



**Crotchet Castle: "A book that furnishes no quotations is no book - it is a plaything."**

*Thomas Love Peacock*

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Thomas Love Peacock was born on October 18th 1785 in Weymouth, Dorset. His education was never completed and mainly self-taught Thomas was made a clerk with Ludlow Fraser Company, merchants in the City of London in 1800. For Thomas life was work and the nurturing of his writing. When time allowed he would visit the Reading Room of the British Museum to study classic literature. In 1804 and 1806 he published two volumes of poetry, *The Monks of St. Mark and Palmyra*. By 1809 he has also published his great poem 'The Genius of the Thames'. Peacock travelled to North Wales in January 1810 where he visited Maentwrog and met his future wife, Jane Gryffyd. By September 1815 had settled at Great Marlow and wrote *Headlong Hall* in 1815. It was published the following year. With this work Peacock found the true field for his literary gift in the satiric novel. Peacock continued to produce; the satirical novels *Melincourt* in 1817 and *Nightmare Abbey* in 1818. At the beginning of 1819, Peacock was summoned to London for probation with the East India Company. Peacock's test papers earned the commendation, "Nothing superfluous and nothing wanting." This career was to run alongside his literary one for several decades. Peacock married Jane Griffith or Gryffyd in 1820. They went on to have four children. In 1820 Peacock wrote *The Four Ages of Poetry*, which argued that poetry's relevance was being eclipsed by science, a claim which provoked Shelley's *Defence of Poetry*. In the winter of 1825–6 he wrote *Paper Money Lyrics* and other Poems "during the prevalence of an influenza to which the beautiful fabric of paper-credit is periodically subject." In 1829 he published *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, and in 1831 *Crotchet Castle*, the most mature and perhaps most appreciated of his works. By 1836 his official career was crowned by his appointment as Chief Examiner of Indian Correspondence. In about 1852 towards the end of Peacock's service in the India office, his taste for leisure and appetite for writing returned and with it his entertaining and scholarly *Horæ Dramaticæ*. In 1860 came the publication of his last novel; *Gryll Grange*. Later, that same year he added the appendix of Shelley's letters, a matter of great literary importance. Thomas Love Peacock died at Lower Halliford, on 23rd January, 1866, from injuries sustained in a fire in attempting to save his library. He is buried in the new cemetery at Shepperton.

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