

**MRS. CAUDLE'S CURTAIN
LECTURES: MRS.
BIB'S BABY, PP. 1-187**

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Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures: Mrs. Bib's Baby, pp. 1-187 by Douglas Jerrold & Blanchard Jerrold

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DOUGLAS JERROLD & BLANCHARD JERROLD

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DOUGLAS JERROLD.

MRS. CAUDLE'S
CURTAIN LECTURES:
MRS. BIB'S BABY.

By DOUGLAS JERROLD.

WITH MEMOIR BY BLANCHARD JERROLD.



CAUDLE!!!

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1873.

INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR.



BIOGRAPHICAL introduction to any writings of a working man of letters is useful, as explaining many of the characteristics of the author's mind, and how he reached the fields in which he fed his imagination, or built up his theories. There is pleasure in tracing the thread of his own life, that, whether thin as spider's silk, or broad and clear, the author draws through his writings. We appear to gain a personal acquaintance with the man whose pen has charmed us, or has taught us wisdom. I believe that this is the chief reason why the lives of literary men, even when most uneventful, are welcome to the public. Readers are delighted to learn how the man who, from his silent study, so long entranced them, appeared in his slippers. Did he eat, and drink, and sleep like other men? He had genius: what, then, were his eccentricities? For—authors shall spend the most humdrum lives, living on roast and boiled duly paid for; reading at the club; and keeping all the business of their days by double entry; and it shall still be some time

before their readers will believe that a man may be a genius, and have no more eccentricity than a city banker. There are crowds of people who hold that a great scientific thinker must, of necessity, use a lady's finger as a tobacco-stopper. I remember sitting, at a continental table d'hôte, near an enthusiastic family, who were thrown into a condition of dangerous mental excitement, by the arrival of a quiet, gentlemanly man; who took his seat at the lower end of the table, and talked easily and cheerfully to his neighbours. They had discovered that he was the great Mr. Blank, whose last novel they had been reading. Every ear was stretched to catch Mr. Blank's lightest word. But Mr. Blank, having arrived with a good appetite, confined his conversation to the merits of the dinner, with a passing allusion to the probable state of the weather; and, his dinner over, lighted a cigar in the court-yard, and walked smartly away—to the port.

"Who would have thought that was the great Mr. Blank?" cried the enthusiastic family. "Why, he might have been Mr. Brown or Jones!"

The difficulty is to persuade enthusiastic readers, that most modern men of letters have the appearance and manners of ordinary English gentlemen; and never go to balls or routs in shooting jackets, nor wear their hair curled to the waist.

A traveller early on his way to Richmond, passing over the then picturesque heath of Putney, some ten years ago, in the summer time, would probably see, by the gipsies'

tent, a short gentleman, with wild iron-grey hair peeping from under his straw hat ; a sharp, bright eye ; and a lip with mocking corners to it ; chattering with the gipsies, who would lie upon the grass, shielding their eyes from the sun, with their chestnut hands ; and laugh at their neighbour from the snug Lodge yonder, curtained in lime-trees, and musical with a little farm-yard at the back. I am sure the stranger would hardly have paused to listen to the *badinage*, nor to mark a point of eccentricity in the owner of the Lodge. I am quite certain the gipsies themselves, who were old friends and neighbours of Douglas Jerrold, never saw anything more in him than a lively gentleman, who was very fond of early morning on the heath ; who appeared to love the yellow furze very much, and pick it very often, and hold it apparently with great pleasure between his lips ; while, bending himself back, a little painfully, leaning on his stick, he watched the sky-promises of the opening day.

A man of the simplest habits ; with the nature of childhood as fresh in him in his fiftieth year as when he first looked over the broad sea from a Sheerness garret, and saw the great war-ships dip under the horizon—going, he longed to know whither. My father, the subject of this memoir, would have been remarked anywhere, not for an eccentricity, but for a simple freshness of manner ; the manner of a country gentleman brightened by the sea. All his life the boy shone through the man. The laugh remained clear and loud ; the spirit free and adventurous ;

the mind as bent upon the realisation of shining dreams, as in the days when two boys, unknown to fame, stood out of the rain under a London doorway, dreaming of the gallant things they would do, under Lord Byron, in behalf of the Greeks. Since these young soldiers of Independence, who were to have become volunteers Douglas William Jerrold and Samuel Laman Blanchard, dreamed that glorious dream in the rain and fog of London; the lives of both have been fought in the fields of literature, far away from Greece!

The time and atmosphere in which my father was born and spent his youth, were calculated to give him that free, gallant, and cheerful spirit which appeared, in after life, too strong and impetuous for the slight, weak frame in which it was housed. He was born in London, on the 3rd of January, 1803; but his first recollections were of Sheerness, where his father owned and managed a theatre. In those days, war made Sheerness a lively place to live in. To a boy of quick imagination, the tramp of the gallant old salts through the streets, the brave Lord Cochrane among them, and their rough stories of their exploits; with the ships roaring their salutes, and the press-gangs kidnapping more food for powder; life in the old seaport must have had endless attractions. Then there was his father's theatre, with its scenic wonders, amid which my father actually appeared more than once, carried on by Edmund Kean, in Rolla. Being early a greedy reader, his mind strengthened soon, fed from