening" 4-5). The letdown exhibition-goers felt at the actual sight of the diamond was great, as R. H. Horne observed:

Like everybody else, I have been, of course, to the Great Exposition;  
and, like everybody else, I was strikingly disappointed by the

appearance of the Koh-i-noor. My imagination had portrayed something a million times more dazzling. (436-7)

Many at the Crystal Palace who had looked forward to seeing a true "Mountain of Light" mistook the building's great central crystal fountain for the neighboring Koh-i-noor. This confusion suggests how large the gem and its native land loomed in the Victorian imagination.

Although the diamond could not be increased in size, at least it could be made to look more like a British jewel. Thus, in 1852, the Koh-i-noor was painstakingly recut in an operation that was said to have "greatly improved its brilliancy and general appearance, [though] at the expense of more than a third of its weight" (Barrera 281). Despite this reduction in size, the diamond's still considerable dimensions somewhat limited its dazzling effects. As Victorian mineralogist Nevil Story-Maskelyne explained, "So large a stone as the Koh-i-nur could never be endowed with the splendour of a smaller diamond" because "as a stone rises in weight and size above twenty carats it loses proportionally in effect" (248). He added that a simple repolishing of the stone's rounded Indian facets would have done just as well for improving its appearance. However, not even the Koh-i-noor's loss in weight could rob the diamond of its unique prestige.

In fact, this gem's reputation in its new land began to improve over time. English views of the diamond changed for the better with Victoria's extended ownership of the stone. In an 1882 history of the Koh-i-noor that the Queen herself

read in manuscript, Edwin W. Streeter assured his British readers that the gem would no longer leave "sorrow and sufferings . . . in its wake":

A strange fatality presided over its early vicissitudes, but its alleged 'uncannie' powers have now ceased to be a subject of apprehension. Its latest history eloquently demonstrates the fact that extended empire is a blessing, just in proportion as it finds hearts and hands willing to fulfil the high duties which increased privilege involves. (128, 134-35)

With good fortune generally following Victoria at home and abroad, the Koh-i-noor slowly acquired a new character. As Stephen Howarth notes, "Gradually it became an accepted standard that bad luck would befall a man who wore the jewel, while good luck would follow a woman" (143). This rosier version of the Koh-i-noor's talismanic powers derived, in part, from one of the stone's former owners, Shah Soujah, who estimated the stone's value by its good luck, "for it [had] ever been his who [had] conquered his enemies" (qtd. in *Story-Maskelyne* 232).

However, as both Streeter and Tennyson acknowledged, with Britain's material gains came added responsibility. The ceaseless expansion that the British empire was still experiencing had given it, in India, a throne "in our vast Orient" ("To the Queen" 30-1), of which Victoria became the Empress on May 1, 1876, twenty-five years to the day after the opening of the Crystal Palace. A quarter-century after the Great Exhibition, imperial England, like the "spiritual city and all her spires / And gateways in a glory like one pearl" (HG 526-7), still held a promise as great as its "orient," or lustrous iridescence, a pearl's counterpart to a diamond's fire. By placing

his Queen's jewels at the center of the Idylls, Tennyson portrays India and empire as pearls of great price, to be won and worn with caution.

## Chapter Five

### **Aurelians Abroad: Literary Lepidoptery at the Fin de Siècle**

Do you know the pile-built village, where the sago dealers trade—

Do you know the reek of fish and wet bamboo?

Do you know the steaming stillness of the orchid-scented glade

When the blazoned, bird-winged butterflies flap through?

It is there that I am going with my camphor, net, and boxes,

To a gentle, yellow pirate that I know—

To my little wailing lemurs, to my palms and flying-foxes,

For the Red Gods call me out and I must go!

—Rudyard Kipling, "The Feet of the Young Men" in The Five Nations (1897)

In a letter dated March 22, 1869, Charles Darwin, having just read fellow evolutionist Alfred Russel Wallace's Malay Archipelago, congratulated his colleague on the engaging account of his recent travels, which Wallace had dedicated to him:

My Dear Wallace,—I have finished your book; it seems to me excellent, and at the same time most pleasant to read. . . . Your descriptions of catching the splendid butterflies have made me quite envious, and at the same time have made me feel almost young again, so vividly have they brought before my mind old days when I

collected, though I never made such captures as yours. Certainly collecting is the best sport in the world. (F. Darwin 2: 294-5)

Darwin's response to Wallace's book reflects the nostalgic and competitive aspects of collecting from nature, both of which he knew well. Having collected since his schoolboy days at Shrewsbury, Darwin hunted beetles during Cambridge's entomological craze of the 1820s, following the publication of William Kirby and William Spence's enormously successful Introduction to Entomology (1815-26), the first popular work on insects in English. Even after he returned from his voyage aboard the Beagle, Darwin never lost his passion for the acquisitive aspects of entomology, as his letter to Wallace shows.

In Wallace, Darwin recognized a kindred spirit whose narrative evoked fond memories of collecting insects for pleasure and prestige. Among the butterfly anecdotes that elicited Darwin's sense of nostalgia and envy, Wallace describes his capture of a large birdwing, so named for its impressive wingspan, on the Aru Islands in what is now Indonesia:

The next two days were so wet and windy that there was no going out; but on the succeeding one the sun shone brightly, and I had the good fortune to capture one of the most magnificent insects the world contains, the great bird-winged butterfly, *Ornithoptera poseidon*. I trembled with excitement as I saw it coming majestically towards me, and could hardly believe I had really succeeded in my stroke till I had taken it out of the net and was gazing, lost in admiration, at the velvet

black and brilliant green of its wings, seven inches across, its golden body, and crimson breast. It is true that I had seen similar insects in cabinets at home, but it is quite another thing to capture such one's self—to feel it struggling between one's fingers, and to gaze upon its fresh and living beauty, a bright gem shining out amid the silent gloom of a dark and tangled forest. The village of Dobbo held that evening at least one contented man. (328-9)

As Darwin suggests, Wallace brings to life the firsthand experience of obtaining an exotic butterfly in its native setting. Here, as in other passages from Wallace, "[t]he butterfly-as-object is gorgeous and, in addition, representative of the perceived inexhaustible richness of nature's forms that await discovery and capture" (Merrill 114).

Among Victorian insect collectors, butterflies and moths were by far the favorite objects of pursuit and study because of their beauty and the opportunities they offered for discoveries about their habitat, distribution, and behavior. In fact, one writer of the day estimated that the admirers of Lepidoptera, or Aurelians,<sup>75</sup> many of whom "only suffer[ed] themselves to look upon the most beautiful of the Insect-world," outnumbered followers of all the other orders combined (Smith 111). Facilitated by road improvements, the growth of the railways, and the increased accessibility of the countryside, butterfly collecting as a pastime enjoyed its heyday in the late Victorian era (Salmon 43). Darwin's theory of evolution, though it was disputed by some entomologists, brought new attention to races, varieties, and

genetics, helping to make butterfly and moth collecting "almost popular enough to rank as a field sport" from the 1870s until World War I (Salmon 95). Meanwhile, exotic butterflies such as Wallace's, like other foreign flora and fauna, provided incentive for travel abroad among freelance entrepreneurs, colonial personnel, and commissioned collectors, whose systematic cataloging of the world grew out of and contributed to an expanding commercial and administrative infrastructure overseas and thus reflected a dominant imperialist ethos (Browne, "Biogeography" 305-14; Raby 8).

With a resurgence of interest in entomology at the end of the nineteenth century,<sup>76</sup> butterflying abroad became part of a project of imperial self-fashioning for some privileged British collectors, to whom tropical butterflies in particular exemplified the treasures of nature and empire in all their beauty and variety. In the 1840s, Capt. Thomas Brown related the appearance of these butterflies to their latitudinal location between Cancer and Capricorn: "Almost every country on the globe is inhabited by numerous species of lepidopterous insects. These are habited in more splendid attire as we approach the Tropics" (192). Around the same time, the Scottish lepidopterist James Duncan contrasted the flora and fauna of Britain with that of tropical countries through their butterflies: "The remarkable superiority in size and beauty of most tropical productions over those of temperate regions, is scarcely more strikingly exemplified in any department of nature than in this. The most richly ornamented of our native species . . . appear insignificant when contrasted with those of Brazil and Eastern Asia" (65). According to Duncan, tropical butterflies, many of

them relatively new to European naturalists, displayed striking "modifications of form," including as many as three or four hind-wing tails, and "exhibit[ed] almost every possible shade of colour . . . combined and blended in the most elegant and harmonious designs . . ." (66). Attractive, abundant, and diverse,<sup>77</sup> these butterflies exemplified what British collectors described as the "luxuriance" of life in tropical regions and environments that were the site of much eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European travel and exploration (Martins and Driver 59).

As emblems of individual and evolutionary change, tropical butterflies mirrored their collectors' own attempts at self-transformation through the acquisition and display of natural objects, as shown in British fiction and travel writing of the fin de siècle. In Joseph Conrad's Lord Jim (1901), Arthur Conan Doyle's Hound of the Baskervilles (1902), and the diaries of Margaret Fountaine (1878-1939), the tropical butterfly collector's pursuit and capture of rare and exotic specimens is further associated with attempts to possess or control cultural others, who are themselves likened to butterflies in terms of their appearance or behavior. In turn, the elusiveness of butterflies in these works comes to suggest the futility of their collectors' colonial ambitions in a region that was seen in the 1890s as resistant to European acclimatization.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the entomologist's dream of appropriation, which began as a domestic Victorian obsession, became a fleeting imperial fantasy in literature at the turn of the twentieth century.

### **Entomology and the Victorian Natural History Craze**

The immense popularity of Victorian natural history is perhaps best represented by the various collecting crazes that swept Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century. Like other natural history crazes of the day, the entomological craze of the 1820s was not confined to the universities, but soon reached the middle and working classes. Other popular manias in natural history were largely the result of developments in collecting tools and techniques, innovations in collecting practices, and the appearance of many new and relevant publications. Though seabathers had shown great interest in seaweeds and shells as early as the mid-1700s, collecting seaside objects did not become a real craze until the 1820 and 1830s, when tow-nets and dredges came into wide use (Allen 127-30). Moreover, rapid improvements in microscope design and affordability in the 1830s granted naturalists superior access to a hitherto neglected world of marine microorganisms (Allen 128-9). The 1840s saw an unprecedented orchid craze, especially among wealthy collectors, who could afford to purchase these exotic and often expensive flowers for their greenhouses, which had been improved for heating orchids with hot water circulated through pipes (Scourse 114-15). That same decade, entomologists began the innovative practice of "sugaring" leaves and tree trunks at dusk with a solution of brown sugar, water, and beer or rum to attract a large number and variety of nocturnal moths (Stainton, British 49-51; Allen 147-50). Just after 1850, the Victorian fern craze, also known as Pteridomania, came into vogue. The removal of high excise duties on glass, in place since the Napoleonic wars, made Wardian cases, or

terrariums for growing exotic and native ferns indoors, more affordable to those who took up this new fashion (Barber 111-15).<sup>79</sup> In a related development, the publication of Philip Henry Gosse's A Naturalist's Rambles on the Devonshire Coast (1853) made the marine aquarium it described an almost immediate sensation, sparking a resurgence of interest in beachcombing (Allen 136-7; Kingsley 139-60). By this means, natural history was domesticated as it moved into the middle-class Victorian parlor (Barber 13).

Natural history possessed several intrinsic qualities that appealed to a wide range of Victorians across lines of age, class, and gender. First, natural history was wonderful entertainment, presenting many surprises and discoveries (Merrill 30). Its accessibility was another great attraction; physically and financially, natural history was available to all in some form. As a democratic Victorian pastime, it also offered a means of self-improvement to everyone, at least in theory; the various departments of natural history all promised opportunities for cultivating the body, mind, and spirit that satisfied a dominant Evangelical ethos. Besides providing healthy exercise through long outdoor excursions, natural history was said to form habits of observation and accurate perception that fostered a methodic and scientific mind (Budgen 1: 171; Kingsley 46-7). Moreover, because natural history was supposed to increase one's reverence for nature and its divine creator, it was used to support the pious tenets of natural theology, the Victorian precursor to intelligent design, in which it had its moral and religious foundation. However, it was science, rather than religion, that made natural history a truly prestigious pursuit and even "a form of

economic and social mobility" (Levine 11); because collections from nature possessed scientific and commercial value, they often served as social capital (Browne, Charles Darwin 206-08). Above all, the enduring attraction of Victorian natural history can be attributed to "the fact that it center[ed] on collecting, the acquisition of natural objects that in themselves are colorful, intricate in form, pleasing to the eye, and gratifying to the touch" (Merrill 82).

Of all the branches of natural history, entomology, which combined the thrill of the chase with striking visual and tactile elements, most strongly evoked what Lynn Merrill calls the "joy in the specimen" (114). In fact, Prince Albert, an avid sportsman, gave royal sanction to entomology when he told the geologist Charles Lyell "that he looked back with more pleasure to collecting insects, than he had ever found in stag-shooting" (C. Darwin, Correspondence 10: 421). Albert's fellow entomologists likewise relished the pursuit and capture of insects from beetles to butterflies, which were valued all the more highly because of the difficulty with which they were obtained. In The Romance of Natural History (1860), Philip Henry Gosse recounts a typical butterfly chase, which runs the emotional gamut from exhilaration and frustration to anticipation and euphoria:

[A] gorgeous butterfly rushes out of the gloom into the shade, and is in a moment seen to be a novelty; then comes the excitement of pursuit; the disappointment of seeing it dance over a thicket just out of sight; the joy of finding it reappear; the tantalising trial of watching the

lovely wings flapping just out of reach; the patient waiting for it to descend; the tiptoe approach as we see it settle on a flower; the breathless eagerness with which the net is poised; and the triumphant flush with which we gaze on its loveliness when held in the trembling fingers. (257-8)

The delight that Gosse describes could be relived through the entomologist's collection, whose objects evoked retrospective pleasures. In 1929, the sixty-four-year-old Norwich globetrotter and lepidopterist Margaret Fountaine, clearing out one of her old cabinets, was imaginatively transported to the southern locales where she had captured her tropical butterflies decades earlier:

Today I had got as far as the drawer containing the Agrias, those very expensive but exquisitely beautiful things, and these were immediately followed by a few brilliant Preponas from the forests of Matto Grosso, which struck me as being more lovely than ever, and give me such a longing to be back in Brazil. The contents of the next drawer took me back to India and Java, for there were the Kallimas, then came the Charaxes, full of hot, African sunshine . . . . (Butterflies 113)

Unlike plants, which were altered in form and color when pressed and dried for collectors' albums, properly preserved insects could retain their original appearance for years, vividly reminding the collector of the scenes in which they were taken, whether at home or abroad.

By the mid-nineteenth century, entomology had attracted thousands of enthusiasts throughout Britain, most of them men, as had been the case since the sixteenth century, when natural history emerged as a predominantly male activity in England. In 1856, Henry Stainton's first partial "List of British Entomologists" in his Entomologist's Annual included among its 269 names twenty-one vicars, several physicians and museum keepers, a police sergeant, an innkeeper, a prison gardener, and a member of Parliament, among others. Stainton catalogued his professionally and socially diverse entomologists by name, address, and area of specialization in order to promote the free and liberal exchange of specimens between sometimes widely scattered collectors, whose communications and transactions were facilitated by the advent of the penny post in 1840. Some of the most esteemed entomologists of the day appeared in Stainton's rolls, including Henry Doubleday (who was said to have "The Finest Collection in England"), the Rev. F. O. Morris, Edward Newman, and J. O. Westwood. In subsequent years, Stainton invited other readers to add their names to the register. Due to a vast increase in entomologists from 1845 to 1865, which coincided with the spread of education in England (Allen 138), Stainton's list swelled to over 1200 entomologists by 1860. By that time, collectors were arranged both alphabetically and geographically and were also assigned a number for easy reference. In short, Stainton treated himself and his fellow entomologists like their insects, each a new specimen to be catalogued and described. More important, Stainton's lists, which for several years comprised the bulk of his Annual, helped to

build an extensive and easily accessible virtual community of insect collectors in the metropolises and provinces.

The growing popularity of Victorian entomology was reflected by its conspicuous appearance in the fiction of the day. In 1856, Stainton noted with satisfaction in the Entomologist's Annual, "[I]t is difficult to take up any work of our greatest literary characters, without finding some allusion either to Entomology or Entomological pursuits":

[E]ven in the first number of "Little Dorrit," Mr. Meagles states in reference to his dread of the plague while in quarantine at Marseilles, —"Why, I'd as soon have a spit through me, and be stuck upon a card in a collection of beetles, as lead the life I have been leading here"; and Bulwer Lytton, in the "Caxtons," devotes a whole chapter to the earwig . . . . This scientific information occurs in Chapter III., Part VII., of that clever novel. (Preface viii-ix)

Two years later, Stainton documented the latest addition to this growing body of work by including an epigraph from Tom Brown's School Days (1857) that indicated the presence and the potential of young entomologists at England's boarding schools: "If we knew how to use our boys, Martin would have been seized upon and educated as a natural philosopher. He had a passion for Birds, Beasts, and Insects, and knew more of them and their habits than any one in Rugby; except perhaps the Doctor, who knew everything" (qtd. in Stainton, Entomologist's Annual for 1858 [viii]). In the previous century, entomology's literary exposure had been limited to poetry (Means 210-11),

including Pope's satirical portrayal of the Aurelian Joseph Dandridge among the virtuosos in The New Dunciad (1742).<sup>80</sup> By contrast, entomology's newfound prominence in the Victorian novel suggested that it was "coming rapidly into notice as an attractive branch of science" (Stainton, "Preface" viii).

Representations of entomologists in Victorian fiction tended to reflect the emerging social dynamics of insect collecting, with reference to gender, class, and profession. Elizabeth Gaskell's industrial novel Mary Barton (1848) refers to followers of "the more popularly interesting branches of natural history" among Lancashire's handloom weavers, including "entomologists, who may be seen with a rude-looking net, ready to catch any winged insect, or a kind of dredge, with which they rake the green and slimy pools; practical, shrewd, hard-working men, who pore over every new specimen with real scientific delight" (39). Gaskell's venerable Job Legh, whose walls are covered with "rude wooden frames of impaled insects," serves as her representative of the "thoughtful, little understood, working-men of Manchester" (40). The so-called rational recreation of such self-educated artisan-naturalists allied them with respectable middle- and upper-class interests, "mak[ing] them look as if they had absorbed the bourgeois credo of individual self-improvement" (Secord 388-9). Even as Gaskell celebrates their expertise in local flora and fauna, including "the two great beautiful families of Ephemerae and Phryganidae" (39), she tends to subordinate the amateur Job Leghs to their more elite counterparts, portraying them as mere providers of specimens and information for their social superiors (Secord 392).

Along similar lines, Victorian representations of clerical entomologists focus on their work with insects as a diversion or distraction from their professional responsibilities. In Anthony Trollope's Barchester Towers (1857), the absentee "canon in residence" of Barchester, Rev. Dr. Vesey Stanhope, turns over his preaching to the bishop's chaplain during a twelve-year hiatus with his family on the shores of Lake Como, assembling "that unique collection of butterflies for which he is so famous" while supposedly convalescing from a sore throat (I: 47, 48). Later, in George Eliot's Middlemarch (1871-2), the bachelor Rev. Camden Farebrother, like many of his real-life counterparts circa 1830, takes to entomology because of his university training, the relative want of other intellectual pursuits in an isolated country parish, and the pious spirit of natural history. Moreover, Farebrother's natural history collection, consisting largely of insects, circumscribes an exclusively male domain in a physical as well as an intellectual sense. Farebrother's insects provide a pretext for the vicar's meeting with the new physician Tertius Lydgate, which takes place in the parsonage den, away from Farebrother's widowed mother and unmarried aunt and sister, and among his "delicate orthoptera" (174), including grasshoppers, crickets, and locusts. Though Lydgate is about to cast the deciding vote against Farebrother for a lucrative infirmary chaplaincy, their interview focuses more on Farebrother's exhibition of his collection, which he describes as a sedative or "spiritual tobacco," suggesting that "the Vicar felt himself not altogether in the right profession" (172). Though Farebrother could use the new hospital chaplain's income, he discourages Lydgate from voting for him for fear of making enemies with

Middlemarch's power brokers, and focuses instead on enriching his collection through barter.

In his "exhaustive study of the entomology of [his] district" (172), Eliot's ill-suited vicar performs what Henry Stainton described in 1857 as the entomologist's civic duty "to know the extent of our native riches" (Manual 1: 30). Just two years earlier, however, Charles Kingsley's Glaucus had confidently, if somewhat prematurely, asserted that prospects for discoveries in "the natural history of all our land species" were so diminished as to be "well-nigh exhausted": "Our home botanists, entomologists, and ornithologists, are spending their time now, perforce, in verifying a few obscure species, and bemoaning themselves like Alexander, that there are no more worlds left to conquer" (24). Subsequently, as travel became increasingly available to the middle classes, Kingsley's spirit of discovery and conquest and Farebrother's taxonomic impulse took enterprising entomologists like Wallace and Henry Walter Bates overseas on speculative ventures to collect and catalogue tropical fauna, including, most famously, butterflies, which they found in abundant variety. By the turn of the century, however, the butterfly collector abroad became identified more with the defeated ambition of Eliot's Casaubon and his hopelessly unfinished Key to all Mythologies than with the benign escapism of Farebrother's cabinet.

### **Birdwings and Beetles**

From his remote Malaysian trading post in Conrad's Lord Jim (1901), the prolific German entomologist Stein, like his fictional and historical predecessors, "on account of a few bushels of dead insects, become[s] known to learned persons in Europe" (123). In the narrator Marlow's words, Stein's "collection of Buprestidae and Longicorns—beetles all—horrible miniature monsters, looking malevolent in death and immobility, and his cabinet of butterflies, beautiful and hovering under the glass of cases on lifeless wings, had spread his fame far over the earth" (123). However, Conrad ultimately demonstrates the failure of Western ideals in the East through his "learned collector" (123), who builds his business and his scientific reputation upon violence and death. Even as Conrad's novel celebrates the merchant-naturalist's singular triumphs and acquisitions, especially as a butterfly collector, it questions the larger imperial enterprise of which Stein's collecting is a part.

As Conrad shows through Stein's career, an adventurous spirit and possessive individualism are no hedge against political unrest and personal tragedy. After taking part in the revolution of 1848, the expatriate Stein flees Germany, works as the assistant to a famous Dutch naturalist and collector in the Malay Archipelago for four years, and inherits a trading establishment and house on the island of Celebes (now Sulawesi) from a local Scotsman. Throughout a civil war over tribal succession rights, which includes a month-long siege of his house, Stein "never failed to annex on his own account every butterfly or beetle he could lay hands on," making his insects the mementos of surviving "some eight years of war, negotiations, false truces, sudden outbreaks, reconciliation, treachery, and so on" (125). After a short-lived

peace, Stein departs on the heels of losing a local ally to assassination and his own native wife and their daughter to illness. Despite his renewed involvement in inter-island commerce as a fleet owner and large-scale trader in island produce, the now aged and reclusive Stein never fully recovers from his Celebes disappointments. Having suffered a failure of spirit, he spends much of his time living "solitary, but not misanthropic, with his books and his collection, classing and arranging specimens, corresponding with entomologists in Europe, writing up a descriptive catalogue of his treasures" (126). Stein's retrospective project of naming and cataloging seems to be his final, desperate attempt to impose order on an unruly and alien world. His taxonomic work extends to the novel's English protagonist, whom the entomologist classifies as a "romantic" (129) before assigning him to the trading post at Patusan out of a sense of gratitude to his late British benefactor. In the end, the self-exiled Stein becomes as much victim as victor in Celebes; as with Jim, "all his conquests, the trust, the fame, the friendships, the love—all these things that made him master had made him a captive, too" (152). Consequently, Conrad depicts Stein as a virtual prisoner of the shelves, cases, and boxes or "catacombs" that surround him (124).

In many respects, Conrad models his entomologist on Alfred Russel Wallace, whose Malay Archipelago was Conrad's favorite book (Clemens 305). As J. H. Stape notes, "Wallace amassed enormous collections of tropical species, particularly of butterflies and beetles, and his scientific curiosity, allied to an aesthetic appreciation of natural phenomena, is echoed in Stein's enthusiasm for the works of nature" (Knowles and Moore 397). When Marlow consults Stein about Jim's case, he is

working on a scientific description of his greatest capture, a birdwing butterfly, which is said to have "dark bronze wings, seven inches or more across, with exquisite white veinings and a gorgeous border of yellow spots" (124). Stein's prize specimen can be identified as a variety of Ripponia hypolitus, the more common name for Ornithoptera remus, which was "one of the rarest and remarkable species" of the "highly esteemed" birdwings, according to Wallace (167). As Wallace describes it, "The ground colour of this superb insect [is] a rich shining bronzy black, the lower wings delicately grained with white, and bordered by a row of large spots of the most brilliant and satiny yellow" (167), matching the appearance of Stein's bronze-winged, white-veined, yellow-spotted butterfly.

The resemblance of Stein's birdwing to Wallace's butterfly helps to establish the similarities between their collectors. Stein's account of his greatest hunt is a pastiche of several episodes from Wallace, emphasizing the element of chance in collecting, the thrill of the chase, and the overwhelming joy of finally obtaining a desired specimen that is as beautiful as it is rare. For this incident, Conrad draws most extensively upon two anecdotes from Wallace, including one where he describes how, with gun in hand, he obtained a new species of butterfly, Nymphalis calydonia, at Malacca, not far from British-colonial Singapore on the Malay peninsula (22). Wallace's later reaction to catching the spotted Ornithoptera croesus would provide a prototype for Stein's ecstasy over capturing his birdwing:

I had begun to despair of ever getting a specimen, as it seemed so rare

and wild; till one day, about the beginning of January, I found a beautiful shrub . . . and saw one of these noble insects hovering over it, but it was too quick for me, and flew away. The next day I went again to the same shrub and succeeded in catching a female, and the day after a fine male. I found it to be as I had expected, a perfectly new and most magnificent species, and one of the most gorgeously coloured butterflies in the world. . . . The beauty and brilliancy of this insect are indescribable, and none but a naturalist can understand the intense excitement I experienced when I at length captured it. On taking it out of my net and opening the glorious wings, my heart began to beat violently, the blood rushed to my head, and I felt much more like fainting than I have done when in apprehension of immediate death. I had a headache the rest of the day, so great was the excitement produced by what will appear to most people a very inadequate cause. (Wallace 257-8)

Like Stein after him, Wallace takes a nearly orgasmic pleasure in possession, with extreme physical symptoms amounting to sexualized "captor passion" (Tagge 186). Wallace's capture of a female and his rapturous opening of her "glorious wings" further suggest a connection between the erotic and the entomological, as he attempts to render his unique delight over his acquisition.

Echoing Wallace, Stein tells Marlow of his own birdwing, "You don't know what it is for a collector to capture such a rare specimen. You can't know" (126). In

Stein's case, Conrad combines Wallace's experiences of catching new butterflies and adds an element of danger not present in Wallace. Stein narrates how, after he single-handedly fought off an enemy ambush by feigning death and then gunning down three of his attackers, he saw something pass over the forehead of a fallen foe. "It was the shadow of this butterfly," explains Stein:

"Look at the form of the wing. This species fly high with a strong flight. I raised my eyes and I saw him fluttering away. I think—— Can it be possible? And then I lost him. I dismounted and went on very slow, leading my horse and holding my revolver with one hand and my eyes darting up and down and right and left, everywhere! At last I saw him sitting on a small heap of dirt ten feet away. At once my heart began to beat quick. I let go my horse, keep my revolver in one hand, and with the other snatch my soft felt hat off my head. One step. Steady. Another step. Flop! I got him! When I got up I shook like a leaf with excitement, and when I opened these beautiful wings and made sure what a rare and so extraordinary perfect specimen I had, my head went round and my legs became so weak with emotion that I had to sit on the ground. I had greatly desired to possess myself of a specimen of that species . . . . I took long journeys and underwent great privations; I had dreamed of him in my sleep, and here suddenly I had him in my fingers—for myself!" (128)

After demonstrating his "intrepidity of spirit" and "physical courage" (123) by killing his enemies, the unflappable Stein quickly changes hats to take advantage of an unexpected opportunity as a naturalist.

Stein's wielding of his pistol in both episodes helps to characterize him as a proficient hunter of men as well as butterflies, linking his collecting to the "romantic, violent, and dangerous process of confrontation and conquest" that attends the spread of imperial dominion (Ritvo 243). Through its connection to the collector's near-death experience and his ensuing violence, Stein's butterfly becomes, like big-game trophies from Asia and Africa (see Chapter 1), a reminder of the expedition on which it was procured and "a symbol of the force and power that supported and validated the routinized day-to-day domination of . . . empire" (Ritvo 247-8). Stein's resourcefulness in the face of imminent danger not only allows him to survive in an inhospitable environment but also yields the object of his heart's desire, suggesting the risks and rewards of empire. However, Stein's attempt to make of the moment something permanent is short-lived, as his butterfly's death foreshadows those of his friend and family. Ironically, in its very ephemerality, the butterfly captures the fleeting nature of Stein's success.

Besides their collecting experiences, Stein and Wallace also share the distinction of acquiring specimens found in virtually no other cabinet. Wallace became the fortunate possessor of an exceptionally scarce specimen on the island of Java, where a boy brought him "the rare and curious *Charaxes kadenii*, remarkable for having on each hind wing two curved tails like a pair of callipers" (87). In his three

and a half months on Java, this example was the only specimen Wallace ever saw, and eight years later, he boasted that it was still "the only representative of its kind in English collections" (87). Likewise, the extreme rarity of Stein's butterfly becomes a source of great pride for him. As he tells Marlow, "Only one specimen like this they have in your London, and then—no more" (124). Moreover, Stein's narcissistic identification with his fine specimens provides him with the means of achieving immortality through a museum back home; in his words, "To my small native town this my collection I shall bequeath. Something of me. The best" (124).

As collectors, both Stein and Wallace view butterflies as the epitome of nature's—and empire's—productions. Wallace sees his butterflies as the best in the world, as shown by his superlative descriptions of Malay flora and fauna: "The richest of fruits and the most precious of spices are here indigenous. It produces the giant flowers of the Rafflesia, the great green-winged Ornithoptera (princes among the butterfly tribes), the man-like Orang-Utan, and the gorgeous Birds of Paradise" (1). Though Wallace remarks on the number and diversity of all Indonesian insects, including "elegant" Longicorn (long-horned) beetles "remarkable for their large size, strange forms, and beautiful colouring" (19, 28), his royal birdwings claim the entomological throne. Wallace's more than eighty thousand beetles impress by their sheer numbers and variety, but his butterflies are distinguished by the passion for possession they inspire in their collector. In a similar way, Stein's superb butterfly eclipses his beetles through the personal significance it acquires for him as a collector. Marlow himself witnesses the bespectacled Stein's "intense, almost passionate

absorption with which he looked at a butterfly, as though on the bronze sheen of these frail wings, in the white tracings, in the gorgeous markings, he could see other things" (126). Meanwhile, Stein's words provide Marlow with a lesson in reading this specimen:

"Look! The beauty—but that is nothing—look at the accuracy, the harmony. And so fragile! And so strong! And so exact! This is Nature—the balance of colossal forces. Every star is so—and every blade of grass stands so—and the mighty Kosmos in perfect equilibrium produces—this. This wonder; this masterpiece of Nature—the great artist." (126)

In this Whitmanesque rhapsody, the curatorial Stein describes the sometimes paradoxical virtues embodied by his butterfly, which, even in death, is at once a feat of engineering and a work of art, eclipsing a flawed humanity in its perfection.

In this butterfly, Conrad also provides an image of his protagonist, the doomed but undaunted Jim, who is "as perishable and defying destruction as these delicate and lifeless tissues displaying a splendour unmarred by death" (126). Despite past failures, Jim defeats the marauding "Arab half-breed" Sherif Ali (157) and confronts the petty tyrant Rajah Allang without regard for his own life to become the virtual ruler of Patusan. In the process, Jim emerges as "a creature not only of another kind but of another essence" (140), undergoing a butterfly-like transformation or rebirth in the East. His paternalistic acceptance of responsibility for "every life in the land" (240) elevates the "frail aspiring Idealist" Jim further above the figurative beetles or

"cynical self-preserving empiricists" around him, as Stein's collection comes to embody what Tony Tanner calls "a central metaphor for the extremes of human conduct and values" in the novel (41).

Thus, butterflies become for Conrad, as for Wallace, a symbol of ideals and of the ideal. For Stein, the possession of an exceptionally rare and magnificent butterfly is, as Donald C. Yelton suggests, "the fulfillment of an ideal aspiration, a thing dreamed of at the very height of prosperity and good fortune" (474). Even as the capture of a butterfly represents the end of a quest, butterflies in general symbolize the collector's never-ending pursuit for perfection or completion. As Wallace comments, because of the element of chance and the difficulty of obtaining particular butterflies, a traveler's collection, no matter how "fine," must necessarily be "fragmentary and imperfect" (22). Likewise, when Marlow judges the would-be hero Jim for having abandoned the sinking Patna as its first mate, he compares this missed opportunity to an escaped butterfly: "[H]e knows of one which he certainly did not catch" (133). Reflecting on his own unfulfilled dreams or lost butterflies, Stein responds, "Everybody knows of one or two like that . . . and that is the trouble—the great trouble" (133). For these men, butterflies represent what can be imagined, if not achieved.

In a more specific sense, tropical butterflies also exemplify the colonial aspirations of Europeans like Stein, Wallace, and all those who, in Conrad's words, "adventured their persons and lives and risked all they had for a slender reward" (138). Jim's own reward takes the form of the otherworldly Jewel, who shares her

character and her fate as a woman with Stein's butterflies. Like her ill-used mother, Jewel is one of "the beings that come nearest to rising above the trammels of earthly caution" (169). Moreover, Jewel's love possesses "an extraterrestrial touch," and her tenderness is said to hover over Jim "like a flutter of wings" (172). The characterization of Jewel as a butterfly is further reinforced by the description of her as a protective spirit: "[T]wo wide sleeves uprose in the dark like unfolding wings, and she stood silent" (187-88). As a woman, though, she is doomed to suffer the "lingering torment" of such fragile creatures (169). In this respect, she resembles the aptly-named geisha of Puccini's Madama Butterfly (1904), who becomes the victim of her American lover's "frenzy to pursue her . . . even if [he] should have to crush her wings" (9). Jim rescues Jewel from her brutish stepfather, "the unspeakable Cornelius" (168), only to abandon her later when he answers with his own life for the death of the Bugis chief's son, which results from Jim's misplaced trust in a stranger. After Jim's altruistic death at the vengeful Doramin's hands, Jewel seeks refuge in Stein's house, where she leads "a sort of soundless inert life" amid her inanimate counterparts in Stein's collection (253). Like Stein's butterflies and Jim himself, Jewel is sacrificed for the purpose of a male quest, namely Jim's obsessive pursuit of "a shadowy ideal of conduct" to atone for his earlier failure at sea (253).

As with Jim's personal quest for redemption, Stein's solitary pursuit also comes to an end with himself. Of the collector, Marlow narrates, "Stein has aged greatly of late. He feels it himself, and says often that he is 'preparing to leave all this; preparing to leave . . .!' while he waves his hand sadly at his butterflies" (253). Like

Nick Carraway's departure from the Midwest in The Great Gatsby (1925), Stein's imminent exodus from his land of opportunity symbolizes the end of a dream. Because Stein's farewell to his butterflies signals his bequeathal of them to others, his gesture also portends his own death as a collector. Whereas Job Legh's enthusiastic return to insect collecting at the conclusion of Gaskell's Mary Barton indicates a New World renaissance for him and his family in Canada, Stein surrenders his romantic ideals along with his entomology at the end of Lord Jim. Unable to cultivate Jim as a surrogate son and heir to succeed him, Stein leaves his commercial operation to his unnamed partner, as Patusan apparently reverts to anarchy. Thus, Stein's colonial enterprise shares its uncertain fate with his butterflies, which finally slip through his fingers.

### **The Empire Strikes Back: The Butterflies of the Baskervilles**

Though the capitalist Harry Gee of Conrad's "An Anarchist" (1923) ridicules butterfly collecting as a "deadly sport" and mocks the lepidopterist-narrator as a "desperate butterfly-slayer" (137, 138), he nevertheless draws attention to the lethal character of this pursuit. To clear themselves of charges of cruelty for killing what they caught, nineteenth-century entomologists often pointed to the apparent insensibility of insects to suggest that they did not inflict any great pain on their quarry. Moreover, Victorian insect collectors developed more efficient and humane agents to improve and expedite the killing process, largely for their own convenience

(Allen 145-7; Salmon 61-5). Around 1835, crushed laurel leaves, which emit prussic acid gas, came into widespread use in killing jars as an alternative to such crude methods as red-hot needles, pins dipped in nitric acid, boiling water, and smoke. Though laurel did not injure the color of specimens, as did sulfur matches and ammonia, it worked rather slowly. By the mid-1850s, potassium cyanide had been adopted as a faster option, although it was more dangerous to use and tended to cause stiffening in insects' wings, as did chloroform, which had been made popular in surgery a few years earlier. Alternatively, butterflies could be "easily killed by a prolonged sharp pinch under the thorax before being taken from the net, and [did] not need to be put in a poison-box" (A. E. H. White 23), although this hands-on method was not for the squeamish.

The frequent repetition of such necessary, if disagreeable, killing techniques supposedly inured entomologists to their cruelty, which contributed to the perception of insect collectors as unfeeling and heartless, if not bloodthirsty. In Arthur Conan Doyle's Hound of the Baskervilles (1902), the killer of Sir Charles Baskerville is concealed as well as revealed through his lifelong pursuit of lepidoptery, which is portrayed as the respectable but mortal pastime of an exile's son with aristocratic designs, who comes to England to seize a family title and inheritance. As with the rest of the Sherlock Holmes saga, Doyle's Hound "arouse[s] fear and pleasure that the foreign has invaded and threatens to contaminate and exoticize the homeland"; then, it "introduce[s] the hero Holmes to protect England and regulate the incursion of insidious and welcome interlopers" (J. McLaughlin 51). In an outcome that endorses

northern over southern New World influences upon England, the failure of the predatory tropical butterfly collector's countercolonization allows for the renovation of Baskerville Hall, the restoration of the family's "fallen grandeur" (19), and the renewed prosperity of the countryside under the direction of a hardy Canadian farmer turned British heir.<sup>81</sup>

Written at "a moment of national crisis and doubt" during the Boer War of 1899-1902 (J. McLaughlin 50), Doyle's novel pits two cousins and ex-colonials against each other for possession of a five-hundred-year-old family estate, an uncle's fortune from South African gold mines, and symbolic control of the future of England. Rodger Baskerville, the nephew of Sir Charles, inherits his father's name, if not the "sinister reputation" (165) that forced his parent to flee in disgrace to Latin America.<sup>82</sup> Rodger's "taste for entomology" (166), cultivated abroad during his father's permanent exile, lends him an air of respectability as well as the perfect cover when he assumes the alias of the naturalist Jack Stapleton, a botanist and lepidopterist. Rodger's initial appearance as Stapleton in the novel reinforces the aspect of a harmless student of nature; in Watson's words, "He was a small, slim, clean-shaven, prim-faced man, flaxen-haired and lean-jawed, between thirty and forty years of age, dressed in a grey suit and wearing a straw hat. A tin box for botanical specimens hung over his shoulder, and he carried a green butterfly-net in one of his hands" (70). Rodger's interest in natural history identifies him as a man of education and science, like Sir Charles and his friend, the physician Dr. James Mortimer, who share an interest in comparative anatomy. Under the guise of Stapleton, Rodger takes

advantage of the isolation of the moors and "a community of interests in science" (22) to befriend the superstitious Sir Charles while conspiring against his life. Rodger even feigns concern about his uncle's health when the baronet begins to fear for his life upon the apparent return of the legendary hound that is said to have haunted generations of Baskervilles. He continues this masquerade upon the arrival of Watson, whom he invites to inspect his collection of Lepidoptera, which Rodger proudly calls "the most complete one in the south-west of England" (78).

Rodger's affected feelings, like his assumed name, establish a likeness between the collector and his specimens, many of which were known for their ability to disguise themselves through their protective resemblance to flower petals and dead leaves or their mimicry of noxious counterparts (Punnett 8). In fact, such involuntary deception was recognized by Victorian entomologists as a primary survival mechanism for butterflies. In The Naturalist on the River Amazons (1863), Henry Walter Bates, who collected with Wallace in South America in late 1848, suggested the importance of butterflies to an understanding of both mimicry and evolution. He noticed striking similarities in appearance between some Brazilian butterflies that were palatable to birds and other butterflies that predators apparently found distasteful or even poisonous. This defensive resemblance, which came to be known as Batesian mimicry, provided harmless butterflies with protection from predation and also offered evolutionists a convincing example of natural selection at work (Rice 264). Moreover, Bates observed that the distinct shapes, colors, and patterns of butterflies' wings "vary in accordance with the slightest change in the conditions to which the

species are exposed," making them an ideal register of adaptation to environmental change and "the story of the modifications of species" (338). Even as the murderous Rodger Baskerville shows "malignant and retrogressive tendencies" (Kissane and Kissane 362), he also demonstrates an adaptability to circumstance that gives him a personal, if not Darwinian, advantage over his unsuspecting relatives and others. Rodger's elaborate and deliberate subterfuge, reminiscent of the deceptions and disguises of Amazonian butterflies, not only protects him from detection, but also allows him to act as predator rather than prey. To this end, Rodger uses phosphorus to lend a glowing and demonic appearance to the savage mastiff-bloodhound, of mixed origins like himself, that literally frightens his uncle to death.

Further imitating his specimens in habit and appearance, Rodger undergoes a series of identity changes, each of which reflects the ongoing metamorphosis of a butterfly from a caterpillar to an adult. After he marries a Caribbean beauty and embezzles a large amount of public funds, Rodger changes his name to Vandeleur and flees to England, where he establishes a school in the east of Yorkshire. Following the death of the consumptive tutor whose talents made the undertaking a success, Rodger's school sinks "from disrepute into infamy" (165). Having lost their good name, the Vandeleurs change their surname to Stapleton, and Rodger establishes himself near his family's ancestral home in Devonshire. This outpost allows Rodger to cultivate friendships with Sir Charles and his neighbors while plotting the weak-hearted baronet's demise. When the new heir Sir Henry arrives in London, Rodger follows him, wearing a beard and looking like a spy, as Watson observes. He even

uses Holmes's own name as an alias while fleeing from the detective. Moreover, Holmes speculates that Rodger, to avoid suspicion in the event of Sir Henry's death, could have "adopt[ed] an elaborate disguise" to establish his identity as the last of the Baskervilles (174).

Rodger's spurious appearance as Stapleton is made all the more convincing by his Costa Rican wife Beryl's forced participation in his trickery. The partners in crime somehow manage to masquerade as brother and sister, despite the striking physical differences between them. As Watson narrates, "There could not have been a greater contrast between brother and sister, for Stapleton was neutral-tinted, with light hair and grey eyes, while she was darker than any brunette whom I have seen in England—slim, elegant, and tall" (75). In an effort to obtain the Baskerville estate, Rodger uses Beryl as a "decoy" (166) to attract the new Canadian bachelor-heir, just as moth collectors would draw swarms of males with a single female as bait in a practice called assembling (Allen 150). The ploy works all too well for Rodger, who soon becomes jealous of the affection that his wife and the baronet show for each other. Watson, Sir Henry, and even Rodger himself acknowledge a brother's "natural" love for his sister (94) but suggest that this affection has its proper limits, which Rodger violates with his excessive demands upon both Beryl and Henry. While the inappropriate intimacy between the supposed Stapleton siblings may appear to verge on incest, it actually invites adultery or bigamy, as the co-conspirators pursue relationships outside of their marriage, with Rodger courting the married Laura Lyons. In their sexual relations, then, the childless Stapletons ironically show the

kind of biological imperative typically associated with butterflies and other insects in their lives of propagation and proliferation. In this respect, the novel associates entomology with erotic attraction and lust, if not with reproduction, in what Kurt Johnson and Steve Coates describe as a typical fashion in fiction (293).

The changeable Rodger resembles his prey even more closely in his pursuit of a "Cyclopides" during his first interview with Dr. Watson. Watson emphasizes the affinity between hunter and hunted in his description of the chase:

A small fly or moth had fluttered across our path, and in an instant Stapleton was rushing with extraordinary energy and speed in pursuit of it. To my dismay the creature flew straight for the great Mire, but my acquaintance never paused for an instant, bounding from tuft to tuft behind it, his green net waving in the air. His grey clothes and jerky, zigzag, irregular progress made him not unlike some huge moth himself. (75)

In this scene, Stapleton's excitement over what he describes as a very rare species, "seldom found in the late autumn" (76), apparently leads him to abandon all caution near the dangerous Grimpen Mire in his impulsive pursuit of this most desirable specimen, the loss of which he sorely laments. The naturalist's enthusiasm here seems genuine enough; indeed, Stapleton's knowledge and credentials as an entomologist are never doubted or challenged. In fact, Holmes later discovers at the British Museum that Rodger "was a recognized authority on the subject, and that the name of Vandeleur has been permanently attached to a certain moth which he had, in

his Yorkshire days, been the first to describe" (166). In the case of the Cyclopides, the exact identity of Stapleton's specimen remains uncertain, despite the fact that he twice refers to it by name. Donald Girard Jewell goes so far as to suggest that Watson "probably knew little about moths and butterflies anyway, so the naturalist could select any name he liked for his quarry" (11).

However, Doyle's choice of Cyclopides, no matter how imprecise the designation, suggests significant parallels between the naturalist and his game. This genus, defunct even in Doyle's day because of changes in nomenclature, once belonged to the Hesperidae family of butterflies, commonly called skippers because of their short, jerking flight (Jewell 10; Stainton, British 61). The popular Victorian naturalist Edward Newman characterized their movement as "brisk and devoid of grace," "rather more like the blundering flight of a full-bodied moth than the business-like progress made by a butterfly" (169). Watson's description of Rodger and his butterfly as moths of a sort further reflects the mothlike appearance of skippers in terms of their drab colors, from dark brown to tawny (Jewell 10). More important, skippers are known as "concealers" because their caterpillars, unlike those of most butterflies, hide themselves as in a silk cocoon before changing into a chrysalis (Newman 169). Rodger is a concealer of a similar kind, hiding under his many assumed identities and appearances before he plans to reemerge under his own name. Moreover, during his insect hunts, Rodger learns to penetrate the Cyclopides' boggy habitat, the great "impassable" mire (73), where he hides the ferocious hound he turns on both Sir Charles and Sir Henry. Like a butterfly, the elusive Rodger also shows his

"readiness of resource" when he escapes from Holmes and Watson in London (170). However, the naturalist's inability to capture the desirable Cyclopedes foreshadows the ultimate failure of his designs upon the house of the Baskervilles.

Rodger's character as a butterfly collector eventually suggests his propensity for killing those he cannot control. Once Holmes uncovers Rodger's "elaborate deception" (131) through his past as a schoolteacher and entomologist, Watson reappraises the naturalist and his occupation. As he states, "In that impassive, colourless man, with his straw hat and his butterfly-net, I seemed to see something terrible—a creature of infinite patience and craft, with a smiling face and a murderous heart" (131). In the family portrait gallery at Baskerville Hall, Holmes recognizes Rodger as a physical and spiritual "throwback" (145) to the degenerate ancestor who represents England's old aristocracy, the "wicked" kidnapper and villain Hugo (144), who was supposedly victimized by the original spectral Baskerville hound for his crimes. Holmes, like Watson, sees through the butterfly collector to what lies beneath: "[H]e seems a quiet, meek-mannered man enough, but . . . there was a devil lurking in his eyes" (144). Moreover, Holmes takes Rodger's general conduct, including his entomological pursuits, as evidence of a larger career of crime, including four unsolved burglaries in the West Country, one of which involved the cold-blooded shooting of a page by a masked gunman. Rodger's proximity to these crimes, his elaborate disguises and assumed names, and his practice of killing butterflies for "relaxation" (159) make him the prime suspect in these other cases. Rodger's transformation of his own wife into a living museum specimen, "swathed

and muffled in sheets" like a cocoon in the midst of his glass-topped cases of butterflies and moths (159), also shows the lengths to which the collector is willing to go to achieve his ends.

Ultimately, butterfly collecting becomes for Doyle a metaphor for capture and control. Rodger's peripatetic pastime allows him to monitor his wife's progress with Sir Henry during the couple's outdoor rendezvous, and he even appears dressed in full butterfly attire, with net in hand, to interrupt the baronet's marriage proposal. In fact, Rodger wields such power over his "tropical and exotic" wife (82) that she is eventually reduced to the mute and immobile centerpiece of his butterfly collection to keep her from betraying him. Watson indicates his own sense of being placed at someone else's mercy through a reference to Rodger's avocation: "Always there was this feeling of an unseen force, a fine net drawn round us with infinite skill and delicacy, holding us so lightly that it was only at some supreme moment that one realized that one was indeed entangled in its meshes" (126). More important, Holmes's appropriation of the language of butterfly hunting suggests Rodger's inability to flee his pursuers. Once Holmes has identified his suspect, he tells Watson, "My nets are closing upon him, even as his are upon Sir Henry, and with your help he is already almost at my mercy" (133). Imagining himself as a hunter of butterflies and Rodger alike, Holmes adds, "We have him, Watson, we have him, and I dare swear that before tomorrow night he will be fluttering in our net as helpless as one of his own butterflies. A pin, a cork, and a card, and we add him to the Baker Street collection!" (145). Holmes's mention of the "Baker Street collection" evokes

not only the past criminals that have fallen into his net but also the wax figures of sensational criminals in Madame Tussaud's Chamber of Horrors, just around the corner. There, Rodger's likeness would have been identified with a numbered card, referring the spectator to his name and great crimes as listed in the exhibition catalogue. Perhaps it is Stapleton's destiny to be placed next to "Selden, the Notting Hill murderer" (61), who also haunts the moors.

Turning the entomological tables on Rodger, Holmes converts the collector into a specimen for his pursuit. Though Rodger eludes capture in his butterfly-like "flight" (161), he apparently becomes the victim of the moors themselves, as Holmes surmises: "Somewhere in the heart of the great Grimpen Mire, down in the foul slime of the huge morass which had sucked him in, this cold and cruel-hearted man is for ever buried" (162). As the would-be usurper is seemingly consumed by the native soil, England itself decides the expatriate lepidopterist's fate, making way for the legitimate successor whose northern upbringing promises a new day for the Baskervilles. As with the ex-colonials in A Study in Scarlet (1888), Rodger is punished for exporting his "vicious behavior" and ill-gotten gains to the motherland (Kestner 9), whereas Sir Henry emerges as the next generation of England by prospering abroad and returning with new money to the old country to restore its former glory (Jaffe 78-9, 87).

However, the uncertainty surrounding Rodger's disappearance leaves the specter of his threat from abroad hovering over the Baskerville estate, as he could reemerge, under another name, to seek his vengeance. An unexpected fog explains

how Rodger might have made a fatal misstep en route to his "bog-girt" island hideout on the night of his attempted escape (162). Yet Rodger's self-proclaimed mastery of the mire, cultivated while botanizing and butterflying, and the absence of a body raise the possibility that he survives his ordeal. Besides suggesting the need for continued vigilance against foreign threats disguised as native Britons, this lack of closure supplies one final possible correspondence between Rodger and his butterflies. As Victorian entomologists were fond of remarking, the butterfly traditionally served as an emblem of resurrection because of "its own progressive stages of caterpillar, chrysalis, and perfect insect," which were seen to parallel "the human soul's progress through earthly life and death, to heavenly life" (Coleman 34). Perhaps the objects of Rodger's collection are meant to imply that he, too, will rise again, whether from the mire or the Americas, to claim a contested patrimony.

### **Butterflies and the New Woman**

"[T]he most travelled British lepidopterist" of her time (Sheldon 193), the Norwich heiress Margaret Fountaine (1862-1940) collected in and wrote about sixty countries on six continents over fifty years. More important, butterflying overseas furnished Fountaine with an occupation that allowed her, as the fairly well-to-do eldest daughter of a country rector, to escape the confines of middle-class English domesticity and to define herself, as a collector abroad, through unconventional social relationships and male communities. For Fountaine, butterflying became a lived

metaphor, not only for escaping from her mother's dull house and friends into a world of travel and adventure, but also for love as chase and flight, evasion and pursuit. Meanwhile, writing served as a textual counterpart to Fontaine's collecting, as she recorded and relived each day's captures in her diaries. There, she also preserved personal mementos of her travels, including photographs, picture-postcards, and pressed wildflowers, which she described and annotated. These interpolated souvenirs serve as material witnesses to her autobiography, told as the story of a collector and "New Woman" of independent means.<sup>83</sup> As her diaries reveal, however, Fontaine fell short of her own expectations as a tropical entomologist and a would-be settler on the edge of empire.

Although Fontaine's butterflies remained physically separate from her diaries, they in effect engendered the narrative of her life through their appeal to memory, as Susan Stewart's account of the souvenir suggests. According to Stewart, souvenirs are objects of nostalgia that authenticate and distinguish experiences, and whose value is conferred through their context of origin and their relation to the possessor who incorporates them into a personal narrative of origins (135-6). In Fontaine's case, her predilection for butterflies as souvenirs was influenced by her association of them with thoughts of joining the man whom she later called the "greatest passion, and perhaps the most noble love of my life" (*Butterflies* 31). In 1886, Fontaine began a long-distance relationship and secret, though sporadic, correspondence with Septimus Hewson, an Irish chorister and guide at Norwich Cathedral, whom she had admired from afar for almost three years. Within a few

months, however, Fontaine heard rumors that Hewson was already engaged; he was later dismissed from the cathedral for drunkenness and left for Limerick with his debts unpaid. In the spring of 1889, Fontaine's unexpected legacy from a rich uncle provided her with enough income to make her financially independent. After a brief chaperoned visit to Dublin, she made plans for a longer trip to Ireland while watching butterflies flit by her at the family's summer house. The twenty-seven-year-old heiress eagerly wrote her beloved "Sep" to tell him of her good fortune, as she recorded in her diary, "offering, as it were, to buy the love of the man I loved" (Love 42). Despite their difference in social class, the two became engaged, or so Fontaine thought, until she received a letter from her fiancé's aunt breaking off the affair.

After the winter of 1890-91, which she spent recovering from the shock of her separation from Septimus, Fontaine turned to butterflies the following summer as a means of self-forgetfulness during a trip to Switzerland. As she explained, "I would often spend my afternoons at St. Jean and go out with an English girl after butterflies, a pursuit which once started became all-absorbing" (Love 55). Butterflyflying brought back Fontaine's memories of her childhood, when her prayer to capture a Greater Tortoiseshell to please her brother was answered (175). As she wrote of her first outings abroad,

I filled my pocket-box with butterflies, some I had only seen in pictures as a child and yet recognised the moment I caught sight of them on the wing. I little thought years ago, when I used to look with covetous eyes at the plates representing the Scarce Swallowtail or the

Camberwell Beauty that I should see both these in a valley in Switzerland and know the delight of securing specimens. I was a born naturalist, though all these years for want of anything to excite it, it had laid dormant within me. (55)

This 1891 trip began Fontaine's decade-long Grand Tour in search of butterflies and fellow entomologists throughout Europe, as she exchanged her visits to the cathedrals of England for more exotic quarry. Having abandoned the sepulchers that reminded her of her former beau, Fontaine now enjoyed working out in the open air. At Lake Como, she rhapsodized, "What a delightful life it was to be free, to wander where I would" (62). She later wrote, "Never did I derive half the pleasure from my cathedral sketching as I do now from my butterflies; that was always more or less a misery from the cold, sitting in draughty aisles; now it is a life of wandering beneath summer skies, and later on sitting in a warm, comfortable room to classify and arrange my trophies" (82). As exotic objects, arising directly out of their possessor's immediate experience, Fontaine's souvenir butterflies thus became a sign of her survival outside her "context of familiarity" (Stewart 148).

Throughout most of her life, Fontaine showed nothing of the "most laudable, stay-at-home character" or the "quiet domesticity" for which L. M. Budgen praised female butterflies in her Episodes of Insect Life (1849) (1: 314). Like other women travelers of her time, Fontaine created a unique traveling self through her participation in public life abroad, which challenged the Victorian ideology of separate spheres for men and women (Ghose 130; Frawley 25-6). Whenever

Fontaine visited her mother in England, she found life there narrow and unexciting. Viewing her return home in 1892 as a kind of distasteful physic for the soul, she wrote, "I had got back to Norwich now; I suppose it is necessary to one's moral digestion to swallow so many degrees of district visiting, Blind Asylum Fridays, Charity Bazaars, etc., etc., to counteract the delights of moving over foreign lands with a tolerably well-lined purse" (Love 63). Even after her mother moved to Bath the next year, Fontaine found little affinity for her pursuits when she put her collection on display for the domestic goddesses of local society. She complained, "How little my mother's friends who come to see my butterflies in winter at Bath realise the long hours of toil and heat and thirst those little insects represent" (118). Indoors, among unsympathetic company, her butterflies did not appear to their best advantage, as Fontaine lamented: "Even the butterflies failed to show their true brilliance beneath the gas burners in my mother's dining room when her friends came to see all my precious collection spread out for their inspection" (119). She detested the "dull peace of an English home" and, at age thirty-three, wondered how she could ever have contemplated ending her days "in a little villa in West Kensington" (83).

Fontaine's association of butterflies with her own freedom and femininity is best suggested by her remarks on the capture of "a splendid specimen of male Brimstone" in Florence (Love 59). Despite the insect's gender, as revealed by its coloring, Fontaine remarks, "It gave me a pang of remorse to take this creature away from her flowers and her sunshine, which I too knew so well how to enjoy; the death of a butterfly is the one drawback to an entymological career" (59; emphasis added).

Fontaine's transgenering of the prized butterfly allows her to displace thoughts about threats to her own liberty onto a collection piece. She viewed domesticity, especially family, as the greatest challenge to her peripatetic way of life: "It is the affections that hold us back from great enterprises, it is the affections that tie us down to one spot on earth—if not in body, in spirit" (128). Fontaine also condemned marriage "as being an unbearable tie and constraint that must either become most irksome or else be broken" (83). However, in 1905, she was briefly engaged to Edwin Gilbertson, the vice-consul of Broussa in Turkey, only to break it off after hearing of her fiancé's debts. Thus, Fontaine's travels both reflect and disavow the motive of husband-hunting, which was often assigned to unmarried women who ventured abroad (Ghose 140).

Throughout her journeys, Fontaine cherished her escape from England and what she called "the conventionalities of civilisation" (Love 128). Even early in life, she declared, "[M]y ruling passion is the love of independence" (28). Her annual income of as much as four hundred pounds from her uncle Edward Lee Warner's estate provided her with the means to give scope to her "soaring" imagination (128), which found its material counterpart in her butterflies. Fontaine's modest but indispensable fortune allowed her to take advantage of the increased affordability and availability of foreign travel to the English middle classes and women alike (Frawley 21), while her rank and family connections provided her with introductions to wealthy collectors abroad, especially among communities of English expatriates on the Continent. Her ever-growing collection attested to her developing knowledge and

skill in her pursuit, as she acquired a sense of purpose and achievement, along with a lifetime passion and an eventual living as a commissioned collector. Moreover, the search for countless new and exotic specimens vastly expanded Fontaine's social circle, acquainting her with hundreds of people she never could have met in Norwich, including many men further down the social scale. As an unaccompanied and independent Englishwoman, she enjoyed a greater freedom than she would have known at home, one which she sought to preserve, along with the butterflies that were her avowed interest, wherever she went.

As a beginning collector in the early 1890s, Fontaine was at the vanguard of a resurgence of interest in insects rivaled only by the craze of seventy years before. Unlike the previous century, however, when women accounted for a quarter to a third of English entomologists (Allen 28), Fontaine was in the distinct minority as a serious female collector, which reflects the resistance of the male-dominated scientific establishment to the participation of women, most of whom were educated in domesticity rather than science (Middleton 4; Mercer 157-8). Indeed, at the time of Fontaine's 1898 election to the Entomological Society of London, there were only four other women among the society's approximately four hundred fellows (Neave and Griffin 162-197). Still, her interest and knowledge earned her ready acceptance from male collectors overseas, where lepidoptery was very much in vogue. As Fontaine wrote after arriving at a hotel in Corsica in 1893, "To have come here for the purpose of collecting butterflies was to find myself completely in the fashion, at least among the male visitors, a row of some three or four Englishmen . . . having all

come here for that express purpose" (Love 67). Compensating for a noticeable lack of female support at home, she sought refuge in the camaraderie and fraternity of male collectors, both in England and abroad.

Fontaine particularly enjoyed male company when she could maintain the privileges of rank and gender, which reinforced the social constructions that she resisted as a female collector and symbolic colonizer (Ghose 139-40; Mercer 151-3). Frustrated in her pursuit of Septimus Hewson, Fontaine took the place of the butterfly, rather than of the collector, in her relationships with men. Though she decried a married woman's "hencoop existence," a conflicted Fontaine also "shiver[ed] at the thought of perpetual spinsterhood" (Love 36). Abroad, she became the exotic specimen to be won or lost. As the object of male desire, Fontaine avoided the disappointment of wanting what she could not have. At first intent on revenge for being abandoned by Septimus, Fontaine discovered the power she had over men, as she noted with great satisfaction: "I believe it is a terrible pain to a man to love a woman who scorns him after having encouraged his affections for a time, and it was the pleasure of inflicting that pain that my soul was craving for; I could do it, I had learnt at last" (56). She dressed "becomingly" when not in her butterfly garb and delighted in a "new and very becoming way" of doing her hair (74, 86). Men found her "very pretty," and she used her charms to great advantage, marveling at the power of women to attract younger men and make them their devoted slaves (96). She found herself pursued by all manner of men, from her singing-master and three Palermo youths to "a wild, gipsy-looking fellow" (68) and a bearded baron with a

Baedeker. Her butterflying thus acquired an erotic component, which was heightened by warm spring and summer days in pastoral settings. Ever vigilant against surrendering herself sexually, for fear of having to give up the life she so enjoyed, Fountaine finally gave in after two years with her longtime companion, Khalil Neimy.

Fountaine's twenty-seven-year relationship with Neimy was a matter of shared passions rather than possession. Whenever she tried to make Neimy her husband, he became, whether by choice or circumstance, the one to flutter and evade. A Syrian dragoman of Greek descent who was fifteen years Fountaine's junior, Neimy endeared himself to her with his "untiring devotion and constant adoration" as her guide in Damascus in May 1901 (Love 137). He took to Fountaine's butterflying with enthusiasm; as she would later write, "Khalil also loved these insects for my sake, and his genuine delight at the acquisition of some fresh rarity was scarcely less than my own" (156). Near Baalbek, Fountaine vowed to marry him, while "the big, brown butterflies flitted unmolested to and fro among the hot rocks" (138). Almost immediately, though, Fountaine began to have second thoughts, feeling like one of her trapped butterflies, as she put it: "I saw there was but one way to extricate myself from this net into which I had fallen, and that was to break through its meshes; but should I have the heart to do it?" (Love, plate facing 137). She did not, and they might have been married in Damascus, had not Neimy belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church and been (she thought) a Turkish subject, which would have made her, as his wife, one too. Fountaine's apprehensions about relinquishing her British citizenship and the protections it afforded her as a woman and a traveler may be seen

as a reflection of the travel writer's common anxiety about being captured and made into the foreign "other" (Kerridge 167). Postponing marriage until Neimy should join her in England, Fontaine parted from him late in 1901, only to discover that he was already married, although he told her that his wife had turned to prostitution and their daughter had died.

When Fontaine rejoined Neimy in Constantinople in 1903, she declared him her husband "in all but name" (Love 167), but still hoped they would be married in fact. After spending much of the next four years apart, the two traveled together from 1907 to 1917, butterflying in the British tropics, beginning with two years in southern Africa, where "catching tropical butterflies was no easy matter; the intense heat seemed to have a most invigorating effect on them" (Love 193). From there, they journeyed on to Jamaica, "the headquarters of Papilio Homerus, that world-famed Papilio of huge magnitude" (204); the Indian state of Sikkim, "the entomologists' Eldorado," where Fontaine caught her first Kallima and obtained "the one and only specimen ever taken" of blue-grey Morphos (215); and southeast Asia.

Meanwhile, wanting to marry without losing her nationality, Fontaine determined to make Neimy a British subject. Towards this end, in 1914, the two tried farming in Australia, the land of Fontaine's "childish dreams" and home to "the huge Papilio Ulysses" (Butterflies 22, 23), where Neimy became a naturalized citizen three years later. In Fontaine's diaries, he underwent a corresponding metamorphosis, much like that of the caterpillars she raised, from Khalil to "Karl" and finally "Charles." Despite this Anglicization, he was really no closer to marrying Fontaine.

In fact, at the prospect of marriage in 1917, Neimy began to suffer from suspicions, nightmares, and apparent dementia, accusing Fountaine of "the vilest acts" of infidelity (Butterflies 27). A paranoid Fountaine attributed their misfortunes to unknown "enemies conspiring against [her]" and a house she felt was haunted by colonial ghosts: "[T]hough a new structure, goodness knows what deeds of wickedness had been perpetrated on that spot many years ago, when Myola was a little township" (Butterflies 29). Thus ended their joint venture down under, where, as Fountaine had written in her youth, "[i]t is a pretty common thing for a young man to go . . . in order to make his way in the world . . ." (Love 24). She mourned the "wreck of our lost dreams" (Butterflies 30) and the loss of her stolen engagement ring, which reminded Fountaine of her diminishing prospects for marrying Neimy.

Following a three-year hiatus, for the rest of their lives together, the two spent frequent interludes of a few months butterflying, after each of which Neimy visited his ailing mother and attempted, without success, to secure a divorce, until his death in 1928. After a New Zealand reunion with Neimy in 1920, Fountaine lamented that "the old, unsatisfactory relationship, travelling together for the sake of collecting entomological specimens, had to be resumed; all the old subterfuges, falling back upon the butterflies as the reason for our travelling together in this way; and again, as in the old days, the butterflies saved the situation" (Butterflies 59). In lieu of a husband, Fountaine had to settle for a collecting companion, who masqueraded as her brother or cousin, à la the Stapletons in Doyle's Hound. Over time, Fountaine's love

for Neimy turned into more of a maternal feeling for him, and in their last years together he became "more . . . a son than . . . a lover" to her (Butterflies 92).

With marriage eluding her as much as she had avoided it, Fontaine increasingly cultivated a surrogate motherhood of rearing butterflies. To obtain undamaged or perfect specimens, Fontaine, like many lepidopterists of her day, raised butterflies in captivity from eggs, caterpillars, or pupae. From these, she selected some for her collection and set the rest free. Because farming helped more butterflies to reach maturity than in the wild, Fontaine's efficient system of rearing, unlike collecting with a net, "produced a gain, rather than a loss, for the butterfly population," as W. F. Cater observes (Love 188). However, Fontaine found her mothering and collecting at odds when she had to kill butterflies she had raised for her collection. In her seventies, she portrayed herself as a murdering mother after the death of one butterfly in particular:

I never before felt more sorry for any butterfly I have ever bred than for a poor little Dardanus female. She stretched out her long proboscis, and seemed to be feeling about to find something to suck—and I? I gave her petrol, till she died. . . . [N]ow that Dardanus will always be there in my collection to remind me of the pangs of remorse I felt before I took her life. (Butterflies 114-15)

Fontaine's gas-guzzling African butterfly becomes for her a memorial to the costs of collecting, not the least of which is the compromise of her maternity. However, as she writes of the unfeminine brutality of plundering "the little, dusky wives and the

mothers of the next brood," "[T]here was no choice but to take a good thing when I saw it or give up collecting altogether" (Love 79-80).

Fontaine's acquisitiveness made her a rival of male collectors, with whom she competed for specimens and entomological preeminence, though often at a great disadvantage in terms of experience and resources. However, her emulation of the proprietary activities of male associates whose collections overshadowed her own helped her to negotiate a new identity for herself as a collector, albeit on a smaller scale. In the 1890s, she made the acquaintance of Henry John Elwes, an avid outdoorsman and the leading authority on Oriental skippers (Salmon 181). Elwes would later serve as Fontaine's mentor and an occasional traveling companion, but her introduction to his extensive collection at Colesborne proved inauspicious. After seeing Elwes's butterflies, Fontaine wrote in her diary, "I was dissatisfied with my own little collection in a way that was almost childish. 'Now you see the possibilities of a collection,' Mr. Elwes had said one day in the museum, to which I had replied, that on the contrary I only saw the impossibilities of a collection!" (Love 82). In 1925, Fontaine had a parallel encounter at the estate of former M. P. and banker Walter Rothschild, the second baron of Tring, whose private museum and zoo, assembled by a network of collecting agents, were described by his niece as "the greatest collection of animals ever assembled by one man . . ." (qtd. in Salmon 205). At his death in 1937, Rothschild's butterflies and moths alone numbered some 2.25 million specimens representing 100,000 species. Fontaine comments, "As to the Tring museum, it was infinitely more wonderful than anything I had ever imagined. I

felt inclined to quote the Queen of Sheba's remark to Solomon[:] 'The half of it had not been told me!'" (Butterflies 79). Associating Rothschild with Solomon for his prosperity rather than his wisdom, Fountaine describes how his vast collection reduced hers to insignificance: "As to the lepidoptera, Lord Rothschild told me that the number of specimens he now had of butterflies and moths alone was more than one and three quarters millions, and I thought to myself how my poor little collection of some 16,000 butterflies would be merely a drop in the ocean" (Butterflies 79). In this light, Fountaine's paid collecting for Rothschild can be seen not just as a matter of financial necessity but also as a concession to his superior collection and a way of contributing to a greater scientific and cultural enterprise.

From Rothschild, Fountaine, who herself "could claim relationship to some half dozen families in the British aristocracy" (Butterflies 51), borrowed the strategy of cultural patronage that allowed her to establish a personal legacy apart from her ancestry and traditional gender roles alike. After selling his huge collections of beetles and birds, Rothschild left the remainder of his Tring Museum to the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, though his "extensive and important" Lepidoptera were not moved to London until 1971 (Stearn 141-2, 379). Besides Rothschild's famous bequest, Fountaine probably knew of Elwes's donation of over 11,000 specimens of Palaearctic butterflies to South Kensington during his lifetime (Salmon 181). Emulating Rothschild and Elwes, Fountaine left her sketchbooks to South Kensington, while her collecting equipment and books went to the youngest member of the Royal Entomological Society. Closer to her childhood home at the

South Acre rectory, Fountaine bequeathed her entire collection of almost 22,000 butterflies and her twelve-volume manuscript diaries to the Norwich Castle Museum, where they joined the insect collections "from Mr. [Joseph] Sparshall and Mr. Simon Wilkin, which were arranged and added to by the Rev. William Kirby" (Southwell 60), the so-called father of British entomology. These early nineteenth-century East Anglian collectors, the members of some of England's first provincial and national entomological societies, in a sense fathered Fountaine, whose butterflies ultimately transformed her into a fellow benefactor and identified her as a member of the civic elite.

What distinguished Fountaine from her male predecessors, however, was the other use to which she put her butterflies. Though Fountaine never married Khalil Neimy, their collection of mostly tropical butterflies ultimately provided her with the means to formalize their relationship, however belatedly. As she designated in her will, "[T]he said collection shall be kept as a whole . . . and be known for all time as 'The Fountaine-Neimy Collection'" (Butterflies 131). By forever linking Khalil's name to her own through this donor memorial, Fountaine achieved a union that had escaped her in life. In the process, she also won recognition for her collection and implicit sanction for the transgressive life that had made it and her both. Like the fictional Stein and Stapleton, then, Fountaine found institutional validation for her collecting through a museum.

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With varying degrees of success, Stein, Stapleton, and Fountaine all make new selves abroad, apart from the traditional tethers of family, ancestry, and country. Even as they pursue their butterflies, these Aurelians all flee from a source of oppression back home: Stein, from his revolutionary past; Stapleton, from his family's profligate past; Fountaine, from the disappointment of lost love and the restrictions of English domesticity. Moreover, these fugitive collectors all inherit or stand to inherit a patrimony, whether from a relative or an acquaintance, that stimulates their collecting. Though they all make a name for themselves as collectors and authorities, they do not find lasting refuge in the tropics, which become more of a colonial nightmare than an entomologist's dream.

## Conclusion

In 1850, the author of a British Museum guidebook contemplated a fossilized human skeleton from Guadeloupe, possibly only a few centuries old, perhaps "the bony framework of some Carib Indian that lived and died about the time that Columbus was preparing for his voyage across the Atlantic" (Masson 266). This West Indian relic that evoked the beginnings of European colonialism in the Americas simultaneously conjured up a post-apocalyptic vision of an underwater England:

[S]hall the time ever come at all when, our present churchyards and burying-places, covered perchance by the sea, shall be but collections of fossil human beings, down into which the future geologist of the globe will dig for specimens of a race that once existed; and when, in some future scheme of fossil zoology, man shall figure at the head of a list of extinct vertebrate animals with whose remains his will be found associated? (265)

Despite the prospect of England's diluvian future, the death of the race, and his own potential afterlife as a fossil ages hence, the writer nevertheless imagines the persistence of collecting as a distinctively human endeavor. He asks, "Shall there ever be on this earth intelligent beings capable of studying such remains, and yet not possessing the organization that they present; or shall the only creature that shall wonder over fossil men be man himself?" (266).

In his evocation of science, empire, and the fate of the nation through a museum specimen, our fossil-gazer touches on many issues central to Victorian collecting, which helped to order knowledge, material culture, and social relations in nineteenth-century Britain. As this study has argued, collecting provided the Victorians with a widely available means of understanding, portraying, and refashioning themselves that was represented in the literature of the age as a source of prestige and social legitimation. From Dickens's earliest works to turn-of-the-century lepidopteran narratives, Victorian writing about collecting negotiated individual and collective identities through objects and texts. The Victorians saw themselves as a nation of collectors and, in the wake of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, and the industrial revolution, looked to collecting as a source of British identity. During the first half of the nineteenth century, prominent author-collectors asserted their specifically male authority and British dominion abroad through travel narratives about acquiring exotic artifacts for the nation or assembling proprietary collections exhibited back home. Meanwhile, Victorian novels included an array of collectors of all ranks, many of whom seek to enhance their professional or social status through their collections, which are often the products of competition or emulation. However, from mid-century on, a period in which museums proliferated and the British empire grew during the age of the New Imperialism, authors increasingly turned to the figure of the collector to convey anxieties about habits of consumption that posed threats to personal identity or social stability and a world of objects that were not necessarily under the consumer's control.

Besides surveying Victorian representations of collecting and the new social selves it enabled, my study suggests areas for further investigation. For one, my discussion of the collectography of Austen Henry Layard, Roualeyn Gordon Cumming, and Margaret Fountaine reveals the potential of travel writing as a source of information about Victorian collecting practices. However, as Laura Franey observes in her discussion of violence in nineteenth-century accounts of anthropological collecting, "the portrayal of collecting practices in [Victorian] travel narratives remains largely unexamined," despite scholarly interest in "travel writing, collecting, and racialized science" and a call to understand travelers' collecting methods and their relationship to individual objects (113, 192). Moreover, travel writing about collecting provides a unique source of evidence about indigenous responses to and involvement in European cultural practices, especially in locations where British power was "informal and in the making" (Jasanoff 9) and collecting served as a substitute for imperial conquest and control.

More work also needs to be done with women's collecting as documented in Victorian writing to explore how Margaret Fountaine's contemporaries and predecessors used accumulated objects to create or transform social selves. In some form, all of my chapters explore collecting in relation to gender, revealing how male and female collectors in Victorian texts reinforce or subvert the dominant gender codes of their time through their selection and management of material objects. With the exception of the effete connoisseur-invalids Frederick Fairlie and Noel Vanstone in Collins's novels, most men who collect in Victorian literature display the

stereotypically masculine personality traits associated with collecting, including "aggressiveness, competitiveness, mastery, and seriousness" (Belk and Wallendorf 242). However, the female collectors I discuss share many of these traits, challenging the traditional characterization of women as amateurs in the world of collecting. The relative absence of women collectors from nineteenth-century institutional records and auction catalogues demands that we look at other kinds of texts to write a more comprehensive history of women and collecting. Besides Fountaine's diaries and the travel writings of other New Women, the journals of Lady Eastlake, the wife of Royal Academy president and National Gallery director Charles Eastlake, and Charlotte Schreiber, one of the most celebrated Victorian collectors in the decorative arts, provide some of the materials for such an investigation.<sup>84</sup>

My use of the works of less well-known authors to supplement canonical fiction and poetry suggests that more Victorian voices on collecting await discovery and examination.<sup>85</sup> Newly considered Victorian representations of collecting, whether from literature, the visual arts, or popular culture, will help to modify, qualify, and extend the views of Victorian possessive selfhood and material culture I have developed here. As my readings show, in its elite and democratic forms, collecting furnished the Victorians with a culturally sanctioned means of navigating an expanding world of objects and fashioning new cultural identities and meanings, helping to make the nineteenth century, like our own, a collecting age.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For more on Richardson's life and work, see Hugh S. Torrens and John A. Cooper, "George Fleming Richardson (1796-1848)—Man of Letters, Lecturer and Geological Curator," Geological Curator 4 (1986): 249-72.

<sup>2</sup> This partial fossil skeleton of the Iguanodon, which Mantell had described and named in 1825, was discovered in a quarry near the town of Maidstone and purchased for Mantell by some friends. At the time, it represented "the nearest approach to the perfect skeleton yet brought to light" (Richardson 15).

<sup>3</sup> Richardson reproduces within a few silent changes (e.g., "vast" for "rare" in line 5 and "fame" for "fane," or temple, in line 9) what Mantell called the "pretty sonnet in the Gazette" that he copied into his diary (Knell 314):

Mantell! thou nobly hast achiev'd the praise  
That but to noblest natures doth belong;  
To soar superior to the triflers' throng,  
And by thy deeds thy monument to raise!  
For who that o'er thy vast Museum strays,  
And views with awe-struck soul the scene sublime,  
That seems to spurn the bounds of space and time,  
And wakes to view the world of other days!  
O who but feels that thou has reared a fame,  
That not alone shall charm the present age,

But to all time the pilgrim shall engage,  
To seek the spot where all thy triumphs reign!  
Yes, thou hast reared thee an immortal shrine;  
Then live or die content, a deathless name is thine! (222)

For Mantell's transcription, see E. Cecil Curwen, The Journal of Gideon Mantell (London: Oxford UP, 1940), 134.

<sup>4</sup> In On Longing, Susan Stewart discusses the Lilliputian and Brobdingnagian curiosities of Swift's Gulliver's Travels (1726) as exotic narrative-generating souvenirs of the miniature and gigantic, respectively (147). For Smollett's exploration of the nature of the collection and the process of accumulation in the 1750s and 1760s, see Edward L. Schwarzschild, "'I Will Take the Whole Upon My Own Shoulders': Collections and Corporeality in Humphry Clinker," Criticism 36 (1994): 541-68. Tatler 221 (7 Sep. 1710), Spectator 21 (24 Mar. 1711), Pope's Dunciad iv.421-36 (1743), and Cowper's "Epistle to Robert Lloyd, Esqr. 1754" all associate butterfly collecting with eighteenth-century virtuosi. For Scott's practice and portrayal of antiquarian collecting, see The Antiquary (1816); his recently published guide to Abbotsford and its collections, Reliquiae Trotcosienses ([Edinburgh]: Edinburgh UP/Abbotsford Library Project Trust, 2004); Iain Gordon Brown, The Hobby-Horsical Antiquary: A Scottish Character 1640-1830 (Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, 1980); Clive Wainwright, The Romantic Interior (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989); Yoon Sun Lee, "A Divided Inheritance: Scott's Antiquarian Novel

and the British Nation," ELH 64 (1997): 571-601; and Shawn Malley, "Walter Scott's Romantic Archaeology: New/Old Abbotsford and The Antiquary," Studies in Romanticism 40 (2001): 233-51. Byron attacks his fellow Scot Lord Elgin for removing the Parthenon marbles from Greece in his satirical polemic "The Curse of Minerva" (1811) and Canto II, stanzas 11-15 of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (1812); for more on Byron and the Elgin Marbles, see the International Byron Society's online edition of "The Curse of Minerva" (<[www.internationalbyronsociety.org/pdf\\_files/curse\\_minerva.pdf](http://www.internationalbyronsociety.org/pdf_files/curse_minerva.pdf)>).

<sup>5</sup> Full-length studies of prominent collectors and their contributions to collecting practices in nineteenth-century Britain include Margaret Gibson and Susan M. Wright, eds., Joseph Mayer of Liverpool, 1803-1886 (London: Society of Antiquaries/National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1988); Marjorie Caygill and John Cherry, eds., A. W. Franks: Nineteenth-Century Collecting and the British Museum (London: British Museum Press, 1997); and Anne Sebba, The Exiled Collector: William Bankes and the Making of an English Country House (London: John Murray, 2004). Seminal studies on specific categories of collecting in the Victorian era include David Elliston Allen, The Naturalist in Britain: A Social History (London: Allen Lane: 1976); Philippa Levine, The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians, and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986); Dianne Sachko Macleod, Art and the

Victorian Middle Classes: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996); and Simon J. Knell, The Culture of English Geology, 1815-1851: A Science Revealed through Its Collecting (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Asa Briggs provides one of the broadest treatments of Victorian collecting in his Victorian Things (London: B. T. Batsford, 1988), which discusses the wide variety of Victorian objects and alludes to collecting as a striking characteristic of the era.

<sup>7</sup> Other related studies include Tim Dolin, "Cranford and the Victorian Collection," Victorian Studies 36 (1992): 179-206; Nicholas Daly, "That Obscure Object of Desire: Victorian Commodity Culture and Fictions of the Mummy," Novel 28 (1994): 24-51; and Ruth Hoberman, "In Quest of a Museal Aura: Turn of the Century Narratives about Museum-Displayed Objects," Victorian Literature and Culture 31 (2003): 467-82.

<sup>8</sup> Belk, Collecting in a Consumer Society, 104, 156.

<sup>9</sup> Most prominently, the London antiquary Charles Roach Smith assembled his Museum of London Antiquities from remains turned up by metropolitan public works projects around mid-century. As he explains in his museum catalogue, excavations made to widen and add streets, to improve sewerage, and to deepen the bed of the Thames near London Bridge accidentally uncovered Anglo-Saxon, Roman, Norman, medieval, and Tudor artifacts. Because of city commissioners' indifference, workmen who found such historical objects were left to their own devices, leading to the destruction or dispersal of many antiquities. Smith attributes the preservation of his

artifacts to his "self-imposed stewardship" : "The portion which I obtained would also . . . have perished or passed away, had I not bestowed incessant personal exertion and solicitude in watching the works and encouraging the labourers, by the most persuasive of all arguments, to preserve, and also to understand what to preserve" (Catalogue of the Museum of London Antiquities [London, 1854], vi, iv-v). Though Smith labored in vain to convince city authorities to establish a public museum "to illustrate the early history of the metropolis" (vi), in 1856, the British Museum purchased Smith's 5000-piece archaeological collection, the museum's "first major purchase . . . of specifically British antiquities" (Susan Pearce, et al., eds., The Collector's Voice: Critical Readings in the Practice of Collecting, Vol. 3 [Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002], 141).

<sup>10</sup> In the second edition of his Journal of Researches into the Natural History and Geology of the Countries Visited during the Voyage of H. M. S. Beagle (New York: Harper, 1846), Darwin suggested the possible evolutionary significance of the Galapagos finches' "insensibly gradated" beaks, whose size and shape were later discovered to be adapted to particular feeding habits: "Seeing this gradation and diversity of structure in one small, intimately-related group of birds, one might really fancy that, from an original paucity of birds in this archipelago, one species had been taken and modified for different ends" (2: 147-8). Although Darwin's statement now seems tantalizing in its indication of the evolutionary origins of both his finches and his theory of natural selection, his understanding of the birds he collected was

retrospective, incomplete, and based more on speculation than on evidence. Darwin did not mention the finches again, not even in his Origin of Species (1859), and the birds only became attached to his name a century after his return aboard the Beagle. For more on the misunderstanding and misinformation surrounding the Geospizinae or "Darwin's finches"—some of which Darwin never saw—and their apocryphal relation to the origins of evolutionary theory, see Frank J. Sulloway's "Darwin and His Finches: The Evolution of a Legend," Journal of the History of Biology 15 (1982): 1-53.

<sup>11</sup> See Maxine Berg, Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> For the history of stamp collecting in Britain, see, among others, the British Museum zoologist John Edward Gray's Hand Catalogue of Postage Stamps for the Use of Collectors (London: R. Hardwicke, 1862), which contains a bibliography of related Victorian articles and works; Asa Briggs's Victorian Things, especially pp. 348-54; and Steven M. Gelber, "Free Market Metaphor: The Historical Dynamics of Stamp Collecting," Comparative Studies in Society and History 34 (1992): 742-69.

<sup>13</sup> The development and maintenance of these strategic routes for trade and communications between Britain and India was essential to England's eastern prosperity and security; as Ronald Robinson, John Gallagher, and Alice Denny state, "British positions and interests in half the world stood or fell upon the safety of the routes eastward" (Africa and the Victorians: The Climax of Imperialism [Garden City:

Doubleday, 1968], 13). By the 1840s, the overland route to India through the Middle East served as a faster alternative to the earlier Cape route around Africa for travelers as well as mail (Searight 117-19).

<sup>14</sup> Layard came from a "not especially rich" upper-middle-class English family (Larsen 35), and Cumming's father was the second baronet of Altyre and Gordonstown (Casada vii).

<sup>15</sup> See, among others, Gordon Waterfield, Layard of Nineveh (London: John Murray, [1963]), 191, 194; Arnold C. Brackman, The Luck of Nineveh (New York: McGraw-Hall, 1978), 225; and John Malcolm Russell, From Nineveh to New York (New Haven: Yale UP, 1997), 57.

<sup>16</sup> Frederick N. Bohrer observes that Layard "exaggerated the daunting, completely uncharted nature of the field," drawing "considerable protest from those who knew better," including travelers and scholars alike ("The Printed Orient," 85-6).

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Layard's commentary on the artistic qualities of a bas-relief from Nimrud with a battle scene:

I observed with surprise the elegance and richness of the ornaments, the faithful and delicate delineation of the limbs and muscles, both in the men and horses, and the knowledge of art displayed in the grouping of the figures, and the general composition. In all these respects, as well as in costume, this sculpture appeared to me not only to differ from, but to surpass, the bas-reliefs of Khorsabad. (1: 41)

Layard's inability to remove this slab did not diminish its significance, since he collected it in another form by drawing it and later having it engraved in his first folio volume of plates, The Monuments of Nineveh (London: J. Murray, 1851), fig. 28.

<sup>18</sup> Mogens Trolle Larsen writes, "[Layard] met unbelievably many people who really and truly wished him ill, and he was attacked and plundered so many times that it is difficult to keep track of" (The Conquest of Assyria [London: Routledge, 1996], 55).

<sup>19</sup> In The Return of Cultural Treasures (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989), Jeanette Greenfield notes the "vague" and "subjective" nature of the term "cultural property" (254), which has been used in divergent ways to assert national or communal ownership of objects that constitute a nation's or a people's identity. Strictly speaking, "cultural treasures" constitute a special category of cultural property and may be understood as "exceptional or unique landmark objects" (255). Despite their limitations, I use these terms to reflect Layard's valuation of Assyrian antiquities as well as his sense that these objects formed part of Britain's heritage, however remotely or imaginatively.

<sup>20</sup> In particular, Layard repeatedly describes the excitement of his workmen over their discoveries. Their unbridled enthusiasm contrasts with his outward show of restraint:

They soon felt as much interest as I did in the objects discovered, and worked with renewed ardour when their curiosity was excited by the

appearance of a fresh sculpture. On such occasions they would strip themselves almost naked, throw the kerchief from their heads, and letting their matted hair stream into the wind, rush like madmen into the trenches, to carry off the baskets of earth, shouting, at the same time, the war cry of the tribe. (1: 137)

The narrative displacement of Layard's euphoria onto his workers allows him to maintain a display of superiority through self-command while the Arabs make a spectacle of themselves.

<sup>21</sup> Subsequently known as the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III, this monument shows the submission of the biblical king Jehu and tribute being brought to the Assyrian king from the Near East (Curtis and Reade 11).

<sup>22</sup> Layard's sketchbooks are in the British Museum's Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities, and the Victoria and Albert Museum's Searight collection includes several drawings attributed to Layard. Many of Layard's drawings of his discoveries, together with those of the artists who accompanied him on his second expedition, were published by John Murray in The Monuments of Nineveh (first series, 1849; second series, 1853), which contains mostly illustrations of sculptures, along with some reconstructions and general views.

<sup>23</sup> Drawing upon Layard's discoveries and narrative, Rossetti's poem "The Burden of Nineveh" (1857, rev. 1870) uses the winged bull's placement in the British Museum as an occasion for reflections on the inevitable fall of the British empire.

See Carl Woodring, "The Burden of Nineveh," Victorian Newsletter 63 (Spring 1983): 12-14; Barbara J. Black, On Exhibit: Victorians and Their Museums (Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 2000), 141-5; and Andrew M. Stauffer, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Burdens of Nineveh," Victorian Literature and Culture 33 (2005): 369-94.

<sup>24</sup> For the early history of the British Museum's Assyrian display, see Bohrer, Orientalism, 114-131.

<sup>25</sup> Because universities offered no training in archaeological method in the Victorian period, Layard's background was typical for his time: "It was experience rather than formal training that typified a nineteenth-century archaeologist" (Levine 92).

<sup>26</sup> Layard's colleague and frequent correspondent Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, Britain's political resident at Baghdad, first translated Assyrian cuneiform just before the publication of Nineveh and Its Remains (Waterfield 168n). Layard used the translations of the Rev. Edward Hincks in writing the account of his second expedition (1849-51), Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon (London: J. Murray, 1853). For more on cuneiform and its decipherment, see Larsen, especially ch. 19-20 and 32.

<sup>27</sup> For the origins of biblical archaeology, see Neil Asher Silberman, "The Evolution of a Dream: Edward Robinson and the Birth of Biblical Archaeology, 1821-1842," in Digging for God and Country, 37-47.

<sup>28</sup> Where the higher criticism challenged the literal truth of the Bible by studying it as a human document rather than a divinely revealed text, uniformitarianism, as set forth in Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology (1830-33), cast doubt upon biblical chronology by theorizing that geological change was the result of slow and continuous processes taking place over eons, rather than the product of a series of global cataclysms, as the so-called Catastrophists believed. See Richard Altick, Victorian People and Ideas (New York: Norton, 1973), 219-226.

<sup>29</sup> In the early 1840s, "the geography of the African interior was still as much of a mystery to Europeans as it had been to the Greeks and Romans. The existence of the great lakes was not suspected, and the whereabouts of the sources of the Nile and Congo were subjects of unproductive speculation" (Jeal 18).

<sup>30</sup> "Britain had taken the Cape Colony from the Dutch during the Napoleonic Wars and had made their possession formal in 1806. With a clement climate, no malaria, and, in the Cape Colony at least, no tsetse fly, South Africa [in the 1840s] seemed set to rival Canada and Australia as a successful European colony" (Jeal 23).

<sup>31</sup> Though his narrative reveals big-game hunting to be what Harriet Ritvo calls a "complex cooperative venture" (279), Cumming tends to downplay the contributions of others while focusing on those episodes that highlight his own intelligence, skill, courage, and strength. The seventeen engravings that accompany his narrative reinforce this aspect of his account, typically portraying a solitary Cumming, mounted on horseback, in pursuit of a herd of giraffes, zebras, or antelopes, or bravely taking

on a lion, rhino, or hippo at close range. Where his companions are shown, they are usually bystanders or victims, though the Hottentot Kleinboy does lend a hand in "Drawing a Snake" (facing 2: 129). On occasion, the unidentified illustrator depicts Cumming eluding an angry rhino or elephant, but even in these scenes, the protagonist, unlike his companions, never seems in need of rescue.

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, the plates "Nocturnal Adventure with Six Lions" (facing 2: 117) and "Elephant Shooting by Moonlight" (facing 2: 237).

<sup>33</sup> Harriet Ritvo further suggests that Cumming's narrative, as an imperialist adventure "in which Britain appropriated exotic territories and subjugated alien people," also allowed "even humble citizens" to participate vicariously in "a kind of metaphoric reenactment of conquest that had previously been confined to the privileged classes" (257).

<sup>34</sup> At the Egyptian Hall in 1837, Dr. Andrew Smith displayed natural specimens and artifacts collected by the expedition of the Cape of Good Hope Association for Exploring Central Africa. Two years later, the German-born Robert Hermann Schomburgk mounted a Guianese exhibition at the Cosmorama Rooms that included three natives who had been part of his boat crew (Altick, Shows of London 290).

<sup>35</sup> For the rise and decline of panoramas as a form of popular entertainment in nineteenth-century London, see Altick, Shows, especially ch. 10-15 and 33.

<sup>36</sup> The Anglicanized Ruyter presented a striking contrast to his predecessors on display, the last of whom were seen by Dickens and others as little better than animals; see Altick, Shows, 279-81.

<sup>37</sup> As with Cumming, Quatemain's hunting becomes inextricably linked to colonial conquest. In King Solomon's Mines (1885), a successful elephant hunt foreshadows a triumphant rebellion Quatemain helps to lead against the usurper Twala of the Kukuanas. Moreover, Quatemain's brother-in-arms Sir Henry Curtis keeps at his Yorkshire manor-house the mementos of their bloody African adventures, including the tusks of the elephant that killed their servant Khiva and the axe with which Curtis decapitated Twala.

Quatemain and Haggard's other protagonists who journey to and collect from ancient civilizations also share affinities with the archaeologist Layard. Recalling Layard's interest in moveable antiquities, when Quatemain pockets diamonds from King Solomon's legendary treasure chamber in Africa, he rationalizes, "[I]t had . . . become a sort of second nature with me never to leave anything worth having behind, if there was the slightest chance of my being able to carry it away" (293). Just as Layard provided his workmen with personal mementos upon his departure, Quatemain's fellow traveler Captain John Good gives their guide Infadoos his eyeglass as a souvenir, "foreseeing that the possession of such an article would enormously increase his prestige" (311). In Haggard's She (1887), the confirmed bachelor Holly collects relics of dead women from the fallen African empire of Kôr,

including a lock of hair from the two-thousand-year-old Ayesha, who perishes in the pillar of flame that was her fountain of youth. The ruins of Kôr, like those of Assyria, contain bas-reliefs and strange writing on the walls.

<sup>38</sup> See European & Asian Furniture & Decorative Arts, Sale 2246, 17 July 2004 (Boston: Skinner, 2004), 83.

<sup>39</sup> Two months later, the Gentleman's Magazine was more sanguine, explaining that the prognosis was better than originally expected: "The vase is considerably and severely injured, but not so irreparably so as might at first be supposed" ("The Portland Vase," Gentleman's Magazine 23 [1845]: 300). Indeed, the vase was reassembled from its over two hundred fragments and put back on display by September 1845.

<sup>40</sup> The repaired painting is now catalogued at the National Gallery under the title of Leda and the Swan and described as in the style of Mola.

<sup>41</sup> As Toshio Kusamitsu explains, beginning in the early 1820s, the mechanics' institutes of provincial manufacturing towns provided job-related scientific instruction for skilled workmen and displayed new technology for the working classes and lower-middle class mechanics and artisans. These pioneering institutes also hosted numerous industrial and art exhibitions for heterogeneous audiences in the late 1830s and early 1840s ("Great Exhibitions before 1851," History Workshop 9 (1980): 70-89). See also Edward Royle, "Mechanics' Institutes and the Working Classes, 1840-1860," Historical Journal 14 (1971): 305-21.

<sup>42</sup> In a March 1850 Household Words article on "The Amusements of the People," Dickens describes polytechnic institutions like the one on London's Regent Street as places "where an infinite variety of ingenious models are exhibited and explained, and where lectures comprising a quantity of useful information on many practical subjects are delivered." However, in the same breath, he cautions against relentless didacticism in rational recreation: "[W]e think a people formed entirely in their hours of leisure by Polytechnic Institutions would be an uncomfortable community" ("The Amusements of the People," Household Words 1 [1850]: 13).

<sup>43</sup> See, among others, Jane Bacon, "Waxwork," Dickensian 33 (1937): 111-12; Paul Schlicke, "The Old Curiosity Shop: The Assessment of Popular Entertainment" in Dickens and Popular Entertainment (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985), 87-136; Pamela Pilbeam, Madame Tussaud and the History of Waxworks (London: Hambledon and London, 2003), 120-122; and Michelle E. Bloom, "The Business of Wax in Dickens," in Waxwork: A Cultural Obsession (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2003), 191-210.

<sup>44</sup> As Jane Bacon observes, Madame Tussaud's happened to establish itself near Dickens's London residences at Furnival's Inn, Doughty Street, and Devonshire Terrace. Thus, "although there seems to be no evidence of his ever having gone to see the Waxwork, it is hardly likely that [Dickens] failed to do so" ("Waxwork," Dickensian 33 (1937): 111).

<sup>45</sup> Compare to Tussaud's description of the infamous resurrectionists William Burke and William Hare, who resorted to serial killing to supply cadavers for dissection in the late 1820s:

The annals of crime can scarcely exhibit two agents equal in atrocity to the subjects of this group. Allured by the prospects of gain, held out by the Professors of Anatomy in Edinburgh, they undertook to furnish, from time to time, a number of subjects for the practice of the students. Thinking it unsafe to ransack the burying grounds, they formed the detestable resolution of decoying poor persons whom they might chance to meet with, to the home of one or other of them, and then, with the greatest appearance of friendship, to ply them with spirits till they were in a complete state of intoxication: this being accomplished, they contrived to throw them down; and, while one held close the nostrils and mouth of the victim, the other knelt upon the breast until a complete suffocation took place, when they stripped the body, packed it in a box, and in some instances, while yet warm, took it to the Professor's and received the usual price. This practice they carried on for upwards of ten months, during which a number of persons disappeared in a manner that could not be accounted for. (Tussaud 34-5)

After their arrest, Hare testified against Burke, who was convicted and executed, while Hare was set free.

<sup>46</sup>The English practice of using wax effigies at state funerals is fully discussed in Julian Litten's "The Funeral Effigy: Its Function and Purpose" (Anthony Harvey and Richard Mortimer, eds., The Funeral Effigies of Westminster Abbey [Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1994], 3-19).

<sup>47</sup>This reversal is not mentioned in Dickens's text but is recorded in the illustration that accompanies Jarley's attempts to market her exhibition to the general public at the end of Chapter 32 of The Old Curiosity Shop. Because Dickens's letters to the illustrators of the novel "show that he often had very clear notions of what they should depict," the content and placement of this illustration must have met with Dickens's approval (Norman Page, Introduction, The Old Curiosity Shop [New York: Penguin, 2000], xxvi).

<sup>48</sup>Sol's shop also happens to resemble the United Service Museum, which had been a London fixture since 1831. Located inside the banqueting hall of Whitehall Palace, the Service Museum was formed to lend a scientific aspect to the character of the army and navy, both of which contributed greatly to geographical research and studies in natural history. However, Dickens's familiarity with this institution is a matter of conjecture. He does not allude to it in any of his correspondence or writings, including his two weeklies. Dickens's occasional references to Whitehall and Scotland Yard, though, show that he knew the museum's neighborhood.

Moreover, by the late thirties, Dickens was acquainted with Charles Knight, the editor and publisher of the popular Penny Magazine, which profiled the museum in 1841; see "United Service Museum," Penny Magazine 10 (1841): 274-77, 286-88. If Dickens happened to read the article or, better yet, to visit the Service Museum, he would have known that the museum's contents belonged "principally to the following divisions": "naval and military models; naval and military arms; naval and military relics; illustrations of the arts and manners and customs in foreign countries; coins and other monuments of past ages; and natural history" ("United" 288).

<sup>49</sup> Samuel Smiles profiles Victorian exemplars of self-improvement through collecting in Life of a Scotch Naturalist and Robert Dick, Baker, of Thurso: Geologist and Botanist (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1876).

<sup>50</sup> As Humphreys explains, Livy's history was arranged, perhaps by the author himself, in groups of ten books, or decades, each of which is accompanied by an epitome or index (1: 56-7).

<sup>51</sup> In his Curiosities of Literature, first published in 1791-93 and later revised, Isaac D'Israeli suggests that "the most voluminous" classical authors such as Livy and Diodorus were more prone to the depredations of scribes than their less prolific counterparts because their works furnished more parchment for copying: "[T]hese were preferred, because their volume being the greatest, most profitably repaid [the monks'] destroying industry, and furnished ampler scope for future transcription" (Marvin Spevack, ed., Isaac D'Israeli on Books: Pre-Victorian Essays on the History

of Literature [London and New Castle: The British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 2004], 165).

<sup>52</sup> See Ruari McLean, Victorian Books Design and Colour Printing (Berkeley: U of California P, 1972), and Howard Leathlean, "Henry Noel Humphreys and the Getting-Up of Books in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," The Book Collector 38 (1989): 192-209.

<sup>53</sup> The description to which Humphreys refers reads, in part,

It is a folio, on vellum, and now graces the princely collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart. . . . In that MS. the capital letters, from the beginning to about one third of St. Matthew's Gospel, are enriched with colours, in addition to the red commonly used, and [occasionally] by gilding; as are also the ornamental borders surrounding certain indexes, prefixed to the Gospels, under the title of Canons. The other Illuminations consist of drawings neatly done in outline with a pen and bistre, without any shading whatever. They of course represent the principal stories of the life of Christ; and sometimes two or more subjects are introduced in the same page . . . . But though these drawings are neither shaded nor coloured, they are here and there enriched with gold, upon which are traced zigzag and other lines of vermilion; as in the borders of the draperies, the glories, or diadems round the heads of sacred personages, and in various other parts, so as

to produce a very singular effect." ("A Dissertation on St. Ethelwold's  
Benedictional," Archaeologia 24 [1832]: 29-30)

<sup>54</sup> For the relationship between Phillipps and Halliwell, see Munby, Phillipps  
Studies, especially 2: 37-53, 73-87, 94-105, and 116-19.

<sup>55</sup> OCLC identifies Humphreys as the sole author of this anonymous collection. However, a bookseller's annotation in my copy of Humphreys' Stories, from the library of the novelist Egerton Castle, lists Humphreys, Wright, and Halliwell as co-authors. Such corporate authorship would seem to be supported by the book's introduction, where the archaeologist of the title refers to himself as the "nominal author" and describes the "appended narratives" as the "Monthly Stories" of the antiquarian society he served as its "last secretary" (1: 10). Wright influenced Halliwell to study manuscripts at Cambridge in the 1830s (Munby 2: 37), but I have been unable to verify a connection between them and Humphreys.

<sup>56</sup> For more on Don Vincente, see Nicholas A. Basbanes, A Gentle Madness (New York: Henry Holt, 1995), 33-4, 538. Don Vincente's crimes inspired the teenaged Gustave Flaubert to write one of his first short stories, "Bibliomania" (1836), in the year of the monk's execution.

<sup>57</sup> Except for Josephus's Wars of the Jews, copies of all of Boffin's books were in Dickens's Gadshill library at the time of his death; see J. H. Stonehouse, ed., Catalogue of the Library of Charles Dickens . . . Catalogue of His Pictures and

Objects of Art . . . Catalogue of the Library of W. M. Thackeray (London: Piccadilly Fountain Press, 1935).

<sup>58</sup> For Dickens' treatment of Victorian investments, see Michael Cotsell, "The Book of Insolvent Fates: Financial Speculation in Our Mutual Friend," Dickens Studies Annual 13 (1984): 125-42.

<sup>59</sup> Likewise, in Collins's No Name (1862), another bachelor invalid and collector, Noel Vanstone, considers his housekeeper Mrs. Lecount to be part of the collection of foreign curiosities he inherits from his father, and he even calls her one of his father's "bargains" (London: Penguin, 1994, 230).

<sup>60</sup> Mannix and Whellan's History, Gazetteer and Directory of Cumberland (1847) includes a short account of the Carlisle Mechanics' Institute:

The Mechanics' Institute, which has for its primary object the dissemination of scientific, mechanical and other useful knowledge, among the operative classes, was established here [in Carlisle] in December, 1824, and now occupies a commodious room in the Athenæum, Lowther-street[,] where there is a museum, but wants a laboratory, for the illustration of lectures. It is liberally supported by literary gentlemen of the city, and possesses a library of upwards of 2000 volumes, many of which are very valuable. There are about 3000 members, each of whom above the age of 21 years, contributes 8s. per

annum, and under that age, 5s. a year. It is open every evening, except Sunday, from seven to ten o'clock."

See "Images of Cumbria—Carlisle's Newspapers, Literary Institutions, Etc.," <[http://www.stevebulman.f9.co.uk/cumbria/carlisle\\_newspapers.html](http://www.stevebulman.f9.co.uk/cumbria/carlisle_newspapers.html)>).

<sup>61</sup> All citations of Tennyson's poetry are from The Poems of Tennyson, ed. Christopher Ricks, 3 vols. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1987). Abbreviations of the titles of Tennyson's Idylls follow the list in Idylls of the King, ed. J. M. Gray (New York: Penguin, 1983), 303.

<sup>62</sup> Tennyson embellishes considerably upon Malory's description of Excalibur (Morte d'Arthur xxi 4-5), which merely observes that "the pommel and the haft were all of precious stones." Following Ricks, references to Malory are from the Walker and Edwards edition of The History of the Renowned Prince Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table, 2 vols. (London: Walker and Edwards, 1816), preceded by Caxton's numbering.

<sup>63</sup> Tennyson's Maud is a striking exception. Like the Idylls, the 1855 poem is deeply ambivalent about gems, which have an idealized connection to beauty and constancy in nature and Maud, but are also associated with the "barbarous opulence" of Maud's brother (352) and the ostentatious display of the speaker's rival in love.

<sup>64</sup> Although there is no record of Tennyson's acquaintance with the Koh-i-noor, it seems certain that the poet, with his scientific interests, would have seen the diamond at the Great Exhibition. In late 1851, Tennyson was living eleven miles outside of

London, and he made a special effort to visit his literary acquaintances in the city during this time. Victoria had even offered Tennyson the use of her box at the Exhibition. See Robert Bernard Martin, Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 358, 363. Moreover, Tennyson would likely have read about the jewel in the papers of the day, as he made it his business as poet laureate to keep abreast of foreign and domestic affairs.

<sup>65</sup> Recent commentaries on the contribution of the dedicatory "To the Queen" to the imperial framework of the Idylls include Ian McGuire, "Epistemology and Empire in Idylls of the King," Victorian Poetry 30 (1992): 388-91, 396-8; Robin L. Inboden, "The 'Valour of Delicate Women': The Domestication of Political Relations in Tennyson's Laureate Poetry," Victorian Poetry 36 (1998): 208-10; and Cecily Devereux, "Canada and the Epilogue to the Idylls: 'The Imperial Connection' in 1873," Victorian Poetry 36 (1998): 223-45. Gerhard Joseph offers compelling readings of the semiotic significance of Excalibur and other swords in Tennyson's poetry in "Tennyson's Sword: From 'Mungo the American' to Idylls of the King," Sex and Death in Victorian Literature, ed. Regina Barreca (Bloomington: Indian Univ. Press, 1990), 60-68; "Choosing Tennyson: The Stranger's Hovering Sword," Tennyson and the Text: The Weaver's Shuttle (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), 191-212; and "Commodifying Tennyson: The Historical Transformation of 'Brand Loyalty,'" Victorian Poetry 34 (1996): 133-47. For connections between Tennyson's poetry and the Victorian literary marketplace, see Joseph's "Commodifying

Tennyson" and Dino Franco Felluga, "Tennyson's Idylls, Pure Poetry, and the Market," SEL 37 (1997): 783-803.

<sup>66</sup> As Grant McCracken explains, material culture possesses a propagandistic value because it works "in more understated, inapparent ways than language." Even if material culture is limited in its expressive range, the inconspicuousness of its messages permits things "to carry meaning that could not be put more explicitly without the danger of controversy, protest, or refusal" (68-9).

<sup>67</sup> Frances H. Low, "Queen Victoria's Dolls" Strand Magazine Sep. 1892: 222-38. See also Low's Queen Victoria's Dolls, illus. Alan Wright (London: George Newnes, 1894).

<sup>68</sup> Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 5 vols. (London: Spicer and Clowes, 1851), 1: 111-12; 3: 847. The exhibition catalogue and its objects portrayed India as the repository of vast and varied animal, vegetable, and mineral wealth, "capable of producing, within its own limits, almost all the useful products of every other quarter of the globe" (4: 857). India's catalogue listing at the head of Britain's foreign possessions reflected its central position inside the Crystal Palace. For more on the representation of India at the Great Exhibition, see Carol A. Breckenridge, "The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World Fairs," Comparative Studies in Society and History 31 (1989): 195-216.

<sup>69</sup> See Joseph Weisenfarth, "Antique Gems from Romola to Daniel Deronda," George Eliot: A Centenary Tribute, eds. Gordon S. Haight and Rosemary T. VanArsdel (Totowa: Barnes & Noble, 1982), 55-63, and Mark M. Hennelly, Jr., "Detecting Collins' Diamond: From Serpentstone to Moonstone," Nineteenth-Century Literature 39 (1984): 25-47.

<sup>70</sup> Lancelot's incomplete understanding of gifts contrasts with the relative mastery of the gift by women around him. The superior treatment of gifts by Camelot's women, including Enid, Vivien, Elaine, and Guinevere, supports Godbout's contention that women show special competence in the domain of the gift. According to Godbout, "[W]omen are at the heart of the gift in the domestic sphere. . . . Women are in charge of presents and are at ease in that world. . . . Men are clumsy, embarrassed, often ridiculous, understand the rules of the game poorly, lack subtlety, make blunders" (36). Tennyson's anxieties about the Koh-i-noor show his concern over the diamond as a gift in the public sphere, particularly under the aegis of the state, which Godbout views as inimical to the spirit of the gift (61-2). See also Godbout and Caillé, 149-67.

<sup>71</sup> Spinel rubies differ in color and crystal form from the true or "oriental" ruby. Spinel rubies are generally a vivid scarlet, rose, or poppy-red with octahedral crystals, in contrast with the familiar blood-red color and six-sided prisms of the oriental ruby. See Louis Dieulafoy, Diamonds and Precious Stones: A Popular Account of Gems (London: Blackie & Son, 1874), 114-119, and Barrera, Gems and Jewels, 183-5. Of

spinels, M.H. Story-Maskelyne states, "Nearly all the large and famous stones that pass under the name of rubies belong to this species" ("Precious Stones," Edinburgh Review 124 [1866]: 243).

<sup>72</sup> The Timur Ruby arrived separately from the Koh-i-noor, and it was not presented to the Queen until 1851. Eric Bruton writes, "While the famous diamond merited special security arrangements, armed guards, and transport in one of Her Majesty's ships, the Timur Ruby went to London by ordinary transport" (133).

<sup>73</sup> Walter Nash, qtd. in Gray 116.

<sup>74</sup> According to J. Philip Eggers in King Arthur's Laureate (New York: New York UP, 1971), Tennyson owned and read Turner in the 1807 edition (217).

<sup>75</sup> I borrow this term from England's earliest organized entomological society, the first Aurelian Society (c. 1738-1748), which took its name from the Latin aureolus, or golden, referring to "the metallic golden markings of certain chrysalides" (Michael A. Salmon and Peter J. Edwards, The Aurelian's Fireside Companion: An Entomological Anthology [Lymington: Paphia Publishing, 2005], 1). The term was more widely disseminated by the 1766 publication of Moses Harris's Aurelian, the most famous early English book about butterflies and moths, which was dedicated to the members of the second Aurelian Society (1762-1767). The name continued to be used throughout at least the first half of the nineteenth century, on the strength of the third Aurelian Society (1801-06) and in publications such as Laetitia Jermyn's Butterfly

Collector's Vade Mecum (1827) and L. M. Budgen's Episodes of Insect Life (1849-51).

<sup>76</sup> The exact reason for this resurgence of interest is not entirely clear, though it was supported by many new publications in entomology. Of the craze for things with wings in the 1820s, David Allen speculates, "In place of the flowers and shells, the static, stylized, pretty-pretty edging that formed the principal appeal of nature to eighteenth-century man, the nineteenth century seemed to feel the lure of wings, needed to gratify itself with something closer to flesh and blood, with more life-like souvenirs of the starkly elemental. The swing to birds and insects, it may be, was at base a switch of symbols" (101). Likewise, the return to birds and insects at the fin de siècle might be seen as a belated reaction against the largely botanical crazes of the forties and fifties.

<sup>77</sup> In the 1860s, the leading entomologist of his day, Henry Walter Bates, provided an index of the profusion of tropical species while describing the diversity of Brazilian butterflies in the neighborhood of Pará: "[A]bout 700 species of that tribe are found within an hour's walk of the town; whilst the total number found within the British Islands does not exceed 66, and the whole of Europe supports only 321" (qtd. in Merrill 87).

<sup>78</sup> As Rod Edmond explains, the publication of such influential works as Charles Pearson's National Life and Character (1893), Benjamin Kidd's The Control of the

Tropics (1898), and Patrick Manson's Tropical Disease (1898) at the end of the nineteenth century perpetuated the widespread belief that Europeans were unable to survive in the tropics due to climactic and biological theories of racial difference and adaptability, the emergence of the germ theory of disease, and fears of gradual degeneration among settlers' descendants ("Returning Fears: Tropical Disease and the Metropolis," Driver and Martins 175-94).

<sup>79</sup> On Pteridomania, see David Elliston Allen's The Victorian Fern Craze (London: Hutchinson, 1969).

<sup>80</sup> W. R. Walton cites passages from William Cowper's "Epistle to Robert Lloyd, Esqr. 1754" and Satire IV of Edward Young's Love of Fame that mock other butterfly collectors, including Sir Hans Sloane, the virtual father of the British Museum. According to Walton, "Many of the earlier [i.e., eighteenth-century] English poets pose as men of science, but as a rule the cult has been antagonistic toward the development of the natural sciences, which they ridiculed unmercifully" ("The Entomology of English Poetry," Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington 24 (1922): 187).

<sup>81</sup> Doyle's Canadian farmer Henry Baskerville reflects the late Victorian vision of Canada as a land of opportunity for British hunters, farmers, and investors, among others. The promise of free land, rising wheat prices, and falling freight costs attracted emigrants from England and especially Eastern Europe to what was advertised in Canadian propaganda as a wonderfully fertile country. However, a

harsh climate, strenuous work, isolation, and a lack of amenities made western Canadian farming life less attractive in reality. For Sir Henry to make good in Canada, he would have needed to be rugged, industrious, and self-reliant, qualities of a nation builder. See R. G. Moyles and Doug Owsram, "'A Farm of One's Own': The British Emigrant's View of Western Canada," in Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities: British Views of Canada, 1880-1914 (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1988), 115-139.

<sup>82</sup> Early in the novel, Dr. Mortimer identifies Central America as the elder Rodger Baskerville's destination (28), though Holmes later says it was South America (165). Despite this discrepancy and vagueness, Doyle locates Baskerville's place of exile in a tropical region with several British possessions, including the British Honduras (later Belize) in Central America, British Guiana (later Guyana) in South America, and the British West Indies in the Caribbean. The West Indies had been "a consistent colonial problem throughout the nineteenth century," owing to economic and political unrest in the decades following the abolition of slavery in 1833, and culminating in the anti-British Jamaica Rebellion of 1865 and its brutal and controversial suppression by Governor Eyre (Webb 320). Such troubles may help to explain Doyle's prejudice against the tropics, which foster "homicidal passions" and "an atavistic human nature" in his works, as Catherine Wynne observes (The Colonial Conan Doyle: British Imperialism, Irish Nationalism, and the Gothic [Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002], 83).

<sup>83</sup> As Harriet Blodgett notes, "Fountainne became adult in time to become one of the 'new women' of the eighties and nineties: a liberated middle-class female who could live away from home, even if unmarried, and pursue a career" ("Preserving the Moment in the Diary of Margaret Fountainne," Inscribing the Daily: Critical Essays on Women's Diaries, eds. Suzanne L. Bunkers and Cynthia A. Huff [Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1996], 160).

<sup>84</sup> For additional examples, see Charlotte Gere and Marina Vaizey, Great Women Collectors (New York: Philip Wilson/Harry N. Abrams, 1999).

<sup>85</sup> Excerpts from several works not discussed here, including Wilkie Collins's Moonstone, Arthur Conan Doyle's "Adventure of the Illustrious Client," Bram Stoker's Jewel of the Seven Stars, and H. G. Wells's Time Machine, are anthologized in Susan Pearce et al., eds., Imperial Voices, Vol. 3 of The Collector's Voice: Critical Readings in the Practice of Collecting (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

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