



de Quincey CONFESIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM EATER

Confessions of an English Opium-Eater

by Thomas de Quincey (1785–1859)

“Thou hast the keys of Paradise, O just, subtle, and mighty Opium!”

Though apparently presenting the reader with a collage of poignant memories, temporal digressions and random anecdotes, the *Confessions*, published in 1822, is a work of immense sophistication and certainly one of the most impressive and influential of all autobiographies. The work is of great appeal to the contemporary reader, displaying a nervous (postmodern?) self-awareness, a spiraling obsession with the enigmas of its own composition and significance. De Quincey may be said to scrutinise his life, somewhat feverishly, in an effort to fix his own identity.

The title seems to promise a graphic exposure of horrors; these passages do not make up a large part of the whole. What makes the book technically remarkable is its use of a majestic neoclassical style applied to a very romantic species of confessional writing.

Total running time: 5:21:43
Read by Martin Geeson

Cover design by Kathryn Delaney
Cover portrait of de Quincey by Sir John
Watson Gordon, 1846



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