

# INTRODUCTION

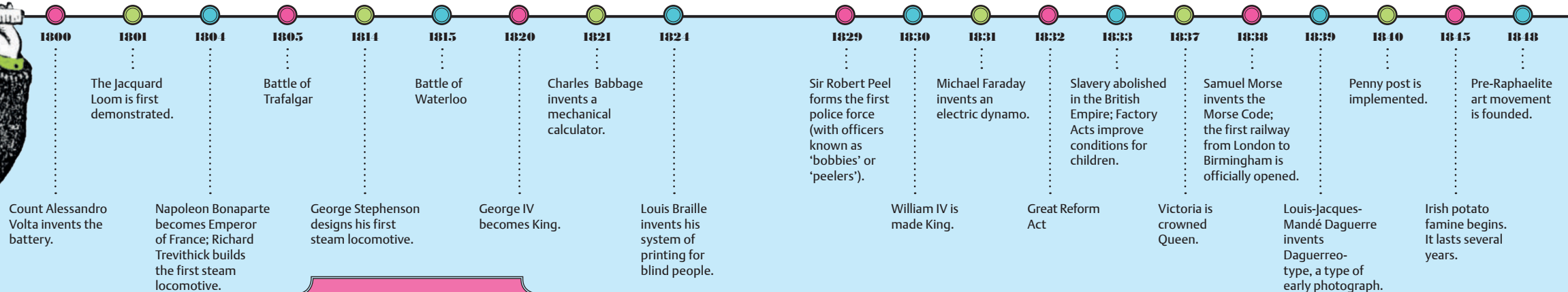
This dictionary will help you to understand the meanings of the words and the language used in 19th century novels and other writing of the period. With over 3000 words from **aback** to **zoophagous** and panels, notes, and illustrated thematic pages to browse through, you will quickly be able to get the most out of your reading.

In this dictionary you will find explanations for:

- unusual words such as **pottle** and **fratch**
- words that are used differently from modern English such as **recede** and **traffic** (note that we have only included the 19th century and unusual senses of these words)
- difficult words or words which are less familiar or less frequently used in modern English such as **abode**, **changeling**, **ire**, and **coeval**
- words which reflect 19th century life such as **poorhouse** and **sal-volatile**.

You will find words from these titles and many more:

- A CHRISTMAS CAROL
- GREAT EXPECTATIONS
- THE SIGN OF FOUR
- THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE
- JANE EYRE
- SILAS MARNER
- FRANKENSTEIN
- PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
- THE WAR OF THE WORLDS



## TIMELINE

### Alphabetical letter openers

These contain information on a specific person, place, object, or event. For instance, you can find out about the beginnings of **antiseptic** at **A**, **Charles Darwin** at **D**, the invention of **Morse code** at **M**, the **Penny Black** at **P**, and the ending of **slavery** at **S**.

## Aa ANTISEPTIC

The Scottish surgeon **Joseph Lister** pioneered the use of carbolic acid to dress wounds and sterilize medical instruments in the **1860s**. Although his work was initially mocked, this **antiseptic** cut the number of patient deaths that followed surgery dramatically. Previously many patients survived operations only to succumb to infection afterwards. Lister also developed the first **antiseptic spray**. He is often referred to as 'the father of modern surgery'.

### Language and culture panels

Look out for the panels at these entries to understand more about vocabulary and language:

<b>abroad</b>	<b>chany</b>	<b>negus</b>	<b>thou</b>
<b>amour propre</b>	<b>defect</b>	<b>profession</b>	<b>Tophet</b>
<b>balk</b>	<b>ecod</b>	<b>progress</b>	<b>unwept</b>
<b>Barmecide</b>	<b>faugh</b>	<b>rive</b>	<b>violent</b>
<b>broider</b>	<b>gammon</b>	<b>sentence</b>	<b>wast</b>
<b>brooklet</b>	<b>girt</b>	<b>sovereign</b>	<b>worrit</b>

You will find information about **familiar words with unfamiliar meanings**, **foreign languages**, **local accents**, **exclamations**, and **expressing emphasis**.

There is also language information on **different spellings**, **capital letters**, **past tenses**, **similes**, **sentence structure**, **nouns**, **prefixes** and **suffixes**, and the use of **thou** and **thine**, and **wast** and **wert**.

At the following entries you can discover cultural facts about **Christmas**, **daguerreotype**, **etiquette**, **fairy tales**, **penny dreadfuls** (under **library**), **money**, and **religion**.

**USAGE** notes help you to understand the differences between the modern and 19th century usage and meanings.

**RELATED WORDS** provide words linked to the word you are looking up.

**Word origins** tell you where the word came from.

### Illustrated themes

Visit the centre section to build a picture of world events and the people and language around them. Topics include **Transport**, the kinds of jobs people did for a living at **Working life**, and the ways people spent their spare time at **Sport and entertainment**.

## Why is 19th Century writing different from modern writing?

The more you read from this period, the more you get used to the ways in which writing is different. Think of these differences as part of setting the scene of the story, along with the clothes that people wore, or the ways that people travelled.

Some examples of differences include:

### Sentences

Compared with modern writing, the style may seem laborious, with very long sentences and unusual grammar and punctuation.

- *Not so much in obedience, as in surprise and fear: for on the raising of the hand, he became sensible of confused noises in the air; incoherent sounds of lamentation and regret; wailings inexpressibly sorrowful and self-accusatory.*—A CHRISTMAS CAROL, CHARLES DICKENS

This sentence uses repeated semicolons, and the phrase describing the ‘wailings’ (not normally a plural noun) does not have typical word order. However, if you find the natural breaks, re-read some parts, and look up words which seem to carry important meaning, you can start to understand it. The word ‘sensible’, for example, is not used with today’s ordinary everyday sense and you can look it up in this dictionary to find its meaning.

### Formal or odd vocabulary

The vocabulary may seem formal and sometimes words are used in odd combinations compared to modern English.

- *Let us not dispute about our views.*—THE WOMAN IN WHITE, WILKIE COLLINS

Some 19th century titles contain language from an even earlier period, or references to things that were common in an earlier period.

- *The Knight undid the clasp of the baldric.*—IVANHOE, WALTER SCOTT
- *an old gentleman with a powdered head*—DOMBEY AND SON, CHARLES DICKENS

### Different punctuation

Punctuation may be different from the punctuation that you use in your own writing. For example, in this extract we would not expect to use a full stop with a dash.

- *For you were not brought up in that strange house from a mere baby.—I was.*

—GREAT EXPECTATIONS, CHARLES DICKENS

In the following extract, the commas are not used to enclose information that could be omitted; these commas would not be used in modern English.

- *It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.*—PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, JANE AUSTEN

### Different spellings

Many words may be spelled differently from modern Standard British English. For example, you may see **-or** instead of **-our** endings (such as **favor** instead of **favour**).

- *I have a favor to ask of you.*—THE MILL ON THE FLOSS, GEORGE ELIOT

You will also see the endings **-ise** and **-isation** as well as **-ize** and **-ization**.

More words were hyphenated, such as **ball-room** and **water-colours**.

- *These pictures were in water-colours. The first represented clouds . . . over a swollen sea.*

—JANE EYRE, CHARLOTTE BRONTË

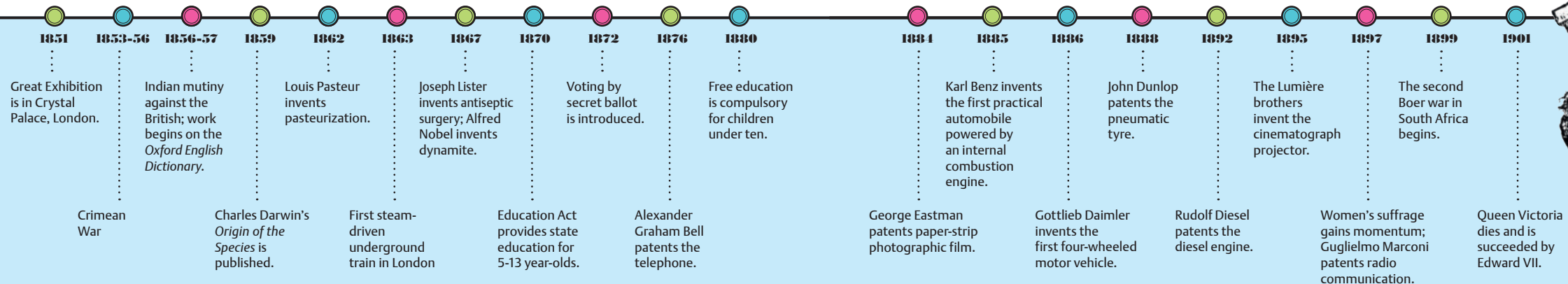
Some characters speak with a dialect which may look strange. The easiest way to understand this is to say it aloud.

- *They aren't worreted wi' thinking what's the rights and wrongs o' things.*—SILAS MARNER, GEORGE ELIOT

### Important to know

As far as possible, examples are faithful to the original texts. Some have been shortened so that they are easier to read. If you are quoting in an essay, ensure you use the version in your exam text, with the spelling and punctuation as they appear there.

Language reflects attitudes and habits of the time which may now be considered stereotypical or inappropriate. We have tried to avoid giving examples which, particularly out of the context of the story, are likely to be misconstrued.





Aa

ANTISEPTIC

The Scottish surgeon **Joseph Lister** pioneered the use of carbolic acid to dress wounds and sterilize medical instruments in the **1860s**. Although his work was initially mocked, **this antiseptic** cut the number of patient deaths that followed surgery dramatically. Previously many patients survived operations only to succumb to infection afterwards. Lister also developed the first **antiseptic spray**. He is often referred to as ‘the father of modern surgery’.

**aback** *ADVERB*  
so that the wind is pressing the sail back against the mast

- [The ship] fell right into the wind’s eye, was taken dead aback, and stood there a while helpless, with her sails shivering.—TREASURE ISLAND, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

**abase** *VERB*  
to lower something

- He cast his eyes full on Mr Dombey with an altered and apologetic look, abased them on the ground, and remained for a moment without speaking.—DOMBEY AND SON, CHARLES DICKENS

**abashed** *ADJECTIVE*  
embarrassed, ashamed, or disconcerted

- Jem entered, looking more awkward and abashed than he had ever done before.—MARY BARTON, ELIZABETH GASKELL

➤ **abash** *VERB* to make someone feel embarrassed, ashamed, or disconcerted

- He had never blushed in his life; no humiliation could abash him.—SHIRLEY, CHARLOTTE BRONTË

**abate** *VERB*  
to become less intense, or to make something become less intense

- When the snow storm abated a moment we looked again.—DRACULA, BRAM STOKER
- I could not now abate my agitation, though I tried hard.—JANE EYRE, CHARLOTTE BRONTË

**abed** (say uh-bed) *ADVERB*  
in bed

- Martha intends ‘to lie abed to-morrow morning for a good long rest’.—A CHRISTMAS CAROL, CHARLES DICKENS

**abhor** *VERB*  
to detest something

- Shall I not then hate them who abhor me? —FRANKENSTEIN, MARY SHELLEY

**abhorrence** *NOUN*  
hatred; loathing and disgust

- I cannot think of it without abhorrence.—PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, JANE AUSTEN
- My abhorrence of this fiend cannot be conceived. —FRANKENSTEIN, MARY SHELLEY

➤ **abhorrent** *ADJECTIVE* hateful; disgusting

- He gloated over every abhorrent adjective.—GREAT EXPECTATIONS, CHARLES DICKENS

**abide** *VERB*  
to live or stay somewhere

- She could not abide there.—THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE, THOMAS HARDY

**abigail** *NOUN*  
a lady’s maid

- The abigails, I suppose, were upstairs with their mistresses.—JANE EYRE, CHARLOTTE BRONTË

**abject** *ADJECTIVE*  
**1** wretched; without dignity

- From the foldings of its robe it brought two children; wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable. —A CHRISTMAS CAROL, CHARLES DICKENS

**2** dreadful; often used emphatically, to mean ‘total’ or ‘utter’

- That abject hypocrite, Pumblechook, nodded again.—GREAT EXPECTATIONS, CHARLES DICKENS

**abjure** *VERB*  
to reject or denounce someone or something

- Dot seems to have ‘abjured the vanities of the world’.—THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH, CHARLES DICKENS

📖 Latin *ab* meaning ‘away’ + *jurare* meaning ‘swear’

**ablutions** (also **ablution**) *NOUN*  
an act of washing yourself or another person

- When my ablutions were completed, I was put into clean linen of the stiffest character.—GREAT EXPECTATIONS, CHARLES DICKENS

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**abode** *NOUN*  
a place to live; the time spent living somewhere  
• *I shall take up my abode in ... a nunnery.*—JANE EYRE, CHARLOTTE BRONTË

**abode** *VERB*  
lived; stayed  
• *I abode in London betwixt a month and five weeks' time.*—LORNA DOONE, R. D. BLACKMORE

**abortive** *ADJECTIVE*  
not having formed fully  
• The pattern, or grain, in the wood is produced by 'abortive buds'.—OUTLINES OF LESSONS IN BOTANY, JANE H. NEWELL

**abridge** *VERB*  
to shorten or lessen something  
• Tess wishes to 'abridge her visit'.—TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES, THOMAS HARDY  
• Little by little we have seen our rights abridged.—A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD PHILADELPHIA, AMANDA MINNIE DOUGLAS

**abroad** *ADVERB*  
all around; out and about  
• There is 'an air of cheerfulness abroad'.—A CHRISTMAS CAROL, CHARLES DICKENS  
• The monster says he 'never ventured abroad during daylight'.—FRANKENSTEIN, MARY SHELLEY

Familiar words with unfamiliar meanings

*Abroad* is a familiar word, used here in an unfamiliar way.

Sometimes familiar words appear in combinations that reflect the period in which the texts were set. In modern English we would not describe a horse as 'breaking down'.

• *It had become known that she had had a fearful journey ... that the horse had broken down, and that she had been more than two days getting there.*—FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD, THOMAS HARDY

The example below reflects the fact that lights consisted of a naked flame, which could set fire to things.

• *He put out the expiring lights, that the barn might not be endangered.*—FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD, THOMAS HARDY

**abstract** *VERB*  
to remove something from somewhere  
• Bounderby tells how 'some fellows ... got to young Tom's safe, forced it, and abstracted the contents'.—HARD TIMES, CHARLES DICKENS

**abstract** *NOUN*  
a summary  
• *Mr Carker had been fluttering his papers, and muttering little abstracts of their contents to himself.*—DOMBEY AND SON, CHARLES DICKENS

**abstracted** *ADJECTIVE*  
distracted or preoccupied  
• *Sherlock Holmes leaned back in his chair with an abstracted expression.*—THE SIGN OF FOUR, ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE  
➤ **abstractedly** *ADVERB* • *Maggie sat apart ... , listening abstractedly to the music.*—THE MILL ON THE FLOSS, GEORGE ELIOT

**abstraction** *NOUN*  
1 being distracted or preoccupied  
• *Mr Nickleby ... gazed with an air of abstraction through the dirty window.*—NICHOLAS NICKLEBY, CHARLES DICKENS  
2 removal  
• *the abstraction of the keys*—THE WOMAN IN WHITE, WILKIE COLLINS  
3 an abstract idea  
• *I am not a poet; I cannot live with abstractions.*—SHIRLEY, CHARLOTTE BRONTË

**abundant** *ADJECTIVE*  
plentiful  
• *Of this preparation a tolerably abundant plateful was apportioned to each pupil.*—JANE EYRE, CHARLOTTE BRONTË  
• *She was not a woman who could shed abundant tears.*—THE MILL ON THE FLOSS, GEORGE ELIOT  
➤ **abundantly** *ADVERB* • *[The] pantry ... was far more abundantly supplied than usual.*—GREAT EXPECTATIONS, CHARLES DICKENS  
• *Mr Collins ... was ... most abundantly supplied with coffee and muffin.*—PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, JANE AUSTEN

**abuse** *VERB*  
to say critical or insulting things about someone or something  
• When Mr Bennet says all his daughters are silly, Mrs Bennet says, 'How can you abuse your own children in such a way?'—PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, JANE AUSTEN  
• *The whole conversation ran on the breakfast, which one and all abused roundly.*—JANE EYRE, CHARLOTTE BRONTË  
➤ **abusive** *ADJECTIVE* • *[She was] uttering very abusive expressions towards my wife.*—THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

**accent** *NOUN*  
a tone of voice  
• 'Come, Master Marner, have you got nothing to say to that?' said Mr Macey at last, with a slight accent of impatience.—SILAS MARNER, GEORGE ELIOT

**USAGE** In modern English you would expect an *accent* to show where someone is from, rather than how they are feeling.

**accident** *NOUN*  
1 chance; fortune  
• *[The letter] convinced her, that accident only could discover to Mr Bingley her sister's being in town.*—PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, JANE AUSTEN  
2 an unimportant part of something  
• *Sunday bells were a mere accident of the day, and not part of its sacredness.*—SILAS MARNER, GEORGE ELIOT

**accidental** *ADJECTIVE*  
1 happening by chance  
• *this accidental meeting*—PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, JANE AUSTEN  
2 unimportant; minor, occasional, or incidental  
• *the removal of any accidental impurities which might be discovered on the coins*—THE WOMAN IN WHITE, WILKIE COLLINS

**acclamation** *NOUN*  
loud or strong approval; a shout of approval  
• *The Court received the new King with joyful acclamations.*—THE YELLOW FAIRY BOOK, ANDREW LANG

**accommodate** *VERB*  
to settle or resolve an argument  
• *By the landlord's intervention, however, the dispute was accommodated.*—SILAS MARNER, GEORGE ELIOT  
➤ **accommodate yourself to something:** to adapt yourself to your circumstances • *It was a remarkable quality of the Ghost ... that notwithstanding his gigantic size, he could accommodate himself to any place with ease.*—A CHRISTMAS CAROL, CHARLES DICKENS

**accomplished** *ADJECTIVE*  
having many accomplishments (skills)  
• *Such a countenance, such manners! and so extremely accomplished for her age!*—PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, JANE AUSTEN

**accomplishment** *NOUN*  
a skill, or skill generally, for example, in conversation, music, or hobbies  
• *What will you do with your French, drawing, and other accomplishments, when they are acquired?*—SHIRLEY, CHARLOTTE BRONTË  
• *Besides, it's not as if I was an accomplished girl who had any right to give herself airs.*—BLEAK HOUSE, CHARLES DICKENS

**accord** *VERB*  
1 to grant or give someone something  
• *Mrs Fairfax had begged a holiday for Adèle ... and ... I accorded it.*—JANE EYRE, CHARLOTTE BRONTË

2 to match, agree, or fit in with something  
• *This seemed to accord with his desire.*—THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE, THOMAS HARDY  
• *But your ideas and mine never accord.*—THE MILL ON THE FLOSS, GEORGE ELIOT

**accordant** *ADJECTIVE*  
agreeable; in harmony; as it should be  
• *All correct there. Everything accordant there.*—HARD TIMES, CHARLES DICKENS

**accost** *VERB*  
to approach and speak to someone  
• *I managed to accost him sedately, yet cheerfully.*—VILLETTE, CHARLOTTE BRONTË

**accost** *NOUN*  
a greeting or way of speaking to someone  
• *Her accost was quiet and friendly.*—MARY BARTON, ELIZABETH GASKELL  
**USAGE** In modern English you might expect *accost* to suggest that someone approaches you in an annoying or unpleasant way.

**accoucheur** *NOUN*  
a person trained to assist in childbirth; a midwife  
• *I think my sister ... had some ... idea that I was a young offender whom an Accoucheur Policeman had ... delivered ... to her.*—GREAT EXPECTATIONS, CHARLES DICKENS

**account** *NOUN*  
a piece of business, especially a bad-natured one; something to be avenged  
• *Nicholas ... resolved that the outstanding account between himself and Mr Squeers should be settled.*—NICHOLAS NICKLEBY, CHARLES DICKENS  
➤ **go to his / her account: to die** • *Hyde is gone to his account; and it only remains for us to find the body.*—THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON  
➤ **turn to account: to make use of something; to profit from something** • *A chance influx of visitors ... rendered it necessary to turn to account all the accommodation.*—JANE EYRE, CHARLOTTE BRONTË

**accoutrement** *NOUN*  
an item of equipment or clothing  
• *His clothes, which are too big, are a 'ludicrous accoutrement'.*—THE STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE, ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

**accumulate** *VERB*  
to gather or increase; to build something up  
• *There was no furniture ... and the accumulated dust of years lay thick upon the floor.*—THE SIGN OF FOUR, ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE  
➤ **accumulation** *NOUN* a mass of something; an amount built up • *I myself was about to sink under the accumulation of distress.*—FRANKENSTEIN, MARY SHELLEY

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