

Books Do Furnish A Mind, Part III

by Ibn Warraq (June 2014)



I do not know that I am happiest alone; but this I am sure of, that I am never long even in the society of her I love without a yearning for the company of my lamp and my utterly confused and tumbled-over library.

– Byron, *Journal*, April, 10th , 1814.

My father was struggling to pay the fees of Bryanston School which he did through an English family with whom I stayed during the school holidays. There was very little pocket money for me, so I had to devise other ways to acquire enough money to indulge my burgeoning bibliophilia. The English family lived near Norwich, Norfolk. Every school holiday I had to pass through London, arriving at Waterloo Station from Blandford Forum, Dorset, and then transfer to Liverpool Station to take my train to Norwich. I was given enough money to take a taxi from Waterloo to Liverpool Street but, instead, I took the Underground to Leicester Square on the Northern Line, thus saving considerable amount of money, which I would use in the second hand bookshops of Charing Cross Road. At Leicester Square tube station, as soon as I came up the underground steps, I felt in heaven as I was engulfed by the second hand bookshops with their bookshelves spilling out onto the pavements. I began the Charing Cross Pilgrimage at Cecil Court which came off the Charing Cross road and ran into St.Martin's Lane, since it housed several bookshops, which also sold prints and maps. Apart from Cecil Court's cultural and literary associations (Mozart, in London between 1764-1765, is said to have written a symphony while living here[\[1\]here.](#)

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