In London he wrote in a large room with three long windows at the top of the house. He wrote lying almost recumbent in a low rocking chair which he tipped to and fro as he wrote, like a cradle, and as he wrote he smoked a short clay pipe, and he scattered books round him in a circle. The thud of a book dropped on the floor could be heard in the room beneath. And often as mounted the stairs to his study with his firm, regular tread he would burst, not into song, for he was entirely unmusical, but into a strange rhythmical chant, for verse of all kinds, both “utter trash,” as he called it, and the most sublime words of Milton and Wordsworth, stuck in his memory, and the act of walking and climbing seemed to inspire him to recite whichever it was that came uppermost or suited his mood.

But it was his dexterity with is fingers that delighted his children before they could potter along the lanes at his heels or read his books. He would twist a sheet of paper beneath a pair of scissors and out would drop an elephant, a stag, or a monkey, with trunks, horns, and tails delicately and exactly formed.

He could be very silent, as his friends have testified. But his remarks, made suddenly in a low voice between the puffs of his pipe, were extremely effective. Sometimes with one word—but his one word was accompanied by a gesture of the hand—he would dispose of the tissue of exaggerations which is own sobriety seemed to provoke...Too much, perhaps, has been said of his silence; too much stress has been laid upon his reserve. He loved clear thinking: he hated sentimentality and gush; but this by no means meant that he was cold and unemotional, perpetually critical and condemnatory in daily life. On the contrary, it was his power of feeling strongly and of expressing his feeling with vigor that made him sometimes so alarming as a companion.

He himself was the most abstemious of men. He smoked a pipe perpetually, but never a cigar. He wore his clothes till they were too shabby to be tolerable; and he held old-fashioned and rather puritanical views as to the vice of luxury and the sin of idleness. The relations between parents and children today have a freedom that would have been impossible with my father. He expected a certain standard of behavior, even of ceremony, in family life. Yet if freedom means the right to think one’s own thoughts and to follow one’s own pursuits, then no one respected and indeed insisted upon freedom more completely than he did.