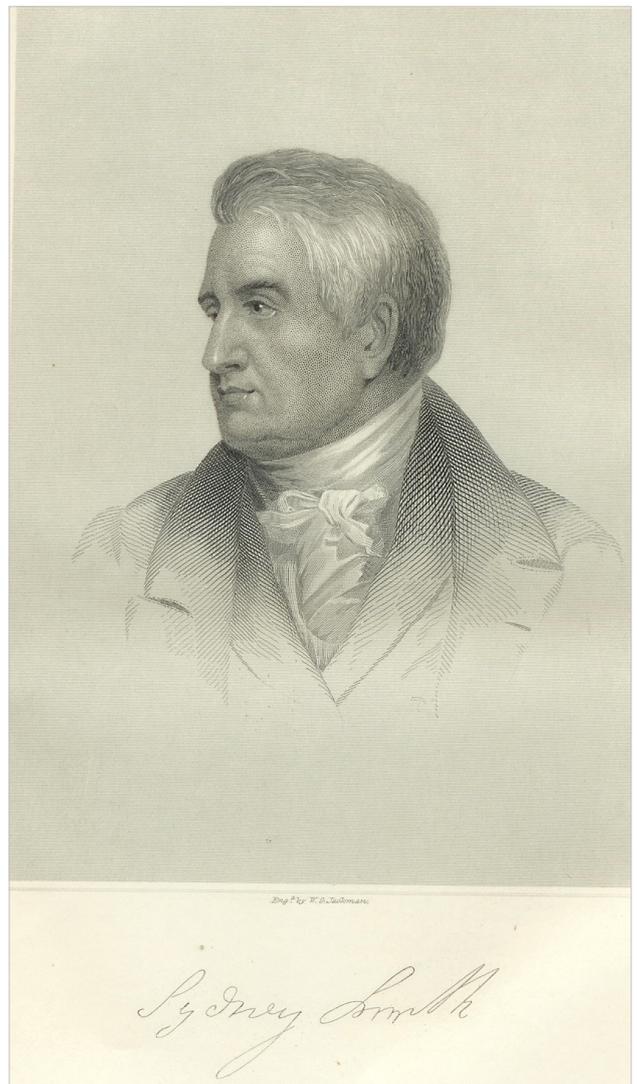


Recipe for a Salad

To make this condiment your poet begs
The pounded yellow of two hard boiled eggs;
Two boiled potatoes, passed through kitchen sieve,
Smoothness and softness to the salad give;
Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,
And, half suspected, animate the whole;
Of mordant mustard add a single spoon,
Distrust the condiment that bites so soon;
But deem it not, thou man of herbs, a fault
To add a double quantity of salt;
Four times the spoon with oil from Lucca crown,
And twice with vinegar, procured from town;
And lastly, o'er the flavoured compound toss
A magic soupçon of anchovy sauce.
O green and glorious! O herbaceous treat!
'T would tempt the dying anchorite to eat;
Back to the world he 'd turn his fleeting soul,
And plunge his fingers in the salad-bowl;
Serenely full, the epicure would say,
"Fate cannot harm me,—I have dined to-day."



The wit and clergyman Sydney Smith (1771-1845) was vicar of a Yorkshire village, Foston-le-Clay, for 20 years. "It is a place with only one post a day," he complained. "In the country I always fear that creation will expire before teatime." He had no great relish for village life, which he described as "a kind of healthy grave".

He had relish for food however: "I am convinced digestion is the great secret of life." This is the clergyman who described a friend's idea of heaven as "eating *pâtés de foie gras* to the sound of trumpets." Breakfast, however, was his favourite meal, "because no one is conceited before one o'clock". And he wrote to one of his correspondents, "Madam, I have been looking for a person who disliked gravy all my life; let us swear eternal friendship." It reminds us that his mother was French.

Before settling in Yorkshire, he was a radical and popular preacher, first in Edinburgh, where he founded the *Edinburgh Review*, and then in London, where people crowded to see him. His views were seen as radical but are now thought of as progressive and far-sighted, being in favour of the education of women, the abolition of slavery and the teaching of practical subjects rather than the classics.

Later in his life he became vicar of Combe Florey, near Taunton. One of his best fighting speeches was delivered at Taunton, when he made his well-known comparison of the House of Lords with Mrs Partington of Sidmouth, setting out with mop and pattens to stem the Atlantic in a storm.

There is a Sydney Smith Society, which seeks to perpetuate his memory and achievements. Lympstone poet Ralph Rochester (now resident in Salcombe Regis and Exeter) is a long-standing member, and regularly attends its Annual Dinners.