

# THE SAVOY

EDITED BY  
ARTHUR SYMONS

VOLUME  
III

LEONARD SMITHERS  
ROYAL ARCADE: OLD BOND STREET  
LONDON W  
1896

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WALTER CONRAD  
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# THE SAVOY

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY

No. 6

October 1896

Price **2/-**

EDITED BY ARTHUR SYMONS





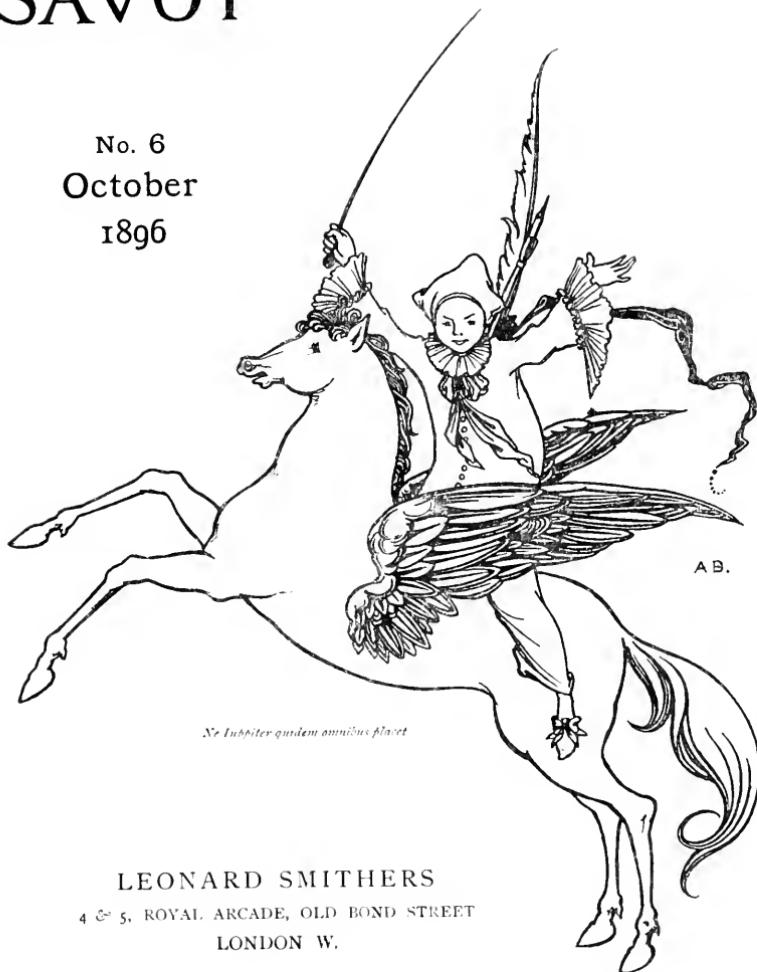
THE SAVOY—N<sup>o</sup> VI

*All communications should be directed to THE EDITOR OF  
THE SAVOY, 4 & 5, Royal Arcade, Old Bond Street, London, W.  
MSS. should be type-written, and stamps enclosed for their return.*

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CHISWICK PRESS:—CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO., TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

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## THE IDIOTS



E were driving along the road from Treguier to Kervanda. We passed at a smart trot between the hedges topping an earth wall on each side of the road ; then at the foot of the steep ascent before Ploumar the horse dropped into a walk, and the driver jumped down heavily from the box. He flicked his whip and climbed the incline, stepping clumsily uphill by the side of the carriage, one hand on the footboard, his eyes on the ground. After a while he lifted his head, pointed up the road with the end of the whip, and said—

“The idiot !”

The sun was shining violently upon the undulating surface of the land. The rises were topped by clumps of meagre trees, with their branches showing high on the sky as if they had been perched upon stilts. The small fields, cut up by hedges and stone walls that zigzagged over the slopes, lay in rectangular patches of vivid greens and yellows, resembling the unskilful daubs of a naïve picture. And the landscape was divided in two by the white streak of a road stretching in long loops far away, like a river of dust crawling out of the hills on its way to the sea.

“Here he is,” said the driver, again.

In the long grass bordering the road a face glided past the carriage at the level of the wheels as we drove slowly by. The imbecile face was red, and the bullet head with close-cropped hair seemed to lie alone, its chin in the dust. The body was lost in the bushes growing thick along the bottom of the deep ditch.

It was a boy’s face. He might have been sixteen, judging from the size—perhaps less, perhaps more. Such creatures are forgotten by time, and live untouched by years till death gathers them up into its compassionate bosom : the faithful death that never forgets in the press of work the most insignificant of its children.

“Ah ! There’s another,” said the man, with a certain satisfaction in his tone, as if he had caught sight of something expected.

There was another. That one stood nearly in the middle of the road in the blaze of sunshine at the end of his own short shadow. And he stood with hands pushed into the opposite sleeves of his long coat, his head sunk between the shoulders, all hunched up in the flood of heat. From a distance he had the aspect of one suffering from intense cold.

"Those are twins," explained the driver.

The idiot shuffled two paces out of the way and looked at us over his shoulder when we brushed past him. The glance was unseeing and staring, a fascinated glance; but he did not turn to look after us. Probably the image passed before the eyes without leaving any trace on the misshapen brain of the creature. When we had topped the ascent I looked over the hood. He stood in the road just where we had left him.

The driver clambered into his seat, clicked his tongue, and we went down hill. The brake squeaked horribly from time to time. At the foot he eased off the noisy mechanism and said, turning half round on his box:

"We shall see some more of them by-and-by."

"More idiots? How many of them are there, then?" I asked.

"There's four of them—children of a farmer near Ploumar here. . . . The parents are dead now," he added, after a while. "The grandmother lives on the farm. In the daytime they knock about on this road, and they come home at dusk along with the cattle. . . . It's a good farm."

We saw the other two: a boy and a girl, as the driver said. They were dressed exactly alike, in shapeless garments with petticoat-like skirts. The imperfect thing that lived within them moved those beings to howl at us from the top of the bank, where they sprawled amongst the tough stalks of furze. Their cropped black heads stuck out from the bright yellow wall of countless small blossoms. The faces were purple with the strain of yelling; the voices sounded blank and cracked like a mechanical imitation of old people's voices; and suddenly ceased when we turned into a lane.

I saw them many times in my wanderings about the country. They lived on that road, drifting along its length here and there, according to the inexplicable impulses of their monstrous darkness. They were an offence to the sunshine, a reproach to empty heaven, a blight on the concentrated and purposeful vigour of the wild landscape. In time the story of their parents shaped itself before me out of the listless answers to my questions, out of the indifferent words heard in wayside inns or on the very road those idiots haunted. Some of it was told by an emaciated and sceptical old fellow with a tremendous whip, while we trudged together over the sands by the side of a two-wheeled cart

loaded with dripping seaweed. Then at other times other people confirmed and completed the story : till it stood at last before me, a tale formidable and simple, as they always are, those disclosures of obscure trials endured by ignorant hearts.

When he returned from his military service Jean Pierre Bacadou found the old people very much aged. He remarked with pain that the work of the farm was not satisfactorily done. The father had not the energy of old days. The hands did not feel over them the eye of the master. Jean-Pierre noted with sorrow that the heap of manure in the courtyard before the only entrance to the house was not so large as it should have been. The fences were out of repair, and the cattle suffered from neglect. At home the mother was practically bedridden, and the girls chattered loudly in the big kitchen, unrebuked, from morning to night. He said to himself: "We must change all this." He talked the matter over with his father one evening when the rays of the setting sun entering the yard between the outhouses ruled the heavy shadows with luminous streaks. Over the manure heap floated a mist, opal-tinted and odorous, and the marauding hens would stop in their scratching to examine with a sudden glance of their round eye the two men, both lean and tall, talking together in hoarse tones. The old man, all twisted with rheumatism and bowed with years of work, the younger bony and straight, spoke without gestures in the indifferent manner of peasants, grave and slow. But before the sun had set the father had submitted to the sensible arguments of the son. "It is not for me that I am speaking," insisted Jean-Pierre. "It is for the land. It's a pity to see it badly used. I am not impatient for myself." The old fellow nodded over his stick. "I dare say ; I dare say," he muttered. "You may be right. Do what you like. It's the mother that will be pleased."

The mother was pleased with her daughter-in-law. Jean-Pierre brought the two-wheeled spring-cart with a rush into the yard. The grey horse galloped clumsily, and the bride and bridegroom, sitting side by side, were jerked backwards and forwards by the up and down motion of the shafts, in a manner regular and brusque. On the road the distanced wedding guests straggled in pairs and groups. The men advanced with heavy steps, swinging their idle arms. They were clad in town clothes : jackets cut with clumsy smartness, hard black hats, immense boots, polished highly. Their women all in simple black, with white caps and shawls of faded tints folded triangularly on the back, strolled lightly by their side. In front the violin sang a strident tune, and the biniou snored and hummed, while the player capered solemnly, lifting high his heavy clogs. The sombre procession drifted in and out of the

narrow lanes, through sunshine and through shade, between fields and hedge-rows, scaring the little birds that darted away in troops right and left. In the yard of Bacadou's farm the dark ribbon wound itself up into a mass of men and women pushing at the door with cries and greetings. The wedding dinner was remembered for months. It was a splendid feast in the orchard. Farmers of considerable means and excellent repute were to be found sleeping in ditches, all along the road to Treguier, even as late as the afternoon of the next day. All the countryside participated in the happiness of Jean-Pierre. He remained sober, and, together with his quiet wife, kept out of the way, letting father and mother reap their due of honour and thanks. But the next day he took hold strongly, and the old folks felt a shadow—precursor of the grave—fall upon them finally. The world is to the young.

When the twins were born there was plenty of room in the house, for the mother of Jean-Pierre had gone away to dwell under a heavy stone in the cemetery of Ploumar. On that day, for the first time since his son's marriage, the elder Bacadou, neglected by the cackling lot of strange women who thronged the kitchen, left in the morning his seat under the mantel of the fire-place, and went into the empty cow-house, shaking his white locks dismally. Grandsons were all very well, but he wanted his soup at midday. When shown the babies, he stared at them with a fixed gaze, and muttered something like: "It's too much." Whether he meant too much happiness, or simply commented upon the number of his descendants, it is impossible to say. He looked offended—as far as his old wooden face could express anything; and for days afterwards could be seen, almost any time of the day, sitting at the gate, with his nose over his knees, a pipe between his gums, and gathered up into a kind of raging concentrated sulkiness. Once he spoke to his son, alluding to the newcomers with a groan: "They will quarrel over the land." "Don't bother about that, father," answered Jean-Pierre, stolidly, and passed, bent double, towing a recalcitrant cow over his shoulder.

He was happy, and so was Susan, his wife. It was not an ethereal joy welcoming new souls to struggle, perchance to victory. In fourteen years both boys would be a help; and, later on, Jean-Pierre pictured two big sons striding over the land from patch to patch, wringing tribute from the earth beloved and fruitful. Susan was happy too, for she did not want to be spoken of as the unfortunate woman, and now she had children no one could call her that. Both herself and her husband had seen something of the larger world—he during the time of his service: while she had spent a year or so in Paris with a Breton family; but had been too home-sick to remain longer away

from the hilly and green country, set in a barren circle of rocks and sands, where she had been born. She thought that one of the boys ought perhaps to be a priest, but said nothing to her husband, who was a republican, and hated the "crows," as he called the ministers of religion. The christening was a splendid affair. All the commune came to it, for the Bacadous were rich and influential, and, now and then, did not mind the expense. The grandfather had a new coat.

Some months afterwards, one evening when the kitchen had been swept, and the door locked, Jean-Pierre, looking at the cot, asked his wife : "What's the matter with those children?" And, as if these words, spoken calmly, had been the portent of misfortune, she answered with a loud wail that must have been heard across the yard in the pig-sty ; for the pigs (the Bacadous had the finest pigs in the country), stirred and grunted complainingly in the night. The husband went on grinding his bread and butter slowly, gazing at the wall, the soup-plate smoking under his chin. He had returned late from the market, where he had overheard (not for the first time) whispers behind his back. He revolved the words in his mind as he drove back. "Simple! Both of them. . . . Never any use! . . . Well! May be, may be. One must see. Would ask his wife." This was her answer. He felt like a blow on his chest, but said only : "Go, draw me some cider. I am thirsty!"

She went out moaning, an empty jug in her hand. Then he rose, took up the light, and moved slowly towards the cradle. They slept. He looked at them sideways, finished his mouthful there, went back heavily, and sat down before his plate. When his wife returned he never looked up, but swallowed a couple of spoonfuls noisily, and remarked, in a dull manner :

"When they sleep they are like other people's children."

She sat down suddenly on a stool near by, and shook with a silent tempest of sobs, unable to speak. He finished his meal, and remained idly thrown back in his chair, his eyes lost amongst the black rafters of the ceiling. Before him the tallow candle flared red and straight, sending up a slender thread of smoke. The light lay on the rough, sunburnt skin of his throat ; the sunk cheeks were like patches of darkness, and his aspect was mournfully stolid, as if he had ruminated with difficulty endless ideas. Then he said, deliberately :

"We must see . . . consult people. Don't cry. . . . They won't be all like that . . . surely! We must sleep now."

After the third child, also a boy, was born, Jean-Pierre went about his work with tense hopefulness. His lips seemed more narrow, more tightly compressed than before ; as if for fear of letting the earth he tilled hear the

voice of hope that murmured within his breast. He watched the child, stepping up to the cot with a heavy clang of sabots on the stone floor, and glanced in, along his shoulder, with that indifference which is like a deformity of peasant humanity. Like the earth they master and serve, those men, slow of eye and speech, do not show the inner fire ; so that, at last, it becomes a question with them as with the earth, what there is in the core : heat, violence, a force mysterious and terrible—or nothing but a clod, a mass fertile and inert, cold and unfeeling, ready to bear a crop of plants that sustain life or give death.

The mother watched with other eyes ; listened with otherwise expectant ears. Under the high hanging shelves supporting great sides of bacon overhead, her body was busy by the great fireplace, attentive to the pot swinging on iron gallows, scrubbing the long table where the field hands would sit down directly to their evening meal. Her mind remained by the cradle, night and day on the watch, to hope and suffer. That child, like the other two, never smiled, never stretched its hands to her, never spoke ; never had a glance of recognition for her in its big black eyes, which could only stare fixedly at any glitter, but failed hopelessly to follow the brilliance of a sun-ray slipping slowly along the floor. When the men were at work she spent long days between her three idiot children and the childish grandfather, who sat grim, angular, and immovable, with his feet near the warm ashes of the fire. The feeble old fellow seemed to suspect that there was something wrong with his grandsons. Only once, moved either by affection or by the sense of proprieties, he attempted to nurse the youngest. He took the boy up from the floor, clicked his tongue at him, and essayed a shaky gallop of his bony knees. Then he looked closely with his misty eyes at the child's face and deposited him down gently on the floor again. And he sat, his lean shanks crossed, nodding at the steam escaping from the cooking-pot with a gaze senile and worried.

Then mute affliction dwelt in Bacadou's farmhouse, sharing the breath and the bread of its inhabitants ; and the priest of the Ploumar parish had great cause for congratulation. He called upon the rich landowner, the Marquis de Chavanes, on purpose to deliver himself with joyful unction of solemn platitudes about the inscrutable ways of Providence. In the vast dimness of the curtained drawing-room, the little man, resembling a black bolster, leaned towards a couch, his hat on his knees, and gesticulated with a fat hand at the elongated, gracefully-flowing lines of the clear Parisian toilette from within which the half-amused, half-bored marquise listened with gracious languor. He was exulting and humble, proud and awed. The impossible had come to pass. Jean-Pierre Bacadou, the enraged republican farmer, had been to mass

last Sunday—had proposed to entertain the visiting priests at the next festival of Ploumar! It was a triumph for the Church and for the good cause. "I thought I would come at once to tell Monsieur le Marquis. I know how anxious he is for the welfare of our country," declared the priest, wiping his face. He was asked to stay to dinner.

The Chavanes returning that evening, after seeing their guest to the main gate of the park, discussed the matter while they strolled in the moonlight, trailing their elongated shadows up the straight avenue of chestnuts. The marquis, a royalist of course, had been mayor of the commune that includes Ploumar, the scattered hamlets of the coast, and the stony islands that fringe the yellow flatness of the sands. He had felt his position insecure, for there was a strong republican element in that part of the country; but now the conversion of Jean-Pierre made him safe. He was very pleased. "You have no idea how influential those people are," he explained to his wife. "Now, I am sure, the next communal election will go all right. I shall be re-elected." "Your ambition is perfectly insatiable, Charles," exclaimed the marquise, gaily. "But, ma chère amie," argued the husband, seriously, "it's most important that the right man should be mayor this year, because of the elections to the Chamber. If you think it amuses me . . . ."

Jean-Pierre had surrendered to his wife's mother. Madame Levaille was a woman of business known and respected within a radius of at least fifteen miles. Thickset and stout, she was seen about the country, on foot or in an acquaintance's cart, perpetually moving, in spite of her fifty-eight years, in steady pursuit of business. She had houses in all the hamlets, she worked quarries of granite, she freighted coasters with stone—even traded with the Channel Islands. She was broad-cheeked, wide-eyed, persuasive in speech: carrying her point with the placid and invincible obstinacy of an old woman who knows her own mind. She very seldom slept for two nights together in the same house; and the wayside inns were the best places to inquire in as to her whereabouts. She had either passed, or was expected to pass there at six; or somebody, coming in, had seen her in the morning, or expected to meet her that evening. After the inns that command the roads, the churches were the buildings she frequented most. Men of liberal opinions would induce small children to run into sacred edifices to see whether Madame Levaille was there, and to tell her that so-and-so was in the road waiting to speak to her—about potatoes, or flour, or stones, or houses; and she would curtail her devotions, come out blinking and crossing herself into the sunshine; ready to discuss business matters in a calm sensible way across a table in the kitchen of the

inn opposite. Latterly she had stayed for a few days several times with her son-in-law ; arguing against sorrow and misfortune with composed face and gentle tones. Jean-Pierre felt the convictions imbibed in the regiment torn out of his breast—not by arguments, but by facts. Striding over his fields he thought it over. There were three of them. Three ! All alike ! Why ? Such things did not happen to everybody—to nobody he ever heard of. One yet—it might pass. But three ! All three. For ever useless, to be fed while he lived and . . . . What would become of the land when he died ? This must be seen to. He would sacrifice his convictions. One day he told his wife :

"See what your God will do for us. Pay for some masses."

Susan embraced her man. He stood unbending, then turned on his heels and went out. But afterwards when a black *soutane* darkened his doorway he did not object ; even offered some cider himself to the priest. He listened to the talk meekly ; went to mass between the two women ; accomplished what the priest called "his religious duties" at Easter. That morning he felt like a man who had sold his soul. In the afternoon he fought ferociously with an old friend and neighbour who had remarked that the priests had the best of it and were going now to eat the priest-eater. He came home dishevelled and bleeding, and happening to catch sight of his children (they were kept generally out of the way), cursed and swore incoherently, banging the table. Susan wept. Madame Levaille sat serenely unmoved. She assured her daughter that "It will pass ;" and taking up her thick umbrella, departed in haste to see after a schooner she was going to load with granite from her quarry.

A year or so afterwards the girl was born. A girl ! Jean-Pierre heard of it in the fields, and was so upset by the news that he sat down on the boundary wall and remained there till the evening, instead of going home as he was urged to do. A girl ! He felt half cheated. However, when he got home he was partly reconciled to his fate. One could marry her to a good fellow—not a good for nothing, but to a fellow with some understanding and a good pair of arms. Besides, the next may be a boy, he thought. Of course they would be all right. His new credulity knew of no doubt. The ill luck was broken. He spoke cheerily to his wife. She was also hopeful. Three priests came to that christening, and Madame Levaille was godmother. The child turned out an idiot too.

Then on market days Jean-Pierre was seen bargaining bitterly, quarrelsome and greedy ; then getting drunk with taciturn earnestness ; then driving

home in the dusk at a rate fit for a wedding, but with a face gloomy enough for a funeral. Sometimes he would insist for his wife to come with him ; and they would drive in the early morning, shaking side by side on the narrow seat above the helpless pig, that, with tied legs, grunted a melancholy sigh at every rut. The morning drives were silent ; but in the evening, coming home, Jean-Pierre, tipsy, was viciously muttering, and growled at the confounded woman who could not rear children that were like anybody else's. Susan, holding on against the erratic swayings of the cart, pretended not to hear. Once, as they were driving through Ploumar, some obscure and drunken impulse caused him to pull up sharply opposite the church. The moon swam amongst light white clouds. The tombstones gleamed pale under the fretted shadows of the trees in the churchyard. Even the village dogs slept. Only the nightingales, awake, spun out the thrill of their song above the silence of graves. Jean-Pierre said thickly to his wife :

"What do you think is there ?"

He pointed his whip at the tower—in which the big dial of the clock appeared high in the moonlight like a pallid face without eyes—and getting out carefully, fell down at once by the wheel. He picked himself up and climbed one by one the few steps to the iron gate of the churchyard. He put his face to the bars and called out indistinctly :

"Hey there ! Come out !"

"Jean ! Return ! Return !" entreated his wife in low tones.

He took no notice, and seemed to wait there. The song of nightingales beat on all sides against the high walls of the church, and flowed back between stone crosses and flat grey slabs, engraved with words of hope and sorrow.

"Hey ! Come out !" shouted Jean-Pierre loudly.

The nightingales ceased to sing.

"Nobody ?" went on Jean-Pierre. " Nobody there. A swindle of the crows. That's what this is. Nobody anywhere. I despise it. Allez ! Houp !"

He shook the gate with all his strength, and the iron bars rattled with a frightful clanging, like a chain dragged over stone steps. A dog near-by barked hurriedly. Jean-Pierre staggered back, and after three successive dashes got into his cart. Susan sat very quiet and still. He said to her with drunken severity :

"See ? Nobody. I've been made a fool ! Malheur ! Somebody will pay for it. The next one I see near the house I will lay my whip on . . . on the

black spine . . . I will. I don't want him in there . . . he only helps the carrion crows to rob poor folk. I am a man. . . . We will see if I can't have children like anybody else . . . now you mind. . . . They won't be all . . . all . . . we see. . . ."

She burst out through the fingers that hid her face :

"Don't say that, Jean ; don't say that, my man!"

He struck her a swinging blow on the head with the back of his hand and knocked her into the bottom of the cart, where she crouched, thrown about lamentably by every jolt. He drove furiously, standing up, brandishing his whip, shaking the reins over the grey horse that galloped ponderously, making the heavy harness leap upon his broad quarters. The country rang clamorous in the night with the irritated barking of farm dogs, that followed the rattle of wheels all along the road. A couple of belated wayfarers had only just time to step into the ditch. At his own gate he caught the post and was shot out of the cart head first. The horse went on slowly to the door. At Susan's piercing cries the farm hands rushed out. She thought him dead, but he was only sleeping where he fell, and cursed his men who hastened to him for disturbing his slumbers.

Autumn came. The clouded sky descended low upon the black contours of the hills : and the dead leaves danced in spiral whirls under naked trees till the wind, sighing profoundly, laid them to rest in the hollows of bare valleys. And from morning till night one could see all over the land black denuded boughs, the boughs gnarled and twisted, as if contorted with pain, swaying sadly between the wet clouds and the soaked earth. The clear and gentle streams of summer days rushed discoloured and raging at the stones that barred the way to the sea, with the fury of madness bent upon suicide. From horizon to horizon the great road to the sands lay between the hills in a dull glitter of empty curves, resembling an unnavigable river of mud.

Jean-Pierre went from field to field, moving blurred and tall in the drizzle, or striding on the crests of rises, lonely and high upon the grey curtain of drifting clouds, as if he had been pacing along the very edge of the universe. He looked at the black earth, at the earth mute and promising, at the mysterious earth doing its work of life in death-like stillness under the veiled sorrow of the sky. And it seemed to him that to a man worse than childless there was no promise in the fertility of fields, that from him the earth escaped, defied him, frowned at him like the clouds, sombre and hurried above his head. Having to face alone his own fields, he felt the inferiority of man who passes away before the clod that remains. Must he give up the hope of having by

his side a son who would look at the turned-up sods with a master's eye? A man that would think as he thought, that would feel as he felt; a man who would be part of himself, and yet remain to trample masterfully on that earth when he was gone! He thought of some distant relations, and felt savage enough to curse them aloud. They! Never! He turned homewards, going straight at the roof of his dwelling visible between the encased skeletons of trees. As he swung his legs over the stile a cawing flock of birds settled slowly on the field; dropped down, behind his back, noiseless and fluttering, like flakes of soot.

That day Madame Levaille had gone early in the afternoon to the house she had near Kervanion. She had to pay some of the men who worked in her granite quarry there, and she went in good time because her little house contained a shop where the workmen could spend their wages without the trouble of going to town. The house stood alone amongst rocks. A lane of mud and stones ended at the door. The sea-winds coming ashore on Stone-cutter's point, fresh from the fierce turmoil of the waves, howled violently at the unmoved heaps of black boulders holding up steadily short-armed, high crosses against the tremendous rush of the invisible. In the sweep of gales the sheltered dwelling stood in a calm resonant and disquieting, like the calm in the centre of a hurricane. On stormy nights, when the tide was out, the bay of Fougère, fifty feet below the house, resembled an immense black pit, from which ascended mutterings and sighs as if the sands down there had been alive and complaining. At high tide the returning water assaulted the ledges of rock in short rushes, ending in bursts of livid light and columns of spray, that flew inland, stinging to death the grass of pastures.

The darkness came from the hills, flowed over the coast, put out the red fires of sunset, and went on to seaward pursuing the retiring tide. The wind dropped with the sun, leaving a maddened sea and a devastated sky. The heavens above the house seemed to be draped in black rags, held up here and there by pins of fire. Madame Levaille, for this evening the servant of her own workmen, tried to induce them to depart. "An old woman like me ought to be in bed at this late hour," she good-humouredly repeated. The quarrymen drank, asked for more. They shouted over the table as if they had been talking across a field. At one end four of them played cards, banging the wood with their hard knuckles, and swearing at every lead. One sat with a lost gaze, humming a bar of some song, which he repeated endlessly. Two others, in a corner, were quarrelling confidentially and fiercely over some woman, looking close into one another's eyes as if they had wanted to tear

them out, but speaking in whispers that promised violence and murder discreetly, in a venomous sibilation of subdued words. The atmosphere in there was thick enough to slice with a knife. Three candles burning about the long room glowed red and dull like sparks expiring in ashes.

The slight click of the iron latch was at that late hour as unexpected and startling as a thunder-clap. Madame Levaille put down a bottle she held above a liqueur glass; the players turned their heads; the whispered quarrel ceased; only the singer, after darting a glance at the door, went on humming with a stolid face. Susan appeared in the doorway, stepped in, flung the door to, and put her back against it, saying, half aloud :

"Mother!"

Madame Levaille, taking up the bottle again, said calmly : "Here you are, my girl. What a state you are in!" The neck of the bottle rang on the rim of the glass, for the old woman was startled, and the idea that the farm had caught fire had entered her head. She could think of no other cause for her daughter's appearance.

Susan, soaked and muddy, stared the whole length of the room towards the men at the far end. Her mother asked :

"What has happened? God guard us from misfortune!"

Susan moved her lips. No sound came. Madame Levaille stepped up to her daughter, took her by the arm, looked into her face.

"In God's name," she said shakily, "what's the matter? You have been rolling in mud. . . . Why did you come? . . . Where's Jean?"

The men had all got up and approached slowly, staring with dull surprise. Madame Levaille jerked her daughter away from the door, swung her round upon a seat close to the wall. Then she turned fiercely to the men :

"Enough of this! Out you go—you others! I close."

One of them observed, looking down at Susan collapsed on the seat : "She is—one may say—half dead."

Madame Levaille flung the door open.

"Get out! March!" she cried, shaking nervously.

They dropped out into the night, laughing stupidly. Outside, the two Lotharios broke out into loud shouts. The others tried to soothe them, all talking at once. The noise went away up the lane with the men, who staggered together in a tight knot, remonstrating with one another foolishly.

"Speak, Susan. What is it? Speak!" entreated Madame Levaille, as soon as the door was shut.

Susan pronounced some incomprehensible words, glaring at the table.

The old woman clapped her hands above her head, let them drop, and stood looking at her daughter with disconsolate eyes. Her husband had been "deranged in his head" for a few years before he died, and now she began to suspect her daughter was going mad. She asked, pressingly :

" Does Jean know where you are? Where is Jean? "

Susan pronounced with difficulty :

" He knows . . . he is dead."

" What! " cried the old woman. She came up near, and peering at her daughter, repeated three times : " What do you say? What do you say? What do you say? "

Susan sat dry-eyed and stony before Madame Levaille, who contemplated her, feeling a strange sense of inexplicable horror creep into the silence of the house. She had hardly realized the news, further than to understand that she had been brought in one short moment face to face with something unexpected and final. It did not even occur to her to ask for any explanation. She thought : accident—terrible accident—blood to the head—fell down a trap door in the loft. . . . She remained there, distracted and mute, blinking her old eyes.

Suddenly, Susan said :

" I have killed him."

For a moment the mother stood still, almost unbreathing, but with composed face. The next second, she burst out into a shout :

" You miserable madwoman . . . they will cut your neck . . . "

She fancied the gendarmes entering the house, saying to her : " We want your daughter; give her up :" the gendarmes with the severe, hard faces of men on duty. She knew the brigadier well—an old friend, familiar and respectful, saying heartily, " To your good health, madame! " before lifting to his lips the small glass of cognac—out of the special bottle she kept for friends. And now! . . . She was losing her head. She rushed here and there, as if looking for something urgently needed—gave that up, stood stock still in the middle of the room, and screamed at her daughter :

" Why? Say! Say! Why? "

The other seemed to leap out of her strange apathy.

" Do you think I am made of stone? " she shouted back, striding towards her mother.

" No! It's impossible. . . ." said Madame Levaille, in a convinced tone.

" You go and see, mother," retorted Susan, looking at her with blazing

eyes. "There's no mercy in heaven—no justice. No! . . . I did not know . . . Do you think I have no heart? Do you think I have never heard people jeering at me, pitying me, wondering at me? Do you know how some of them were calling me? The mother of idiots—that was my nickname! And my children never would know me, never speak to me. They would know nothing: neither men—nor God. Haven't I prayed! But the Mother of God herself would not hear me. A mother! . . . Who is accursed—I, or the man who is dead? Eh? Tell me. I took care of myself. Do you think I would defy the anger of God and have my house full of those things—that are worse than animals who know the hand that feeds them? Who blasphemed in the night at the very church door? Was it I? . . . I only wept and prayed for mercy . . . and I feel the curse at every moment of the day—I see it round me from morning to night . . . I've got to keep them alive—to take care of my misfortune and shame. And he would come. I begged him and Heaven for mercy. . . . No! . . . Then we shall see. . . . He came this evening. I thought to myself: 'Ah! again!' . . . I had my long scissors. I heard him shouting. . . . I saw him near. . . . I must—must I? . . . Then take! . . . And I struck him in the throat above the breast-bone. . . . I never heard him even sigh. . . . I left him standing. . . . It was a minute ago. . . . How did I come here?"

Madame Levaille shivered. A wave of cold ran down her back, down her fat arms under her tight sleeves, made her stamp gently where she stood. Quivers ran over the broad cheeks, across the thin lips, ran amongst the wrinkles at the corners of her steady old eyes. She stammered:

"You wicked woman—you disgrace me. But there! You always resembled your father. What do you think will become of you . . . in the other world? In this . . . Oh misery!"

She was very hot now. She felt burning inside. She wrung her perspiring hands—and suddenly, starting in great haste, began to look for her big shawl and umbrella, feverishly, never once glancing at her daughter, who stood in the middle of the room following her with a gaze distracted and cold.

"Nothing worse than in this," said Susan.

Her mother, umbrella in hand and trailing the shawl over the floor, groaned profoundly.

"I must go to the priest," she burst out passionately. "I do not know whether you even speak the truth! You are a horrible woman. They will find you anywhere. You may stay here—or go. There is no room for you in this world."

Ready now to depart, she yet wandered aimlessly about the room, putting the bottles on the shelf, trying to fit with trembling hands the covers on cardboard boxes. Whenever the real sense of what she had heard emerged for a second from the haze of her thoughts she would fancy that something had exploded in her brain without, unfortunately, bursting her head to pieces—which would have been a relief. She blew the candles out one by one without knowing it, and was horribly startled by the darkness. She fell on a bench and began to whimper. After a while she ceased, and sat listening to the breathing of her daughter, whom she could hardly see, still and upright, giving no other sign of life. She was becoming old rapidly at last, during those minutes. She spoke in tones unsteady, cut about by the rattle of teeth, like one shaken by a deadly cold fit of ague.

"I wish you had died little. I will never dare to show my old head in the sunshine again. There are worse misfortunes than idiot children. I wish you had been born to me simple—like your own. . . ."

She saw the figure of her daughter pass before the faint and livid clearness of a window. Then it appeared in the doorway for a second, and the door swung to with a clang. Madame Levaille, as if awakened by the noise from a long nightmare, rushed out.

"Susan!" she shouted from the doorstep.

She heard a stone roll a long time down the declivity of the rocky beach above the sands. She stepped forward cautiously, one hand on the wall of the house, and peered down into the smooth darkness of the empty bay. Once again she cried:

"Susan! You will kill yourself there."

The stone had taken its last leap in the dark, and she heard nothing now. A sudden thought seemed to strangle her, and she called no more. She turned her back upon the black silence of the pit and went up the lane towards Ploumar, stumbling along with sombre determination, as if she had started on a desperate journey that would last, perhaps, to the end of her life. A sullen and periodic clamour of waves rolling over reefs followed her far inland between the high hedges sheltering the gloomy solitude of the fields.

Susan had run out, swerving sharp to the left at the door, and on the edge of the slope crouched down behind a boulder. A dislodged stone went on downwards, rattling as it leaped. When Madame Levaille called out, Susan could have, by stretching her hand, touched her mother's skirt, had she had the courage to move a limb. She saw the old woman go away, and she remained still, closing her eyes and pressing her side to the hard and rugged

surface of the rock. After a while a familiar face with fixed eyes and an open mouth became visible in the intense obscurity amongst the boulders. She uttered a low cry and stood up. The face vanished, leaving her to gasp and shiver alone in the wilderness of stone heaps. But as soon as she had crouched down again to rest, with her head against the rock, the face returned, came very near, appeared eager to finish the speech that had been cut short by death, only a moment ago. She scrambled quickly to her feet and said : " Go away, or I will do it again." The thing wavered, swung to the right, to the left. She moved this way and that, stepped back, fancied herself screaming at it, and was appalled by the unbroken stillness of the night. She tottered on the brink, felt the steep declivity under her feet, and rushed down blindly to save herself from a headlong fall. The shingle seemed to wake up : the pebbles began to roll before her, pursued her from above, raced down with her on both sides, rolling past with an increasing clatter. In the peace of the night the noise grew, deepening to a rumour, continuous and violent, as if the whole semicircle of the stony beach had started to tumble down into the bay. Susan's feet hardly touched the slope that seemed to run down with her. At the bottom she stumbled, shot forward, throwing her arms out, and fell heavily. She jumped up at once and turned swiftly to look back, her clenched hands full of sand she had clutched in her fall. The face was there, keeping its distance, visible in its own sheen that made a pale stain in the night. She shouted, " Go away "—she shouted at it with pain, with fear, with all the rage of that useless stab that could not keep him quiet, keep him out of her sight. What did he want now? He was dead. Dead men have no children. Would he never leave her alone? She shrieked at it—waved her outstretched hands. She seemed to feel the breath of parted lips, and, with a long cry of discouragement, fled across the level bottom of the bay.

She ran lightly, unaware of any effort of her body. High sharp rocks that, when the bay is full, show above the glittering plain of blue water like pointed towers of submerged churches, glided past her, rushing to the land at a tremendous pace. To the left, in the distance, she could see something shining : a broad disc of light in which narrow shadows pivoted round the centre like the spokes of a wheel. She heard a voice calling, " Hey ! There !" and answered with a wild scream. So, he could call yet ! He was calling after her to stop. Never! . . . She tore through the night, past the startled group of seaweed-gatherers who stood round their lantern paralysed with fear at the unearthly screech coming from that fleeing shadow. The men leaned on their pitchforks staring fearfully. A woman fell on her knees, and, crossing

herself, began to pray aloud. A little girl with her ragged skirt full of slimy seaweed began to sob despairingly, lugging her soaked burden close to the man who carried the light. Somebody said: "The thing ran out towards the sea." Another voice exclaimed: "And the sea is coming back! Look at the spreading puddles. Do you hear—you woman—there! Get up!" Several voices cried together. "Yes, let us be off! Let the accursed thing go to the sea!" They moved on, keeping close round the light. Suddenly a man swore loudly: He would go and see what was the matter. It had been a woman's voice. He would go. There were shrill protests from women—but his high form detached itself from the group and went off running. They sent an unanimous call of scared voices after him. A word, insulting and mocking, came back, thrown at them through darkness. A woman moaned. An old man said gravely: "Such things ought to be left alone." They went on slower, now shuffling in the yielding sand and whispering to one another that Millot feared nothing, having no religion, but that it would end badly some day.

Susan met the incoming tide by the Raven islet and stopped, panting, with her feet in the water. She heard the murmur and felt the cold caress of the sea, and, calmer now, could see the sombre and confused mass of the Raven on one side and on the other the long white streak of Molène sands that are left high above the dry bottom of Fougère Bay at every ebb. She turned round and saw far away, along the starred background of the sky, the ragged outline of the coast. Above it, nearly facing her, appeared the tower of Ploumar church; a slender and tall pyramid shooting up dark and pointed into the clustered glitter of the stars. She felt strangely calm. She knew where she was, and began to remember how she came there—and why. She peered into the smooth obscurity near her. She was alone. There was nothing there; nothing near her, either living or dead.

The tide was creeping in quietly, putting out long impatient arms of strange rivulets that ran towards the land between ridges of sand. Under the night the pools grew bigger with mysterious rapidity, while the great sea, yet far off, thundered in a regular rhythm along the indistinct line of the horizon. Susan splashed her way back for a few yards without being able to get clear of the water that murmured tenderly all around and, suddenly, with a spiteful gurgle, nearly took her off her feet. Her heart thumped with fear. This place was too big and too empty to die in. To-morrow they would do with her what they liked. But before she died she must tell them—tell the gentleman in black clothes that there are things no woman can bear. She must explain how it happened. . . . She splashed through a pool, getting wet to the

waist, too preoccupied to care. . . . She must explain. "He came in the same way as ever and said, just so : 'Do you think I am going to leave the land to those people from Morbihan that I do not know? Do you? We shall see! Come along, you creature of mischance!' And he put his arms out. Then, Messieurs, I said : 'Before God—never!' And he said, striding at me with open palms: 'There is no God to hold me! Do you understand, you useless carcass. I will do what I like.' And he took me by the shoulders. Then I, Messieurs, called to God for help, and next minute, while he was shaking me, I felt my long scissors in my hand. His shirt was unbuttoned, and, by the candle-light, I saw the hollow of his throat. I cried: 'Let go!' He was crushing my shoulders. He was strong, my man was! Then I thought: No! . . . Must I? . . . Then take!—and I struck in the hollow place. I never saw him fall. Never! Never! . . . Never saw him fall. . . . The old father never turned his head. He is deaf and childish, gentlemen. . . . Nobody saw him fall. I ran out. . . . Nobody saw. . . ."

She had been scrambling amongst the boulders of the Raven and now found herself, all out of breath, standing amongst the heavy shadows of the rocky islet. The Raven is connected with the main land by a natural pier of immense and slippery stones. She intended to return home that way. Was he still standing there? At home. Home! Four idiots and a corpse. She must go back and explain. Anybody would understand. . . .

Below her the night or the sea seemed to pronounce distinctly :

"Aha! I see you at last!"

She started, slipped, fell; and without attempting to rise, listened, terrified. She heard heavy breathing, a clatter of wooden clogs. It stopped.

"Where the devil did you pass?" said an invisible man, hoarsely.

She held her breath. She recognized the voice. She had not seen him fall. Was he pursuing her there dead, or perhaps . . . alive?

She lost her head. She cried from the crevice where she lay huddled, "Never, never!"

"Ah! You are still there. You led me a fine dance. Wait, my beauty, I must see how you look after all this. You wait. . . .

Millot was stumbling, laughing, swearing meaninglessly out of pure satisfaction, pleased with himself for having run down that fly-by-night. "As if there were such things as ghosts! Bah! It took an old African soldier to show those clothoppers. . . . But it was curious. Who the devil was she?"

Susan listened, crouching. He was coming for her, this dead man. There was no escape. What a noise he made amongst the stones. . . . She saw his

head rise up, then the shoulders. He was tall—her own man! His long arms waved about, and it was his own voice sounding a little strange . . . because of the scissors. She scrambled out quickly, rushed to the edge of the causeway, and turned round. The man stood still on a high stone, detaching himself in dead black on the glitter of the sky.

"Where are you going to?" he called roughly.

She answered, "Home!" and watched him intensely. He made a striding, clumsy leap on to another boulder, and stopped again, balancing himself, then said :

"Ha! ha! Well, I am going with you. It's the least I can do. Ha! ha! ha!"

She stared at him till her eyes seemed to become glowing coals that burned deep into her brain, and yet she was in mortal fear of making out the well-known features. Below her the sea lapped softly against the rock with a splash, continuous and gentle.

The man said, advancing another step :

"I am coming for you. What do you think?"

She trembled. Coming for her! There was no escape, no peace, no hope. She looked round despairingly. Suddenly the whole shadowy coast, the blurred islets, the heaven itself, swayed about twice, then came to a rest. She closed her eyes and shouted :

"Can't you wait till I am dead!"

She was shaken by a furious hate for that shade that pursued her in this world, unappeased even by death in its longing for an heir that would be like other people's children.

"Hey! What?" said Millot, keeping his distance prudently. He was saying to himself: "Look out! Some lunatic. An accident happens soon."

She went on, wildly :

"I want to live. To live alone—for a week—for a day. I must explain to them. . . . I would tear you to pieces, I would kill you twenty times over rather than let you touch me while I live. How many times must I kill you—you blasphemer! Satan sends you here. I am damned too!"

"Come," said Millot, alarmed and conciliating. "I am perfectly alive! . . . Oh, my God!"

She had screamed, "Alive!" and at once vanished before his eyes, as if the islet itself had swerved aside from under her feet. Millot rushed forward, and fell flat with his chin over the edge. Far below he saw the water whitened by her struggles, and heard one shrill cry for help that seemed to

dart upwards along the perpendicular face of the rock, and soar past, straight into the high and impassive heaven.

Madame Levaille sat, dry-eyed, on the short grass of the hill side, with her thick legs stretched out, and her old feet turned up in their black cloth shoes. Her clogs stood near by, and further off the umbrella lay on the withered sward like a weapon dropped from the grasp of a vanquished warrior. The Marquis of Chavanes, on horseback, one gloved hand on thigh, looked down at her as she got up laboriously, with groans. On the narrow track of the seaweed-carts four men were carrying inland Susan's body on a hand-barrow, while several others straggled listlessly behind. Madame Levaille looked after the procession. "Yes, Monsieur le Marquis," she said dispassionately, in her usual calm tone of a reasonable old woman. "There are unfortunate people on this earth. I had only one child. Only one! And they won't bury her in consecrated ground!"

Her eyes filled suddenly, and a short shower of tears rolled down the broad cheeks. She pulled the shawl close about her. The Marquis leaned slightly over in his saddle, and said :

"It is very sad. You have all my sympathy. I shall speak to the Curé. She was unquestionably insane, and the fall was accidental. Millot says so distinctly. Good-day, Madame."

And he trotted off, thinking to himself: I must get this old woman appointed guardian of those idiots, and administrator of the farm. It would be much better than having here one of those other Bacadous, probably a red republican, corrupting my commune.

JOSEPH CONRAD.

## IN SAINT-JACQUES



RED with the sunlight, her eyes close in prayer,  
A little heap before a waxen saint ;  
Heaven above heaven, the starry hosts are there,  
The wind of odorous wings, beating, breathes faint.

Ah, she is old, and the world's ways are rough,  
She has grown old with sorrow, year by year ;  
She is alone : yet is it not enough  
To be alone with God, as she is here ?

Here, in the shadowy chapel, where I stand,  
An alien, at the door, and see within  
Bent head and benediction of the hand,  
And may not, though I long to enter in.

Sightless, she sees the angels thronging her,  
She sees descending on her from above  
The Blessed Vision for her comforter :  
But I can see no vision, only Love.

I have believed in Love, and Love 's untrue :  
Bid me believe, and bring me to your saint,  
Woman ! and let me come and kneel with you ! . . .  
But I should see only the wax and paint.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

## The Death of Pierrot

by

Aubrey Beardsley

*"As the dawn broke, Pierrot fell into his last sleep. Then upon tip-toe, silently up the stair, noiselessly into the room, came the comedians Arlechino, Pantalone, il Dottore, and Columbina, who with much love carried away upon their shoulders, the white frock'd clown of Bergamo ; whither, we know not."*



AUBREY

BEARDSLEY



## CONCERNING JUDE THE OBSCURE



THE eighteenth century is the great period of the English novel. Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Goldsmith, Sterne, and Jane Austen initiated or carried towards perfection nearly every variety of fiction ; they had few or no rivals throughout Europe. Scott, with his incomparable genius for romance, was left to complete the evolutionary process.

Yet it was Scott, as we too often forget, who marred everything and threw the English novel into disorganization from which it has not even to-day recovered. Those jerry-built, pseudo-mediaeval structures which he raised so rapidly and so easily, still retain, I hope, some of the fascination which they possessed for us when we were children ; they certainly retain it for a few of those children of a larger growth whom we call men of genius. But Scott's prodigious facility and the conventional unreality of his view of life ruined the English novel. By means of his enormous reputation he was enabled to debase the intellectual and moral currency in this department of literature to the lowest possible limit. It is a curious illustration of our attitude towards these things that Scott's method of paying off his debts by feverish literary production seems only to arouse our unqualified admiration. The commercial instinct in our British breasts is so highly developed that we glory in the sight of a great man prostituting his fame to make money, especially in a good cause. If he had paid off his debts at the gaming table, or even at the stock exchange, perhaps we should have been shocked. As he only flung his own genius and art on to the table to play against a credulous public his virtue remains immaculate. But a fate works through these things, however opaque the veil of insular self-satisfaction over our eyes. Scott, the earlier Scott, was a European influence, manifested in Manzoni, down through Hendrik Conscience to the drivel of Paul Féval. Since Scott no English novelist has been a force in European literature.

This may seem too stringent a judgment of so copious a branch of literature. But it is because the literature of fiction is so copious that we need a stringent clue to guide us through its mazes. A man cannot be too

keen in grasping at the things that concern himself, too relentless in flinging aside those things that for him at least have no concern. For myself, at all events, I find now little in nineteenth-century English fiction that concerns me, least of all in popular fiction. I am well content to read and ponder the novels that seem to me assuredly great. In the next century, perhaps, I shall have time to consider whether it were well to read "Robert Elsmere" or "The Heavenly Twins," but as yet the question is scarcely pressing.

If that is the case, I may be asked, why read Thomas Hardy? And I must confess that that question occurred to me—long a devout admirer of Mr. Hardy's work—some fourteen years ago, and I found it unanswerable.<sup>1</sup> For while he still seemed to me a fine artist, I scarcely regarded him as a great artist in the sense in which I so regarded some English novelists of the last century, and some French and Russian novelists of this century. Moreover, Mr. Hardy was becoming a popular novelist. For it may be a foolish fancy, but I do not like drinking at those pools which are turbid from the hoofs of my fellow creatures; when I cannot get there before the others I like to wait until a considerable time after they have left. I could not read my Catullus in peace if I had an uneasy sense that thousands of my fellow creatures were writing to the newspapers to say what a nice girl Lesbia was, and how horrid a person Gellius, condescending to approve the poet's fraternal sentiments, lamenting the unwholesome tone of his Atys. It is my felicity that the railroad that skirts the Lago di Garda still sets but few persons down for Sermione. Nor am I alone in this. The unequalled rapture of Lamb's joy in the Elizabethan dramatists was due to the immensity of the solitude in which at that moment they lay enfolded. Indeed this attitude of mind is ancient and well-rooted. The saviours of mankind, with what at first sight seems an unkindly delight, have emphasized the fact that salvation belongs to the few. Yet not only is religion a sacred mystery, but love also, and art. When the profane are no longer warned away from the threshold it is a reasonable suspicion that no mystery is there.—So it was that I ceased to read Mr. Hardy's novels.

But since then things have somewhat changed. The crowd thickened, indeed, especially when "Tess" appeared, for that book chanced to illustrate a fashionable sentimental moral. But last year, suddenly, on the appearance of Mr. Hardy's latest book, a great stampede was heard in the land. Noisy bands of the novelist's readers were fleeing in every direction. Although it

<sup>1</sup> I may here mention that, in 1883, I published in the "Westminster Review" a somewhat detailed study of the whole of Mr. Hardy's work up to that date.

was still clearly premature to say that peace reigned in the Warsaw of "Tess's" admirers, I detected at least an interesting matter for investigation.—Thus I returned to Mr. Hardy's work.

That work is now very considerable, remembering the brief space of twenty-five years over which it is spread. The *dannosa hereditas* of Scott still afflicts nearly all our novelists with a fatal productiveness. The bigger the burden you lay on the back of Posterity the sooner he is certain to throw it off. And the creature's instinct is right; no man, not even a Goethe, is immortally wise in fifty volumes. There are few novelists who can afford to write much. Even Balzac, the type of prolific imagination in fiction, is no exception. Content to give the merest external impression of reality, he toiled terribly in moulding the clay of his own inner consciousness to produce a vast world of half-baked images, which are immensely impressive in the mass but crumble to pieces in your fingers when you take them up. Mr. George Meredith is, perhaps, our nearest modern English counterpart to Balzac. There is a prodigious expenditure of intellectual energy in the crowd of Meredith's huge novels. To turn from, let us say, "The Hand of Ethelberta" to "Evan Harrington," is to feel that, intellectually, Hardy is a mere child compared to Meredith. There never was a novelist so superhumanly and obstreperously clever as Mr. Meredith. One suspects that much of the admiration expended on Meredith, as on Browning, is really the reader's admiration of his own cleverness in being able to toddle along at the coat-tails of such a giant. Crude intellect is as much outside art as crude emotion or crude morals. One admires the splendid profusion of power, but the perfected achievement which alone holds our attention permanently is not to be found among these exuberantly brilliant marionettes. It is all very splendid, but I find no good reason for reading it, since already it scarcely belongs to our time, since it never possessed the virtues which are independent of time. Like Balzac, George Meredith has built to his own memory a great cairn in literature. No doubt it will be an inspiring spectacle for our race to gaze back at.

There are really only two kinds of novels which are permanently interesting to men. The first contains those few which impress us by the immortal power with which they present a great story or a great human type. Such are the "Satyricon," "Petit Jehan de Saintré," "Don Quixote," "Gil Blas," "Tom Jones." These books are always modern, always invigorating. They stand foursquare, each on its own basis, against every assault of time. The other class of novels—holding us not less closely, though it may be less masterfully—appeal by their intimate insight into the mysteries of the heart. They are

the books that whisper to us secrets we half-knew yet never quite understood. They throw open doors into the soul that were only ajar. The men who write them are not always great masters of style or of literary architectonics, but by some happy inspiration they have revealed themselves as great masters of the human heart. Such books are full of the intimate charm of something that we remember, of things that chanced to us "a great while since, a long, long time ago," and yet they have the startling audacity of the modernest things. Among them are "*Manon Lescaut*," "*Adolphe*," "*Le Rouge et le Noir*," some of Dostoieffsky's novels. If any of Mr. Hardy's novels may claim to be compared with the immortals it is the books of this class which we should bear in mind.

The real and permanent interest in Mr. Hardy's books is not his claim to be the exponent of Wessex—a claim which has been more than abundantly recognized—but his intense preoccupation with the mysteries of women's hearts. He is less a story-teller than an artist who has intently studied certain phases of passion, and brings us a simple and faithful report of what he has found. A certain hesitancy in the report, an occasional failure of narrative or style, only adds piquancy and a sense of veracity to the record. A mischievous troll, from time to time—more rarely in Mr. Hardy's later work—is allowed to insert all sorts of fantastic conceits and incidents. Such interpolations merely furnish additional evidence in favour of the genuine inspiration of the whole document. We realize that we are in the presence of an artist who is wholly absorbed in the effort to catch the fleeting caprices of the external world, unsuspected and incalculable, the unexpected fluctuations of the human heart.

The great novelists of the present century who have chiefly occupied themselves with the problems of passion and the movements of women's hearts—I mean Paul Heyse and George Meredith, together with Goethe, who may be called their master—have all shown a reverent faith in what we call Nature as opposed to Society; they have all regarded the impulses and the duties of love in women as independent of social regulation, which may or may not impede the free play of passion and natural morality. Mr. Hardy fully shares this characteristic. It was less obvious in his earlier novels, no doubt, although Cytherea of his first book, "*Desperate Remedies*," discovered the moral problems which have puzzled her youngest sisters, and Eustacia in "*The Return of the Native*" sank in what she called "the mire of marriage" long before Sue experienced her complicated matrimonial disasters. For Hardy, as for Goethe and Heyse, and usually for Meredith the problems of women's hearts are mostly independent of the routine codes of men.

The whole course of Mr. Hardy's development, from 1871 to the present, has been natural and inevitable, with lapses and irregularities it may be, but with no real break and no new departure. He seems to have been led along the path of his art by his instincts ; he was never a novelist with a programme, planning his line of march at the outset, and boldly affronting public reprobation ; he has moved slowly and tentatively. In his earlier books he eluded any situation involving marked collision between Nature and Society, and thus these books failed to shock the susceptibilities of readers who had been brought up in familiarity with the unreal conventionalities which rule in the novels of Hugo, Dickens, Thackeray, and the rest. "Far from the Madding Crowd" first appeared in the "Cornhill," from which a few years earlier Thackeray had excluded Mrs. Browning's poem, "Lord Walter's Wife," as presenting an immoral situation. It was not until "Two on a Tower" appeared, in 1882, that the general public—led, if I remember rightly, by the "Spectator"—began to suspect that in reading Mr. Hardy's books it was not treading on the firm rock of convention. The reason was, not that any fundamental change was taking place in the novelist's work, but that there really is a large field in which the instincts of human love and human caprice can have free play without too obviously conflicting with established moral codes. Both in life and in art it is this large field which we first reach. It is thus in the most perfect and perhaps the most delightful of Mr. Hardy's early books, "Under the Greenwood Tree." The free play of Fancy's vagrant heart may be followed in all its little bounds and rebounds, its fanciful arduous and repressions, because she is too young a thing to drink deep of life—and because she is not yet married. It is all very immoral, as Nature is, but it succeeds in avoiding any collision with the rigid constitution of Society. The victim finally takes the white veil and is led to the altar ; then a door is closed, and the convent gate of marriage is not again opened to the intrusive novel-reader's eye. Not by any means because it is considered that the horrors beyond are too terrible to be depicted. The matter does not appear to the novelist under this metaphor. Your wholesome-minded novelist knows that the life of a pure-natured English-woman after marriage is, as Taine said, mainly that of a very broody hen, a series of merely physiological processes with which he, as a novelist, has no further concern.

But in novels, as in life, one comes at length to realize that marriage is not necessarily either a grave, or a convent gate, or a hen's nest, that though the conditions are changed the forces at work remain largely the same. It is still quite possible to watch the passions at play, though there may now be more

tragedy or more pathos in the outcome of that play. This Mr. Hardy proceeded to do, first on a small scale in short stories, and then on a larger scale. "Tess" is typical of this later unconventional way of depicting the real issues of passion. Remarkable as that book no doubt is, I confess that on the whole it has made no very strong appeal to me. I was repelled at the outset by the sub-title. It so happens that I have always regarded the conception of "purity," when used in moral discussions, as a conception sadly in need of analysis, and almost the first time I ever saw myself in print was as the author of a discussion, carried on with the usual ethical fervour of youth, of the question: "What is Purity?" I have often seen occasion to ask the question since. It seems to me doubtful whether anyone is entitled to use the word "pure" without first defining precisely what he means, and still more doubtful whether an artist is called upon to define it at all, even in several hundred pages. I can quite conceive that the artist should take pleasure in the fact that his own creative revelation of life poured contempt on many old prejudices. But such an effect is neither powerful nor legitimate unless it is engrained in the texture of the narrative; it cannot be stuck on by a label. To me that glaring subtitle meant nothing, and I could not see what it should mean to Mr. Hardy. It seemed an indication that he was inclined to follow after George Eliot, who—for a large "consideration"—condescended to teach morality to the British public, selling her great abilities for a position of fame which has since proved somewhat insecure; because although English men and women are never so happy as when absorbing unorthodox sermons under the guise of art, the permanent vitality of sermons is considerably less than that of art.

Thus I was not without suspicion in approaching "Jude the Obscure." Had Mr. Hardy discovered the pernicious truth that whereas children can only take their powders in jam, the strenuous British public cannot be induced to devour their jam unless convinced that it contains some strange and nauseous powder? Was "Jude the Obscure" a sermon on marriage from the text on the title-page: "The letter killeth"? Putting aside the small failures always liable to occur in Mr. Hardy's work, I found little to justify the suspicion. The sermon may, possibly, be there, but the spirit of art has, at all events, not been killed. In all the great qualities of literature "Jude the Obscure" seems to me the greatest novel written in England for many years.

It is interesting to compare "Jude" with a characteristic novel of Mr. Hardy's earlier period, with "A Pair of Blue Eyes," or "The Return of the Native." On going back to these, after reading "Jude," one notes the graver and deeper tones in the later book, the more austere and restrained roads of

art which Mr. Hardy has sought to follow, and the more organic and radical way in which he now grips the individuality of his creatures. The individuals themselves have not fundamentally changed. The type of womankind that Mr. Hardy chiefly loves to study, from Cytherea to Sue, has always been the same, very human, also very feminine, rarely with any marked element of virility, and so contrasting curiously with the androgynous heroines loved of Mr. Meredith. The latter, with their resolute daring and energy, are of finer calibre and more imposing ; they are also very much rarer in the actual world than Mr. Hardy's women, who represent, it seems to me, a type not uncommon in the south of England, where the heavier Teutonic and Scandinavian elements are, more than elsewhere, modified by the alert and volatile elements furnished by earlier races. But if the type remains the same the grasp of it is now much more thorough. At first Mr. Hardy took these women chiefly at their more obviously charming or pathetic moments, and sought to make the most of those moments, a little careless as to the organic connection of such moments to the underlying personality. One can well understand that many readers should prefer the romantic charm of the earlier passages, but—should it be necessary to affirm ?—to grapple with complexly realized persons and to dare to face them in the tragic or sordid crises of real life is to rise to a higher plane of art. In "Jude the Obscure" there is a fine self-restraint, a complete mastery of all the elements of an exceedingly human story. There is nothing here of the distressing melodrama into which Mr. Hardy was wont to fall in his early novels. Yet in plot "Jude" might be a farce. One could imagine that Mr. Hardy had purposed to himself to take a conventional farce, in which a man and a woman leave their respective partners to make love to one another and then finally rejoin their original partners, in order to see what could be made of such a story by an artist whose sensitive vision penetrated to the tragic irony of things ; just as the great novelists of old, De la Sale, Cervantes, Fielding, took the worn-out conventional stories of their time, and filled them with the immortal blood of life. Thus "Jude" has a certain symmetry of plan such as is rare in the actual world—where we do not so readily respond to our cues—but to use such a plot to produce such an effect is an achievement of the first order.

Only at one point, it seems to me, is there a serious lapse in the art of the book, and that is when the door of the bedroom closet is sprung open on us to reveal the row of childish corpses. Up to that one admires the strength and sobriety of the narrative, its complete reliance on the interests that lie in common humanity. We feel that here are real human beings of the sort we

all know, engaged in obscure struggles that are latent in the life we all know. But with the opening of that cupboard we are thrust out of the large field of common life into the small field of the police court or the lunatic asylum, among the things which for most of us are comparatively unreal. It seems an unnecessary clash in the story. Whatever failure of nervous energy may be present in the Fawley family, it is clear that Mr. Hardy was not proposing to himself a study of gross pathological degenerescence, a study of the hereditary evolution of criminality. If that were so, the story would lose the wide human significance which is not merely stated explicitly in the preface, but implicitly throughout. Nor can it be said that so wholesale a murder was required for the constructive development of the history ; a much less serious catastrophe would surely have sufficed to influence the impressionable Sue. However skilful Mr. Hardy may be in the fine art of murder, it is as a master of the more tender and human passions that he is at his best. The element of bloodshed in "Tess" seems of dubious value. One is inclined to question altogether the fitness of bloodshed for the novelist's purpose at the present period of history. As a factor in human fate bloodshed to-day is both too near and too remote for the purposes of art. It is too rare to be real and poignant to every heart, and in the days of well-equipped burglars and a "spirited" foreign policy it is too vulgar to bring with it any romance of "old unhappy far-off things." Our great sixteenth-century dramatists could use it securely as their commonest resource because it was then a deeply-rooted fact both of artistic convention and of real life. In this century bloodshed can only be made humanly interesting by a great psychologist, living on the barbarous outskirts of civilization, a Dostoeffsky to whom the secret of every abnormal impulse has been revealed. In Mr. Hardy's books bloodshed is one of the forms put on by the capricious troll whose business it is to lure him from his own work. But that cupboard contains the only skeleton in the house of "Jude the Obscure." On the whole, it may be said that Mr. Hardy here leads us to a summit in art, where the air is perhaps too rare and austere for the more short-winded among his habitual readers, but, so far as can yet be seen, surely a summit.—So at least it seems to one who no longer cares to strain his vision in detecting mole-hills on the lower slopes of Parnassus, yet still finds pleasure in gazing back at the peaks.

But I understand that the charge brought against "Jude the Obscure" is not so much that it is bad art as that it is a book with a purpose, a moral or an immoral purpose, according to the standpoint of the critic. It would not be pleasant to admit that a book you thought bad morality is good art, but

the bad morality is the main point, and this book, it is said, is immoral, and indecent as well.

So are most of our great novels. "Jane Eyre," we know on the authority of a "Quarterly" reviewer, could not have been written by a respectable woman, while another "Quarterly" (or maybe "Edinburgh") reviewer declared that certain scenes in "Adam Bede" are indecently suggestive. "Tom Jones" is even yet regarded as unfit to be read in an unabridged form. The echo of the horror which "Les Liaisons Dangereuses" produced more than a century ago in the cheerfully immoral society of the *ancien régime* has scarcely even to-day died down sufficiently to permit an impartial judgment of that powerful and saturnine book. "Madame Bovary," which Taine regarded in later days as fit for use in Sunday schools, was thought so shocking in the austere court of Napoleon III. that there was no alternative to prosecution. Zola's chief novels, which to-day are good enough to please Mr. Stead, the champion of British Puritanism, were yesterday bad enough to send his English publisher to prison. It seems, indeed, on a review of all the facts, that the surer a novel is of a certain immortality, the surer it is also to be regarded at first as indecent, as subversive of public morality. So that when, as in the present case, such charges are recklessly flung about in all the most influential quarters, we are simply called upon to accept them placidly as necessary incidents in the career of a great novel.

It is no fortuitous circumstance that the greatest achievements of the novelist's art seem to outrage morality. "Jude the Obscure" is a sufficiently great book to serve to illustrate a first principle. I have remarked that I cannot find any undue intrusion of morality in the art of this book. But I was careful to express myself cautiously, for without doubt the greatest issues of social morality are throughout at stake. So that the question arises: What is the function of the novelist as regards morals? The answer is simple, though it has sometimes been muddled. A few persons have incautiously asserted that the novel has nothing to do with morals. That we cannot assert; the utmost that can be asserted is that the novelist should never allow himself to be made the tool of a merely moral or immoral purpose. For the fact is that, so far as the moralist deals with life at all, morals is part of the very stuff of his art. That is to say, that his art lies in drawing the sinuous woof of human nature between the rigid warp of morals. Take away morals, and the novelist is *in vacuo*, in the region of fairy land. The more subtly and firmly he can weave these elements together the more impressive becomes the stuff of his art. The great poet may be in love with passion, but it is by heightening and strengthen-

ing the dignity of traditional moral law that he gives passion fullest play. When Wagner desired to create a typically complete picture of passion he chose the story of Tristram ; no story of Paul and Virginia can ever bring out the deepest cries of human passion. Shakespeare found it impossible to picture even the pure young love of Romeo and Juliet without the aid of the violated laws of family and tradition. "The crash of broken commandments," Mr. Hardy once wrote in a magazine article, "is as necessary an accompaniment to the catastrophe of a tragedy as the noise of drum and cymbals to a triumphal march ;" and that picturesque image fails to express how essential to the dramatist is this clash of law against passion. It is the same in life as in art, and if you think of the most pathetic stories of human passion, the profoundest utterances of human love, you probably think most readily of such things as the letters of Abélard and Héloïse, or of Mlle. de Lespinasse, or of the Portuguese nun, and only with difficulty of the tamer speech of happier and more legitimate emotions. Life finds her game in playing off the irresistible energy of the individual against the equally irresistible energy of the race, and the stronger each is the finer the game. So the great artist whose brain is afire with the love of passion yet magnifies the terror and force of moral law, in his heart probably hates it.

Mr. Hardy has always been in love with Nature, with the instinctive, spontaneous, unregarded aspects of Nature, from the music of the dead heather-bells to the flutter of tremulous human hearts, all the things that are beautiful because they are uncontrolled by artificial constraint. The progress of his art has consisted in bringing this element of nature into ever closer contact with the rigid routine of life, making it more human, making it more moral or more immoral. It is an inevitable progression. That love of the spontaneous, the primitive, the unbound—which we call the love of "Nature"—must as it becomes more searching take more and more into account those things, also natural, which bind and constrain "Nature." So that on the one side, as Mr. Hardy has himself expressed it, we have Nature and her unconsciousness of all but essential law, on the other the laws framed merely as social expedients without a basis in the heart of things, and merely expressing the triumph of the majority over the individual ; which shows, as is indeed evident from Mr. Hardy's work, that he is not much in sympathy with Society, and also shows that, like Heyse, he recognizes a moral order in Nature. This conflict reaches its highest point around women. Truly or falsely, for good or for evil, woman has always been for man the supreme priestess, or the supreme devil, of Nature. "A woman," said Proudhon—himself the incarnation of the revolt of

Nature in the heart of man—"even the most charming and virtuous woman, always contains an element of cunning, the wild beast element. She is a tamed animal that sometimes returns to her natural instinct. This cannot be said in the same degree of man." The loving student of the elemental in Nature so becomes the loving student of women, the sensitive historian of her conflicts with "sin" and with "repentance," the creations of man. Not, indeed, that any woman who has "sinned," if her sin was indeed love, ever really "repents." It is probable that a true experience of the one emotional state as of the other remains a little foreign to her, "sin" having probably been the invention of men who never really knew what love is. She may catch the phrases of the people around her when her spirit is broken, but that is all. I have never known or heard of any woman, having for one moment in her life loved and been loved, who did not count that moment as worth all other moments in life. The consciousness of the world's professed esteem can never give to unloved virtue and respectability the pride which belongs to the woman who has once "sinned" with all her heart. One supposes that the slaves of old who never once failed in abject obedience to their master's will mostly subdued their souls to the level of their starved virtues. But the woman who has loved is like the slave who once at least in his life has risen in rebellion with the cry : " And I, too, am a man !" Nothing that comes after can undo the fine satisfaction of that moment. It was so that a great seventeenth-century predecessor of Mr. Hardy in the knowledge of the heart, painted Annabella exultant in her sin even at the moment of discovery, for "Nature" knows no sin.

If these things are so, it is clear how the artist who has trained himself to the finest observation of Nature cannot fail, as his art becomes more vital and profound, to paint morals. The fresher and more intimate his vision of Nature, the more startling his picture of morals. To such an extent is this the case in "Jude the Obscure," that some people have preferred to regard the book as a study of monstrosity, of disease. Sue is neurotic, some critics say; it is fashionable to play cheerfully with terrible words you know nothing about. "Neurotic" these good people say by way of dismissing her, innocently unaware that many a charming "urban miss" of their own acquaintance would deserve the name at least as well. In representing Jude and Sue as belonging to a failing family stock, I take it that Mr. Hardy by no means wished to bring before us a mere monstrosity, a pathological "case," but that rather, with an artist's true instinct—the same instinct that moved so great an artist as Shakespeare when he conceived "Hamlet"—he indicates the channels of least resistance along which the forces of life most impetuously rush. Jude and Sue are represented

as crushed by a civilization to which they were not born, and though civilization may in some respects be regarded as a disease and as unnatural, in others it may be said to bring out those finer vibrations of Nature which are overlaid by rough and bucolic conditions of life. The refinement of sexual sensibility with which this book largely deals is precisely such a vibration. To treat Jude, who wavers between two women, and Sue, who finds the laws of marriage too mighty for her lightly-poised organism, as shocking monstrosities, reveals a curious attitude in the critics who have committed themselves to that view. Clearly they consider human sexual relationships to be as simple as those of the farmyard. They are as shocked as a farmer would be to find that a hen had views of her own concerning the lord of the harem. If, let us say, you decide that Indian Game and Plymouth Rock make a good cross, you put your cock and hens together, and the matter is settled ; and if you decide that a man and a woman are in love with each other, you marry them and the matter is likewise settled for the whole term of their natural lives. I suppose that the farmyard view really is the view of the ordinary wholesome-minded novelist—I mean of course in England—and of his ordinary critic. Indeed in Europe generally, a distinguished German anthropologist has lately declared, sensible and experienced men still often exhibit a knowledge of sexual matters such as we might expect from a milkmaid. But assuredly the farmyard view corresponds imperfectly to the facts of human life in our time. Such things as "Jude" is made of are, in our time at all events, life, and life is still worthy of her muse.

"Yes, yes, no doubt that is so," some critics have said in effect, "but consider how dangerous such a book is. It may be read by the young. Consider how sad it would be if the young should come to suspect, before they are themselves married, that marriage after all may not always be a box of bon-bons. Remember the Young Person." Mr. Hardy has himself seemingly, though it may only be in seeming, admitted the justice of this objection when in the preface to his book he states that it is "addressed by a man to men and women of full age." Of course there is really only one thing that the true artist can or will remember, and that is his art. He is only writing for one person—himself. But it remains true that a picture of the moral facts of the world must arouse moral emotions in the beholder, and while it may not be legitimate to discuss what the artist ought to have done, it is perfectly legitimate to discuss the effect of what he has done.

I must confess that to me it seems the merest cant to say that a book has been written only to be read by elderly persons. In France, where a different tradition has been established, the statement may pass, but not in England nor

in America, where the Young Person has a firm grip of the novel, which she is not likely to lose. Twenty years ago one observed that one's girl friends—the daughters of clergymen and other pillars of society—found no difficulty, when so minded, in reading *en cachette* the works of Ouida, then the standard-bearer of the Forbidden, and subsequent observation makes it probable that they are transmitting a similar aptitude to their daughters, the Young Persons of to-day. We may take it that a novel, especially if written in English, is open to all readers. If you wish to write exclusively for adult readers, it is difficult to say what form of literature you should adopt; even metaphysics is scarcely safe, but the novel is out of the question. Every attempt to restrict literature is open to a *reductio ad absurdum*. I well remember the tender-hearted remonstrance of an eminent physician concerning a proposal to publish in a medical journal a paper on some delicate point in morbid psychology: "There are always the compositors." Who knows but that some weak-kneed suggestible compositor may by Jude Fawley's example be thrust on the downward road to adultery and drink? With this high-strung anxiety lest we cause our brother to offend, no forward step could ever be taken in the world; for "there are always the compositors." There would be nothing better than to sit still before the book of Ecclesiastes, leaving the compositors to starve in the odour of sanctity.

But why should the Young Person not read "Jude the Obscure"? To me at least such a question admits of no answer when the book is the work of a genuine artist. One can understand that a work of art as art may not be altogether intelligible to the youthful mind, but if we are to regard it as an ensample or a warning, surely it is only for youth that it can have any sort of saving grace. "Jude" is an artistic picture of a dilemma such as the Young Person, in some form or another, may one day have to face. Surely, on moral grounds, she should understand and realize this beforehand. A book which pictures such things with fine perception and sympathy should be singularly fit reading. There is probably, however, much more foxiness than morality in the attitude of the Elderly Person in this matter. "Don't trouble about traps, my little dears," the Elderly Person seems to say; "at your age you ought not to know there are such things. And really they are too painful to talk about; no well-bred Young Person does." When the Young Person has been duly caught, and emerges perhaps without any tail, then the Elderly Person will be willing to discuss the matter on a footing of comfortable equality. But what good will it be to the Young Person then? The Elderly Person's solicitude in this matter springs, one fears, from no moral source, but has its origin

in mists of barbarous iniquity which, to avoid bringing the blush of shame to his cheek, need not here be investigated. "Move on, Auntie!" as little Sue said to the indignant relation who had caught her wading in the pond, "this is no sight for modest eyes!"

So that if the Young Person should care to read "*Jude*" we ought for her own sake, at all events, to be thankful. But our thankfulness may not be needed. The Young Person has her own tastes, which are at least as organically rooted as anyone else's; if they are strong she will succeed in gratifying them; if they are not, they scarcely matter much. She ranks "*A Pair of Blue Eyes*" above "*Jude the Obscure*," likes Dickens more than either, and infinitely prefers Marie Corelli to them all. Thus she puts her foot down on the whole discussion. In any case it ought to be unnecessary to labour this point; there is really little to add to Ruskin's eloquent vindication for young girls of a wholesome freedom to follow their own instincts in the choice of books.

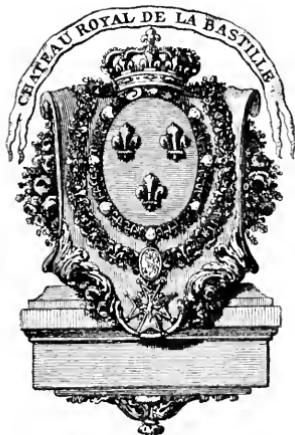
To sum up, "*Jude the Obscure*" seems to me—in such a matter one can only give one's own impressions for what they are worth—a singularly fine piece of art, when we remember the present position of the English novel. It is the natural outcome of Mr. Hardy's development, along lines that are genuinely and completely English. It deals very subtly and sensitively with new and modern aspects of life, and if, in so doing, it may be said to represent Nature as often cruel to our social laws, we must remark that the strife of Nature and Society, the individual and the community, has ever been the artist's opportunity. "Matrimony have growed to be that serious in these days," Widow Edlin remarks, "that one really do feel afeard to move in it at all." It is an affectation to pretend that the farmyard theory of life still rules unquestioned, and that there are no facts to justify Mrs. Edlin. If anyone will not hear her, let him turn to the Registrar-General. Such facts are in our civilisation to-day. We have no right to resent the grave and serious spirit with which Mr. Hardy, in the maturity of his genius, has devoted his best art to picture some of these facts. In "*Jude the Obscure*" we find for the first time in our literature the reality of marriage clearly recognized as something wholly apart from the mere ceremony with which our novelists have usually identified it. Others among our novelists may have tried to deal with the reality rather than with its shadow, but assuredly not with the audacity, purity and sincerity of an artist who is akin in spirit to the great artists of our best dramatic age, to Fletcher and Heywood and Ford, rather than to the powerful though often clumsy novelists of the eighteenth century.

There is one other complaint often brought against this book, I understand, by critics usually regarded as intelligent, and with the mention of it I have done. "Mr. Hardy finds that marriage often leads to tragedy," they say, "but he shows us no way out of these difficulties; he does not tell us his own plans for the improvement of marriage and the promotion of morality." Let us try to consider this complaint with due solemnity. It is true that the artist is god in his own world; but being so he has too fine a sense of the etiquette of creation to presume to offer suggestions to the creator of the actual world, suggestions which might be resented, and would almost certainly not be adopted. An artist's private opinions concerning the things that are good and bad in the larger world are sufficiently implicit in the structure of his own smaller world; the counsel that he should make them explicit in a code of rules and regulations for humanity at large is a counsel which, as every artist knows, can only come from the Evil One. This complaint against "*Jude the Obscure*" could not have arisen save among a generation which has battened on moral and immoral tracts thrown into the form of fiction by ingenuous novices. The only cure for it one can suggest is a course of great European novels from "*Petit Jehan de Saintré*" downwards. One suggestion indeed occurs for such consolation as it may yield. Has it not been left to our century to discover that the same hand which wrote the disordered philosophy of "*Hamlet*" put the times into joint again in "*The New Atlantis*," and may not posterity find Thomas Hardy's hand in "*Looking Backward*" and "*The Strike of a Sex?*" Thus for these critics of "*Jude*" there may yet be balm in Utopia.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

## Two Eighteenth-Century Book-Plates

1. The Book-Plate of The Bastille.
2. The Book-Plate of Marie Antoinette, by Ch. Eisen.



D





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N° 1.



## A SOUL AT LETHE'S BRINK



RE ye not overfond—  
Ye who would carry memory to the shades,  
Those blessed seats in the deep meads and glades?  
For me—I have been bond  
To griefs too many and to joys too fierce ;  
May neither with remembrance longer pierce !

Lead me, caducean wand,  
Where the green turf with silent dew is wet :  
There my burnt, throbbing temples will I steep ;  
I would forget.  
So let me sink in the Great Deep of Sleep !

Why would ye beckon dreams ?  
To set the thorn where never grew the thorn !  
To make sweet rest a mockery forlorn !  
To give the gliding streams  
Of that fair twilight country where ye go,  
The moaning burden that too well ye know !  
To feign the hot noon-beams  
Strike the bowed head, where noon came never yet !  
Far, far from me, the soothless dream-throng keep !  
I would forget.  
Oh, let me sink in the Great Deep of Sleep !

Ay, bid adieu to all ;  
Nor grieve that something sweetest stays behind.  
Be deaf unto his cries, and be ye blind  
To looks that would enthrall ;  
For Love, most far of all the clamant throng  
That held the fevered hands of Life so long,  
Follows with haunting call.

Oh, most of all, to him the bound be set ;  
Between us thrice the lustral waters creep !  
I would forget.  
Oh, let me sink in the Great Deep of Sleep.

But ye, why doubt to drink,  
Ye spirits that from many a land and zone  
Of the wide earth, with me were hither blown ?  
Why stand ye at the brink,  
A timorous band, who often have besought  
That ye might cease from toils, from strife, from thought ;  
Why, therefore, do ye shrink ?  
Follow—and quaff with closed eye, and let  
The sight draw inward, while the shadows creep !  
I would forget . . .  
And now, I sink in the Great Deep of Sleep !

EDITH M. THOMAS.

## THE LESSON OF MILLAIS



THE burial of Millais in St. Paul's should have been an honour done to a great painter, who died at the age of thirty-five, the painter of "The Eve of St. Agnes," of "Ophelia," of "The Vale of Rest;" it was but an honour done to a popular painter, the painter of "Bubbles," and other coloured supplements to Christmas numbers, who died at the age of sixty-seven. In the eulogies that have been justly given to the late President of the Royal Academy, I have looked in vain for this sentence, which should have had its place in them all : he did not make the "great refusal." Instead of this, I have seen only : he was so English, and so fond of salmon-fishing.

It is not too much to say that Millais began his career with a finer promise than any artist of his time. In sheer mastery of his brush he was greater than Rossetti, greater than Holman Hunt, greater than Watts, greater than anyone but Whistler. He had the prodigal energy of genius, and painted pictures because he was born to paint pictures. It was at his studio that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood took form, and he was the most prominent member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. He was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy at the age of twenty-four, a Royal Academician at the age of thirty-four. Up to then he had painted masterpiece after masterpiece, pictures in which there was temperament, intention, a noble interest. From that time to the time of his death he painted continuously, often brilliantly, whatever came before him, Mr. Gladstone or Cinderella, a bishop or a landscape. He painted them all with the same facility and the same lack of conviction ; he painted whatever would bring him ready money and immediate fame ; and he deliberately abandoned a career which, with labour, might have made him the greatest painter of his age, in order to become, with ease, the richest and the most popular.

Art, let it be remembered, must always be an aristocracy ; it has been so, from the days when Michel Angelo dictated terms to Popes, to the days when Rossetti cloistered his canvases in contempt of the multitude and its prying unwisdom. The appeal of every great artist has been to the few ; fame, when

it has come, has come by a sort of divine accident, in which the mob has done no more than add the plaudits of its irrelevant clamour to the select approval of the judges. Millais alone, since the days of that first enthusiasm in which he was a sort of fiery hand for the more slowly realizing brains of his companions in art, has made the democratic appeal. He chose his subjects in deference to the opinion of the middle classes ; he painted the portraits of those who could afford to pay a great price. His pictures of pretty women and pretty children had the success, not of the technical skill which was always at his command, but of the obvious sentiment which makes them pretty. The merit of these interminable pictures varies ; he was sometimes more careful, sometimes more careless. Mastery over the technicalities of painting he always possessed ; but it had come to be the mastery of a hand which worked without emotion, without imagination, without intellectual passion ; and without these qualities there can be no great art.

The newspapers, in their obituary notices, have assured us that in honouring Millais, we are honouring not merely the artist, but the man ; "of the Englishmen who have been the sons of Art," said "The Times," "scarcely one has deserved more honour than Millais." My thoughts have turned, as I read these commendations of the good citizen, so English, so sporting, whose private virtues were so undeniably British, to a painter, also a man of genius, whose virtues were all given up to his art, and who is now living in a destitute and unhonoured obscurity. It has seemed to me that there, in that immaculate devotion to art, I find the true morality of the artist ; while in the respectability of Millais I see nothing to honour, for its observance of the letter I take to have been a desecration of the spirit.

ARTHUR SYMONS.





# THE EPITAPH

IN FORM OF A BALLADE

WHICH VILLON MADE FOR HIMSELF AND HIS COMPANIONS  
WHEN EXPECTING TO BE HANGED WITH THEM



ROTHERS who yet are living, mortal men,  
Speak not of us with wrath and bitter tongue,  
Since if your souls for us are filled with pain  
The more will God's grace fall your hearts among.  
You see us here upon the gibbets hung :  
The flesh that we too much did glorify

Has long been putrid and devoured : and dry  
As dust and ashes now our bleached bones be.  
Let no man then our hideous shapes decry,  
But pray that God may show us all mercy.

Brothers, speak not, we pray you, with disdain  
Of us poor five or six by law upstrung.  
It is not every man who has his brain  
Clear and well-seated, as has oft been sung.  
Make ye then intercession for our wrong  
To him whose death from Hell our souls did buy,  
Saving us from the flames that never die,  
That fresh may flow the fount of His pity.  
We are dead : let none to vex our spirits try,  
But pray that God may show us all mercy.

Our bodies have been washed and drenched by rain,  
Dried up and blackened by the sun ; a throng  
Of ravens and of crows our eyes have ta'en  
And pluckt the brows and beards whereto they clung.

Never are we at rest, forever swung  
By every wind that shifts and passes by,  
Pecked by the sharp beaks of the crow and pye  
And dinted like a thimble, as you see,  
Have naught to say to them that with us vie,  
But pray that God may show us all mercy.

Prince Jesus, Lord who reignest in the sky,  
Grant that to Hell's fierce mouth we draw not nigh :  
Toward such a place no love or wish have we.  
Men, mock not us because we hang so high,  
But pray that God may show us all mercy.

THEODORE WRATISLAW.

## ELSA

### I



HERE was a rosy hue all over the dinner-table, as two men sat patiently waiting ; it cast its glow over the host's ruddy features, and made his fair hair, and good-natured smile, more noticeable by its warmth.

If his good-nature, and his perpetual smile, were sometimes a little monotonous, his wife (still in her dressing-room upstairs) never showed that she thought so. But the red glow from the curtained electric light had no power to change the pallor, or the look of ill-health, on the other man's face ; he was freshly recovered from a long illness, and there were caverns in his cheeks, and black hollows under his dark eyes.

"Elsa is late," said Mr. Lander, "we won't wait. Bring the soup, Williams."

As the manservant obeyed, the guest looked down at his own thin long fingers.

"I feel like a ghost," he remarked.

"Glad to have you here again, my boy. I know you won't mind, though, if I run round to the club for half an hour after dinner." Mr. Lander laughed lightly. "Poker again, Leslie. I didn't know you were likely to drop in, or I shouldn't have promised to go. Elsa will look after you."

His guest glanced up.

"But perhaps, Mrs. Lander——"

As he spoke, the door opened, and she came in. There was something in her manner, which was out of keeping with her face, and her smile was nervous.

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting,——"

"We didn't wait," her husband interrupted, with a giggle.

"I hope you are better, Mr. James. You have had a very hard time lately."

He took her hand, which was limp and unresponsive, and dropped it.

"I am all right now," he answered briskly, "although I am conscious of looking a fearful wreck."

She glanced at him furtively, as she took her seat; and drew in her breath, so that her small full lips curled inwards for a second. Her hand, which was perfectly shaped, and laden with diamonds, touched the orchids in a vase near.

"Are you thinking of going away?" she asked.

"To recruit? Oh, no! I am too glad to begin the old life again, to wish to run away."

She lifted her eyes, till they fell on his thin fingers, and she said softly,—

"You look as if a change of air would do you good," and as suddenly veered round in argument, and added, "But unless your doctor thinks it needful, I should remain in town."

"Doctors always think it needful."

Mr. Lander laughed. "Awful rot, isn't it? What's the matter, Elsa?"

"My soup is cold."

"Your own fault. You were so beastly late."

She looked straight at him, with a leaden expression in her gray eyes.

"'Beastly,' is such an ugly word," she said.

He chuckled, well contented. "Elsa always quarrels with my language, when she can't deny my argument. Don't you, Elsa?"

She was intent on the gold fringe, on the sleeve of her tea-gown, and did not reply.

"What have you both been doing," the other man asked, "during my lost two months?"

"Oh, Elsa has been trotting about as usual. She is always very busy doing nothing. I only see her at dinner-time, and then she is usually tired or cross."

The woman smiled. "I am out of favour to-night," she said gently.

"Nonsense! Nonsense! I always speak the truth, you know I always speak the truth, but you don't like hearing it. That's all."

She sipped her wine. "A generous lie is sometimes refreshing," she remarked.

James broke in abruptly.

"I hope you have been well, anyhow, Mrs. Lander."

"Oh, yes, thank you."

"And the baby?"

"The child is quite well."

Her husband leant forward.

"Let's have him down, Elsa. Send for Mary."

"Oh, no, Bertie. He's asleep by this time."

He shook his head. "I know better, I'll go and see myself."

"I don't want him to come down, Bertie."

"Why the devil not?"

"It isn't good for him to get so excited, just before settling to sleep. Mr. James can see him another day."

"The truth is, Elsa, you don't want to bother with him yourself. But you will kindly allow *me* to care for the child, even if you are so beastly unnatural!"

Their guest grew crimson for the first time, and he moistened his lips, which were dry and parched.

The woman made no answer, nor did she look round, as her husband left the room. Her bent head, with its soft auburn curls, was immovable.

The man watched her, with his teeth set.

She spoke, without lifting her eyes.

"It is a long time since we have seen you."

"Very long."

"You must have been very dull."

"I was dull."

"You heard that Aimée is going to be married."

"Yes, Bertie told me."

"I have known the man a long time."

"Is he a good sort?"

"He is smart, and well-mannered."

"That is scant praise from you."

"I can express no more."

"Your reserve is wonderful, Mrs. Lander."

"Reserve! Why, you can't complain of that, surely. I know no one so reserved as yourself,—no one."

"Not to the people I care for."

She winced, and he saw it with a kind of stupid wonder.

"Was I rude?" he asked.

"A little frank." She clasped her hands tightly together, and added, nervously hilarious, "Don't you feel delighted to be well again? Didn't you feel out of the world when you were ill, and in a land of dreams and phantoms? I always do."

"Yes." He spoke brusquely, as her husband entered with the child.

It was four years old, small and dark-eyed; for the moment it was fretful, and inclined to be capricious.

"Papa dressed me so badly," he announced.

Mrs. Lander said nothing. With a fact once accomplished, she rarely interferred.

"May I have some 'strawberries?'" he lisped.

"Not so late at night," his mother answered.

"Papa will give me some."

"Of course, Dickie. Come over here and sit near papa."

"He hasn't spoken to me yet," James said. "Have you forgotten me, Dickie?"

"Yes."

"Quite?"

"Tite."

"But I am Uncle Leslie."

"You're not my real uncle, nurse said so. You're sham, like my silver watch."

His father interposed. "But he is papa's friend, his greatest friend, Dickie. We were at school and college together, and I am fond of Uncle Leslie. Can't you love a sham uncle, you little rogue, as well as a real one?"

"Yes. P'rhaps I can. More 'strawberries?'"

"No, that is enough. Would you like a sip of my port for a great treat?" Elsa looked across the table, her under lip twitched.

"That will do, Bertie. The child can go now."

The boy did not move.

"Run away, Dickie, and ask nurse to put you to bed."

"Nonsense, Elsa. He can stay a little longer."

"Do you want to teach him to disobey me?" she asked.

"Rubbish!" he giggled. "Look at his stained fingers. Oh, you dirty little boy!"

Mrs. Lander rose and lifted the child off its chair. It screamed with rage and kicked violently, striking out with a deliberate attempt to hurt.

The red glow was again reflected in the guest's face, he half arose from his seat, and then refrained.

"You had better punish him, Lander," he said.

"Oh, no. He's all right. Let him alone, Elsa. Dickie, come and say

good-night to papa, and don't kick your mother. Do you hear? Come away from him, Elsa. What a fool you are."

She had lifted the struggling personification of ill-temper, and held it in a vice which it could not escape. Her little teeth, which were like pearls, were clenched; the burden was somewhat heavy, but she reached the door and carried it upstairs.

The moonlight streamed in at a staircase window, and lit up the face which was capable of so much devotion and passion, but was never intended for the duties of a mother. Her lips quivered, her eyes were dry. Once in the nursery, she put the child down on its bed and stood near.

"Hush!" she said. "We are tired of hideous screams."

The nurse looked on, awed and interested.

"Are you going to stop? Or shall I tell nurse to punish you?"

The sound ceased.

"Sit up and look at me."

She was reluctantly obeyed.

"What would you do if nurse kicked your cat?"

"Kill her."

"What ought I to do to you then, as you have kicked your mother?"

The child fidgetted.

"I have no time to waste on you, now, and I expect you will be feeling rather sick, as you have eaten far too many strawberries; if you are ill, don't send for me. I shall not see you all to-morrow, and little boys who kick can belong to papa if they like, but they don't belong to me."

She turned without another glance at the child, and left the room. On the way downstairs she stopped to wash her hands.

"He was very sticky," she thought; "and he has torn my tea-gown."

Neither of the men had spoken much since she had left, and when she entered, both glanced up, with a nervous curiosity as to what she would do.

She took her seat.

"Pass me the claret, Mr. James, and you can both smoke. I think I should like a cigarette also. There are some in that silver box. Bertie, look for the matches."

James leant forward. "Here is a light."

"Thank you." Her hand touched his, and he felt it was as cold as ice. "I have torn my tea-gown, which is tiresome," she remarked. "But I shall order another to-morrow, so it doesn't matter much."

"Another!" her husband cried.

"Why not?"

"How many more bills?"

"She smiled. "Your son is extravagant, he spares neither material nor flesh. I regret that you did not interfere, it would have spared your pocket, and my wrist." She held up her hand, and showed where a small boot heel had bruised and broken the skin.

Her guest lost his head.

"What a shame, Mrs. Lander!" he cried: "that must hurt you, he really ought to be well punished, the little brute; if he were a child of mine——"

"If he were a child of yours," she answered, "he would never have wounded me."

The remark slipped out. Once spoken, the scarlet colour leapt to her face, his eyes scorched her, and his lifted wineglass rattled against his teeth. The truth lay stripped of its prudery, bare and naked. Its nudity shocked them. Mr. Lander unconsciously held it up like a glass, for them to see the reflection of their souls therein.

"Well, I'm sure Leslie hasn't much to thank you for," he muttered. "You never went near him, after he was on the road to recovery. I begged you to do so a score of times, but you are so deuced modest and particular." He flung down his table-napkin and rose. "I'm off to the club," he added. "See you again later, Leslie."

Neither moved till the hall door closed, then James looked at her.

"Elsa!" he cried.

She faltered, "Yes."

He rose to shut the door. She turned, as a dog turns at its master's voice, and stood upright.

He came back swiftly, and caught her in his arms.

"I love you," he said.

She nodded, dumb.

He kissed the lips which could not speak.

For a short time, her feeling, and the strangeness of the clinging contact of his mouth, obliterated all else. She neither thought nor stirred; her whole form swayed to his slightest movement, her eyes blind, her senses lost, her soul throbbing to the tune of his passion. She turned faint, and drew back slowly.

Then he looked at her, and his look gave her the knowledge of what "had been."

She clung to him freshly, with a sudden shame, and an idea that he, who had invoked the feeling, should aid her to hide it. He held her closely, with the second, more protecting manner of a strong passion, and then in a husky voice, which was unlike his old voice, he spoke.

"Elsa, my darling, my darling," he said.

"But you must have guessed, you must have known long ago," she murmured. "I nearly died during your illness. Oh, Leslie, if you knew,—if you could know,—" She broke off; his lips closed hers.

"And I," he said at length, "have had two months waiting for this."

"But it taught me, Leslie. I didn't understand before."

They were silent again. She leant against him as if for support, overcome by a vague dread of a fuller explanation, which was sure to come.

She pleaded, as women can.

"Let us forget all else, Leslie. All but the one great happiness to-night. I am yours, every thought, every atom of my love, my devotion, is yours,—and you,—I know it at last,—love me. There is nothing else in the world. Just we two here, and together, and loving as we love. Leslie,—" She touched his face, so that he bent his head and looked at her again. "Let us forget all else." She might have added, "duty, honour, and the rest," but her woman's tact refrained. "Let us live in the present, just for to-night. Ah, now you are angry! You don't love me!"

"I don't love you! God help me! Elsa! Elsa!"

There was silence again, and then in the hall a man's step.

She grew nervous and guilty. "We must go upstairs," she said; "the servants will want to clear the table." She drew away; he followed her silently.

Once in the drawing-room he closed the door, and followed her to the sofa. She made him kneel, and wound her arms round his neck.

"I—I don't know myself," she murmured. "Do you know me, Leslie?"

"Yes, at last."

"You have dreamed of me like this?"

"Not like this. Not half so sweet, not half what you are. Oh, Elsa, you are driving me mad!"

She smiled indulgently, and hid, half timidly, her own madness. She held him, as a woman hugs her own danger, with a queer pathetic kind of reasoning, that it is a protection against herself. And he held her, as a man holds a woman who belongs to him by right of her heart, her brain, and all her senses; a right which is all powerful, and, like a flood which sweeps away

the boundaries of a mighty river, is strong enough to break, and wash away, all the marriage ties in the world.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Mr. Lander came home, his guest had been gone three hours. Elsa sat in the drawing-room still.

She forgot to say, "You are late," she only looked up and smiled.

He had gambled and won, and was flushed : a better and a more lenient mood had set in with his success.

"Well, old girl! Still up?" he said.

"Yes," she answered.

He went near her, and put his hand on her shoulder. "I was damned cross," he cried.

It came too late. She was inclined to be forgiving, because she was happy, not because her feelings were touched.

"That's all right," she said. "I am going to bed, now."

"How's the poor wrist?" He flushed as he spoke, as if with shame.

"Oh! it's nothing. You will want a whiskey and soda, you had better go down and get it. I am too tired to come with you, good-night."

"Good-night, old girl."

## II

The next day was a warm June Sunday, and Mrs. Lander expected Mr. James to call. A Sunday is a dreary day to wait for anyone, the traffic is less ; her pulse throbbed to the sound of the wheels of every hansom which turned the corner of the street, while her cheek paled, and her heart sank, when it rattled past, and away, into the distance. When a cab did stop in front of the house, she sat immovable, with a nervous dread that the door might open to admit some other visitor ; and each time, during all the long tedious hours of the afternoon, her terror was realized.

The child, who had been banished, crept down unheeded, till it broke a valuable china vase, and Mr. Lander swore at his wife for not looking after it better. In the evening, her father-in-law and his wife came to dinner, which they partook of with a Sunday solemnity, not a soothing remedy for overstrained nerves. They impressed Elsa with the fact that she was a lucky woman to have married Bertie, and that Bertie's child was the finest in the world. By the end of the evening, her cheeks each bore a bright pink spot, and her lips smiled bitterly. Before she slept, she agreed that if her mirror reflected truly, it was just as well that Leslie had not come.

"There is always to-morrow," she thought, and, after a sleepless night, to-morrow came.

She rode in the morning, and looked for him in the park; the afternoon saw her sitting by the drawing-room window, waiting timidly, with a patience which was new. She went over in her mind his every action, his every word. She recalled his smile, till she was happy, and his kisses, till she blushed.

Then Bertie came home.

They dined out, and she again found sleep almost impossible. On Tuesday morning she took the child for a walk, till its chatter drove her mad. By the afternoon she was frightened and desperate, and she wrote to Leslie. Her letter was formal and brief, and merely asked when he was coming to see her again. She sent her maid round to his rooms, with an order to wait for an answer. After an hour the girl returned. There had been no reply. Elsa went upstairs and dressed for dinner, numb with pain. That evening at a theatre she flirted with a fair boy, who thought her the most beautiful woman in the world, and she talked more than she had ever talked before. But neither the evening, nor the excitement, caused her to forget for one minute.

On Wednesday Bertie remarked that she was "beastly pale." She answered that she hadn't slept well, and mentally resolved to have an old prescription made up, which contained chloral. She went for a ride, but could hardly sit her horse. After lunch she drove down the street where Leslie lived, and passed his club, with the faint hope of meeting him. That night she slept.

The next day she hoped no more, she settled into a kind of fixed despair. There was a maid who wanted to leave, and some bills to pay, and Dickie needed some new nightgowns, and a fresh pair of boots. Bertie told her to visit his married sister, and she could no longer make any excuse to herself for spending the whole of the afternoon indoors. She was afraid to ask the man when she returned if any one had called; she had inquired each morning, so absurdly often.

That evening at dinner the butler approached: "I beg your pardon, Mum," he said, "but I forgot to tell you that Mr. James called to-day. He said he was sorry to miss you, and would take his chance of finding you at home to-morrow afternoon."

She was dumb, and her throat was dry.

"I want you to come to a cricket match with me to-morrow," her husband remarked. "Send old Leslie a line to-night to put him off."

"I hate cricket," she muttered. "There is no game so dull, and no sun so hot, as when I go to a cricket match."

"Oh, nonsense! I want you to come. You'll like it when you get there."

"I can't go. I don't feel well enough."

"You aren't looking your best. But you may be all right to-morrow. I'll put Leslie off anyhow, he had far better come and dine some evening next week, when I shall be at home too. Do you see?"

With a terror, born of her longing to see him, she did as Bertie desired, and she went to the match.

The chloral gave her rest at night, by day she had none. Saturday was wet, and Bertie went to the club. She put on a peignoir when the afternoon came, and was careless of the fact that the drug and the misery had painted her eyes round with black.

A lady came to call, who asked to see Dickie, and gushed over him; he was stuffed with cake, and became sticky and obnoxious. His mother was conscious that the noise was deafening, and that he was naughtier than usual, when amid the din and the visitor's amused laughter a man was announced.

Elsa rose, she went to meet him, and gave him her hand, but she never knew what he said to her, or what she answered. In a dream she regained her seat, and became aware that he was taking Dickie by the shoulders, and turning him out of the room.

"Mamma! Mamma!" shrieked the child, "I hate Uncle Leslie, I hate him, do tell him to let me alone."

The appeal to her, touched her sense of humour, and she began to laugh. Her friend looked shocked, but that mattered so little after all; she laughed as a woman laughs, when she is dazed for the want of the relief of tears.

Outside the door, a small voice was heard plaintively hoping, "that God would kill Uncle Leslie, and put him in a nasty black box." Inside, Leslie was calmly taking a seat, and telling the astonished lady that "His good friend, Lander, was too lenient with the boy."

For half an hour she lingered, and casual topics were discussed. Elsa's haggard face grew flushed, with a feverish longing to get rid of her visitor. When she did at last take leave, and Leslie had walked down to the hall with her, Elsa rose as he entered, and (with an action recalling a scene of the week before) he closed the door.

"Why didn't you come to see me?" She asked.

"I am here to tell you."

She bit her lips, his voice was calm, although his eyes were troubled.

"Well," she said, "begin."

"Won't you sit down?"

She laid one hand on the mantelpiece to steady herself, and shook her head.

"I am going away, Mrs. Lander."

"Going away?"

"Yes, running away from danger."

Her lids drooped, and into her face crept a faint look of contempt.

"Then, you don't love me," she said, and pride, which is a weapon which wounds both the owner and the onlooker, came to stab her into composure. "You don't love me, and the other night was an acted lie."

He had had a week in which to rehearse the scene, and he had marvellous natural self-control, such as the world never teaches.

"No, not a lie. I do love you. But I can't stay to rob my best friend. I can't creep like a coward into his house, to steal his wife's affection. My love has not killed my sense of honour."

"Honour! The usual argument of men, when they want to silence a woman. Honour! Isn't love stronger than honour? We women often sacrifice honour for you men, and never reproach you with it—but,"—she broke off with a little laugh, "I can't fight the point. You want to go."

"I must go."

"I understand. You dreamed of me, and idealized me when you were ill, I was a pleasant remembrance in the long hours of convalescence;—but now that you are well, you are a man again, and think it more manly to keep your loyalty to your friend clean, even at the cost of sacrificing me."

"I cannot sacrifice Bertie. We have been like brothers."

She moved a step towards him.

"Why don't you look at me?"

"Because I am ashamed."

"Oh, Leslie!" Her voice broke.

"Child," his own vibrated strangely, "Don't torture me. Help me to do what is right."

"Why didn't you come. Why did you wait so long?" she asked.

"Because I was afraid of seeing you. I was a coward."

"Oh!" The cry was rapturous. "Then you do love me?"

He strode towards her, and then stopped short. "I love you. I love you so much, that I dare not even touch you. Good God! can't you help me to be a man, don't make a blackguard of me."

"Oh, Leslie!" And the sweetness, and the simplicity of her manner, as she said it, thrilled him from head to foot. "If only you would touch me—only my hand."

He recoiled at last.

"Oh! I know, I understand. I should not have said that, but I can't pretend. My heart aches so."

There was a pause, he fancied she was crying, but she lifted her face after a time, and he was mistaken.

"A woman," she continued gently, "never likes a man to say all those good things, which she ought to have thought of, and said herself. I am a bad woman, I suppose, but I wasn't bad before, at least, I hope not. Life isn't very easy for any of us, is it, Leslie? And we are apt to be children, and try to snatch at the nice things out of reach." She paused again. "I quite see that,—as you have said it,—you must go. Have you settled when?"

"To-morrow. I leave for Paris first."

"Why not to-night? A week ago—we were so happy. Why not allow me to imagine you on the sea, when the time comes round again; where I cannot touch you, or see you, or even hear you speak?"

"As you please. I am behaving very badly to you."

"To me! So you think so." She smiled slightly. "If you really thought so, you would have acted differently. Well, it doesn't matter. I am learning that so little matters after all."

He waited; and then something in her raised eyes, and piteous mouth recalled, not the pale Elsa before him, but the Elsa of a week ago, a warm living creature, responsive to his kisses.

"Elsa, how can I leave you? I—I am half mad. Let me kiss you once,—only once again."

She leant forward, he bent his head, his breath touched her cheek,—then the door creaked. They drew apart, the kiss unborn, as Bertie entered.

"You here, Leslie! That's right. Off to Paris for a few days, aren't you? Stay and dine? Won't you? Then come and have a smoke in my den. I want to talk to you."

His listeners moved forward.

"Good-bye, Mrs. Lander."

"Good-bye, Mr. James."

Their hands touched, he turned and went out. She stood listening to his retreating footsteps, and the future became a long cold path of pain and monotony, ready for her to tread alone.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A MERE MAN."

## THE THREE WITCHES



LL the moon-shed nights are over,  
And the days of gray and dun,  
There is neither may nor clover,  
And the day and night are one.

Not a hamlet, not a city,  
Meets our strained and tearless eyes,  
In the plain without a pity,  
Where the wan grass droops and dies.

We shall wander through the meaning  
Of a day and see no light,  
For our lichenized arms are leaning  
On the ends of endless night.

We the children of Astarte,  
Dear abortions of the Moon,  
In a gay and silent party  
We are riding to you soon :

Burning ramparts, ever burning !  
To the flaine which never dies,  
We are yearning, yearning, yearning,  
With our gay and tearless eyes ;

In the plain without a pity  
(Not a hamlet, not a city)  
Where the wan grass droops and dies.

ERNEST DOWSON.

## SOME NOTES ON THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS AND DECORATIVE PAINTINGS OF THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN'S- ON-THE-HILL, SCARBOROUGH



THE Church of St. Martin's-on-the-Hill, Scarborough, built by a clever architect, and forming, by its stained glass windows and the decorative paintings which it contains, a sort of decorative museum of pre-Raphaelite art, is but little known ; as may be seen from the almost<sup>1</sup> complete lack of any descriptions or reproductions of the works of art which it contains. If we remember that this church, remarkable in itself, contains also stained glass windows and decorative paintings by Rossetti, Burne Jones, Ford Madox Brown, William Morris and Webb, we shall wonder that no artistic English magazine has yet given it any attention, and some interest may therefore be found in these notes, which are a kind of abridged catalogue of the works of art decorating St. Martin's.

Well situated in the new part of the picturesque town of Scarborough, the church was built from the plans of Mr. Bodley, A.R.A., in 1863, and the necessary funds for its construction were subscribed by a local committee, at the head of which was Miss Mary Craven, who appears to be the principal benefactress of the church. Of early Gothic style as a whole, built of Whitby stone, the Church of St. Martin's is composed of an aisled nave, rather short chancel, north-west tower, and large choir vestry. It is, above all, the interior of the church which pleases, affording, by its simple and harmonious

<sup>1</sup> There is, indeed, a pamphlet by the Rev. Newton Mant, but, interesting as it is, it is written more from a parochial than from an artistic point of view ; only one chapter is devoted to the church, and that chapter contains numerous errors. The only reproductions which have appeared are two remarkable woodcuts, executed after the cartoons of the stained window by Rossetti, the subject of which is the Parable of the Vineyard. These reproductions figured in one of the first volumes of the "Hobby Horse."





lines and proportions, an impression of happy peace. The red tiles agreeably replace the stone flags usually seen ; and the unpleasant severity of the hideous wooden benches, which disfigure many of the Gothic cathedrals in England, has been replaced by chairs which fill the church without interfering with the development of its lines. The church is well-lighted, and when a ray of sunshine glances through one of the painted windows, it becomes animated with life, the whiteness of the stone takes a warmer glow, the stained glass enshrined in the Gothic windows becomes resplendent, and the reflection of its bright but velvety colouring flickers on walls and columns, and clothes in rainbow lines the pure whiteness of the Whitby stone.

Besides an elegant choir-screen and a brass lectern, both designed by the architects of the church, Messrs. Bodley and Garner, and a very rich organ, the panels of which are decorated with graceful figures of angels by Mr. Spencer Stanhope, the church of St. Martin's possesses a small pulpit in wood. This pulpit, built against the choir screen, is charming and simple ; it has three sides, each side being divided into distinct panels, superposed. The two panels to the left were painted by Rossetti, and represent the Annunciation. The original imagination of the painter of the "Beata Beatrix" and of "Dante's Dream" is revealed by the poetical conception and arrangement of the subject, into which he had already found means of infusing fresh life and youthfulness in his "Ecce Ancilla Domini" of the National Gallery. This picture, one of Rossetti's most charming pictures, does not in fact resemble any previous Annunciation. The Angel has no wings, the Virgin has not her arms crossed on her bosom, the body humbly bent forward, as is usually depicted, and yet there is no need of the inscription to assure us that it is the Annunciation which the picture represents, but an Annunciation conceived after a manner entirely new and thoroughly characteristic of the temperament of Rossetti. He was not content, however, with giving simply one new arrangement of a subject celebrated by all the great Italian painters, he gives us yet another in these two panels of the pulpit of Scarborough, here reproduced. It must be admitted that this rendering more closely resembles the traditional rendering of the subject ; but it was not possible for Rossetti to depict even a traditional subject without giving at least some detail entirely characteristic of his personality, and this we see in these panels. They show, as will be seen, a high trellised hedge, set with red roses and shining lilies ; at the foot of the hedge the Virgin is seated, a book of prayers on her knees, and the angel appears above her, his brown wings still half open, leaning upon the flowery trellis-work ; he speaks to her, and bends towards her the tallest of the open lilies. She hears, rather

than sees him, for she does not dare raise her eyes to him ; but with eyes lost in an ecstasy, with hands outspread, she seems to say *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.*

This attitude of the Virgin is natural and charming, but what enchantments me most in the composition of these panels is the exquisite gesture of the Angel bending towards the Virgin the tallest of the lilies. This gesture, so full of poetic meaning, is thoroughly new, and belongs to Rossetti. Never, before him, has the supreme purity of the Virgin been indicated by anything so admirable, as this choice of the tall flowering lily.

It is therefore the composition I like above all, in these two panels of the Annunciation, but their colouring also is remarkable ; the flowering hedge seems to embalm the air, so fresh does it appear, the brown wings of the Angel spread soft and velvety against the golden sky, the Virgin's dress is grey, her mantle blue, and the hair of both Virgin and Angel is red, of that rich and magnificent red that Rossetti alone has been able to render after the great Venetian masters.

Although less beautiful than those of Rossetti, the paintings which decorate the other sides of the pulpit are none the less worthy of praise. They were painted by Mr. Campfield after the designs of the late Ford Madox Brown, and of Mr. William Morris, and they represent, on the side opposite the Annunciation, decorative subjects of birds and lilies, and on the principal side, in superposed panels, the Doctors of the Church and the Four Evangelists. The Evangelists, and especially the St. John, are remarkable ; these eight panels are of a warm and rich colouring ; they complete harmoniously the decoration of the pulpit, and contribute to make it one of the most precious ornaments of the church.

But if I admire the pulpit, and above all the delightful Annunciation which decorates it, I admire even more the splendid stained glass windows, which Rossetti designed for the East and West of St. Martin's. It is these windows, and those of Ford Madox Brown, Burne Jones, and Morris, which constitute the principal wealth of the church. It is impossible to forget either their characteristic design or their magnificent and brilliant colouring. Taking them as a whole they constitute one of the best examples of this renaissance of an art which appeared to have been lost since the sixteenth century, and which Madox Brown and Rossetti first, Burne Jones and Morris afterwards, have been able to animate with fresh life, and to render one of the most brilliant and flourishing decorative arts in England. Before examining them in detail I should like to reproduce here a few lines which Madox Brown wrote

in 1865, in the very interesting catalogue of his work entitled, "Cartoons for Stained Glass." These few lines contain the general rules followed by the pre-Raphaelite painters in the design and execution of their stained glass windows, and as the catalogue of the Exhibition of 1865 has become very rare, these lines will perhaps prove interesting. Madox Brown speaks there of the series of cartoons for stained glass, the subject of which was "The Life and Death of St. Oswald," which are now to be seen in the South Kensington Museum. And this is what he says :

"The following nineteen cartoons have been executed for the firm of Messrs. Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co., for stained glass. With its heavy lead lines surrounding every part (and no stained glass can be rational and good art without strong lead lines), stained glass does not admit of refined drawing ; or else it is thrown away upon it. What it does admit of, and what above all things it imperatively requires, is fine colour : and what it can admit of, and does very much require also, is invention, expression, and good dramatic action. For this reason work by the greatest historical artists is not thrown away upon stained glass windows, because though high finish of execution is superfluous, and against the spirit of this beautiful decorative art, yet, as expression and action can be conveyed in a few strokes equally as in the most elaborate art, on this side therefore stained glass rises to the epic height. So in medals, it is well known grandeur of style arises out of the very minuteness of the work, which admits of that and little else. The cartoons of this firm are never coloured, that task devolving on Mr. Morris, the manager, who makes his colour (by selecting the glass) out of the very manufacture of the article. The revival of the mediæval art of stained glass dates back now some twenty years in the earliest established firms ; nevertheless, with the public it is still little understood ; a general impression prevails that bright colouring is the one thing desirable, along with the notion that the brightest colours are the most costly. In an age that has become disused to colour, the irritation produced on the retina by the discordance of bright colour, is taken as an evidence of the so coveted brightness itself. The result of this is, that the manufacturers, goaded on by their clients, and the 'fatal facility' of the material (for all coloured glass is bright) produce too frequently kaleidoscopic effects of the most painful description."

These effects, which Madox Brown had reason to fight against, and which it may not be useless to mention here that they may be definitely abolished, are not, happily, those which he has produced in the two windows at Scarborough, the subjects of which are taken from the legend of the life of St.

Martin, but rather the three qualities he recommends as a principle, "invention, expression, and good dramatic action." All these are to be found, with the somewhat strange and humorous characterization which Ford Madox Brown put into all his designs. The first window represents the episode of the "Golden Legend," in which St. Martin cuts his cloak in two, to give half to the beggar. Half turning on his horse, bearded, helmeted, and covered with a coat of mail, the Saint is here still only the brave and courageous soldier of the Emperors Constantine and Julian ; the cloak which he cuts with his sword is brilliant and magnificent, strewn with rings and stars of gold, and forms a violent contrast to the poverty of the lame beggar, nearly naked, as the legend says, who, leaning on his crutches, stupefied but delighted, looks at the Saint who is despoiling himself ; in the background, a uniform blue sky, green pines clearly defined, and two soldiers talking, who appear to be ridiculing the foolish pity of the good Saint. The neighbouring window is not less attractively composed. Kneeling in a green field studded with flowers, the Saint, who wears on one shoulder the half of his glorious mantle, sees appearing above him the Saviour, seated on a rainbow, and surrounded by angels, holding spread out in front of him the other half of the cloak with which the Saint had unconsciously clothed him. Of a firm and energetic design, full of character and spirit, these two windows, charming by the unexpected but artistic strangeness of their composition, as much as by their good colouring, leave only one regret, that of not seeing other more important windows by Madox Brown in the same church.

The interest of the notes by Madox Brown brought me quite naturally to search, and find, in this window, the qualities which he considered as being essential to good stained glass. I ought, instead of beginning with him, and with this detailed examination of the windows of St. Martin, to have first indicated the position of the different windows in the church, giving a general idea as to their arrangement. Here, then, is how they are placed, following exactly the order in which they occur. West end of St. Martin's : two Gothic windows, Adam and Eve, by Rossetti, and above them in a rose window surrounded by nine smaller ones, "The "Annunciation" and "Angels playing Musical Instruments," by Burne-Jones. North side aisle : stained glass windows by Campfield and Marshall, representing "Characters of the Old Testament." Choir : in a Gothic window of three compartments, above the altar, "The Parable of the Vineyard;" in the centre "The Crucifixion" by Rossetti ; in the four circular side windows "The Emblems of the Evangelists," by Aston Webb. South side aisle : four windows representing "Saints of the New

Testament and of the Catholic Church" by Campfield and Marshall, "Saint Dorothy" by Burne Jones, and "Saint Martin" by Ford Madox Brown.

The two west stained glass windows, by Rossetti, representing Adam and Eve, are in my opinion the most beautiful and impressive windows in the church. An intense life animates them, the thought of this first existence, happy, free, without care, or possible remorse, has made Rossetti depict these two bodies radiant with strength and health. Unlike the beings consumed with love and passion who dwelt habitually in his thoughts, these are consumed and tormented by no passion, they are content to live; and the power with which this life, free from care, is rendered, is almost disconcerting. One is struck by the ingenious arrangement of the branches and leaves by which Rossetti veils the nudity of the bodies of Adam and Eve, for the rosy colours of the flesh look brighter in the violent contrast of the large leaves of a sombre green, and again by contrast with the uniform blue of the sky seen behind them; and these ingenious contrasts give to these two nude bodies a vividness of life which is rendered by no other stained glass window which I have ever seen. These two resplendent bodies of Adam and Eve animate the church, and seem to give it some of their own life. The composition is no less original and new in its details than in the beauty of its colouring. Adam is depicted standing, picturesquely leaning on a branch of a tree with large sombre leaves, a fig-tree I think; with the tip of his foot he amuses himself by tickling a small bear curled up at his feet, the blue sky is seen behind him, and sunflowers, flowering at the end of their long stems, expand at his right hand; in the branches of the tree above him a curious and familiar squirrel watches him. Standing also, Eve has stopped in the middle of a field richly studded with small flowers and red tulips; of the same fairness as the hair and beard of Adam, her unbound hair falls in an opulent stream over her shoulders. In her arms she holds, tenderly pressed to her bosom, a white dove, and in the sombre tree above, his eyes fixed and shining, an owl surveys her. The predominant colours of this admirable window are, flesh colour, dark green, and light gold. Above the windows of Adam and Eve "The Annunciation" of Burne Jones, which decorates the large rose window, and the "Angels playing Musical Instruments" of the nine smaller roses which surround it, form with the windows of Rossetti a remarkable and charming contrast. In the subject he here depicts, Burne Jones has adopted the conventional manner, dear to Fillippo Lippi and to the painters of his school. The Virgin is kneeling in the middle of a diapered field, which is surrounded by a well-cut hedge, bedecked with roses; the Angel has just alighted, and,

surprised and enraptured, in a delicious gesture of astonishment, the Virgin joins her hands, hardly able to believe the "good tidings." That which makes the charm of this window, and of the nine others surrounding it, is the virginal grace and the exquisite purity of its conception, and of its design and colour. White, azure blue, and ruby are the colours principally and almost exclusively used; they blend admirably with the white stone walls, and indeed it seems impossible to find anything more fitted to harmonize in the decoration of churches than the white Whitby stone, and the graceful and spiritual figures of Burne Jones and Morris. The windows of Adam and Eve give an impression of life, strength, and luxuriant health, those of the Annunciation and the Angels an impression of grace and purity.

The first impression given by the window of the "Parable of the Vineyard," which lights the choir, is an impression of colour, dazzling and magnificent, velvety and harmonious, resembling the Flemish stained glass windows decorating the Gothic cathedrals. From the point of view of stained glass, this is the one I consider to be the most perfect. It has all the qualities which we have seen were considered essential by Madox Brown, the "beauty of colour, inventive expression and good dramatic action," and all these qualities are united in a high degree of perfection. In fact, when we approach this window and examine it in detail, we perceive that it is no less remarkable for its ingenious and original composition than for the sensation of opulent colour which it at first gave us. This astonishing Rossetti was made to succeed, and to show himself an accomplished master in everything which he undertook. He appears here to have found the secret of composition of the old Gothic masters, and the arrangement of his subjects is as clever and complicated, the drawing as powerful and precise, as characteristic and appropriate to stained glass as that of his great predecessors. For those who look at the great stained window of the choir of St. Martin's, one subject stands out before all the others, "The Crucifixion," which occupies the centre of the window, and which Rossetti has intentionally made larger and more apparent than the subjects of the Parable of the Vineyard, because it resumes them, and also because it is the one which ought the most vividly to impress the faithful. But little by little around the central figure the different episodes of the parable stand out in the gorgeous colours with which they are clothed, and we find that conception and arrangement of the figures peculiar to Rossetti, as the different scenes of the parable succeed one another in the seven compartments of the window. There is first the planting of the vine, then the letting it out to husbandmen, then the stoning of the servants sent to receive the





first fruits, the feast of the vintage, with its delightful figure of the young woman in a white dress dancing in the midst of the husbandmen, and again the arrival of the heir, young and unarmed, in their midst, while they are already plotting against his life, and then their judgment and condemnation by the master, weary of their ingratitude. Magnificent and striking in itself, the parable of St. Matthew could not be embellished, but it could be presented under a plastic form which, while bringing out certain details, would engrave it more profoundly on the memory; and it is this which has been done by Rossetti. Sumptuous in colour, ingenious in composition, the window of the Parable appears to be of a design more entirely and peculiarly Rossetti's than that of Adam and Eve, of which certain details seem to show the influence of Madox Brown; this statement, of which the only object is to be exact, takes, however, absolutely nothing from my admiration of the stained glass window of Adam and Eve. Rossetti, who, as is well known, was during some time the pupil of Madox Brown, was occasionally influenced by the painter of the frescoes of the Town Hall at Manchester. He on his side underwent, without suspecting it, the influence of the painter poet, who was more his friend than his pupil. This mutual influence can only be for good when brought to bear upon minds so richly endowed as were those of Madox Brown and Rossetti, and the works of both are there to testify to the fact. Perfect from every point of view, this interpretation of the Parable of the Vineyard by Rossetti does not alone embellish the choir of St. Martin's. Four circular windows adorned with stained glass by Aston Webb decorate the side walls. The subjects represented are "The Emblems of the Four Evangelists," and by the vigour of their drawing, as well as by the beauty of their colour, they are worthy of being mentioned at the same time as those of Madox Brown, Burne Jones, and Morris. In indicating the positions of the windows in the church, I have pointed out in the windows of the side aisles those of Madox Brown, Burne Jones, Campfield, and Marshall, and have described the St. Martin of Madox Brown. The windows of Campfield and Marshall, visibly inspired by the works of Burne Jones and Rossetti, are not unpleasant, but are only really valuable for the character of *ensemble* which they help to give to the decoration of the church.

There remains, therefore, now only the window attributed to Burne Jones. It represents "St. Dorothy" and "St. Theophilus" separated by an angel carrying in a basket the "three apples," as the "Golden Legend" describes it. We find this window mentioned by Mr. Malcolm Bell in the very complete catalogues he has drawn up of the works of Burne Jones. It is there

stated to have been done in 1873, and the catalogue also mentions an Aaron, Daniel, and Stephen, which is found in the north side aisle of St. Martin's. For my part I do not consider that an exaggerated importance ought to be attached to these windows simply from the fact that they are ascribed to Burne-Jones. I do not believe that they were done by him exclusively, as was, for example, the "Annunciation," but, most probably, drawings of his were enlarged by Mr. Campfield for the windows at Scarborough, and in copying them, though he has not taken away all their grace and artistic character, he has nevertheless lost much. This is why, although acknowledging their graceful and decorative character, I cannot place them in the same rank as the others I have mentioned. To terminate this rapid examination of the stained glass windows of St. Martin's, I wish to notice, from among the row of south windows above the door of entrance, one representing St. John the Baptist, designed and carried out by Mr. William Morris. It is, above all, remarkable for the richness of its colour, and in this connection I think it well to call to mind that the windows of Madox Brown, Rossetti, Webb, and Burne-Jones, of which I have spoken, were all carried out by Mr. Morris, who, at the great exhibition of 1862, gained a medal for the execution of the "Parable of the Vineyard."<sup>1</sup>

It will be seen that the artistic interest of the church of St. Martin's consists in this, that it constitutes, not merely a handsome church, but a sort of pre-Raphaelite museum. And the collection of stained glass windows which it possesses is especially precious, for when, in a few years, a real pre-Raphaelite museum is originated at the National Gallery, when there will be (as there is now a Turner room) a Rossetti room, and in the adjoining rooms are collected the finest pictures of Ford Madox Brown, Watts, Holman Hunt,

<sup>1</sup> In his pamphlet on St. Martin's the Rev. Newton Mant mentions some paintings which are harmless and insignificant in themselves, and of which I should not speak were it not that he attributes them by mistake to Burne Jones and Morris. Too many indifferent works will probably be generously attributed to these painters in the future for me to think it unnecessary to lighten their reputation at least of these works with which they have no connection. Neither Burne Jones nor William Morris has ever worked at Scarborough; they could not therefore have painted either the Adoration of the Magi or the Angels which decorate the walls above the altar, and which Mr. Mant ascribes to them. This decoration was painted originally by Mr. Campfield, a decorative painter from the firm of Mr. Morris. That Mr. Campfield used at this period drawings by Burne Jones from which to paint in distemper is possible, but in any case the original decoration fell into a ruinous state, and in 1889 this part of the church was entirely repainted by a Mr. Farrer, a painter of Scarborough, assisted by his sons and daughters. Let it here be fully understood that these paintings of the East end have nothing to do with Sir Edward Burne Jones or Mr. Morris.

and Burne Jones ; if it is acknowledged, then, that these artists have formed the most remarkable school of painting of this century, it will be regretted at the same time that we are unable to see represented in a museum certain productions connected with the branches of art which this school has rendered particularly flourishing. After their pictures, it is in stained glass windows that the pre-Raphaelite painters have best succeeded. Rossetti, Madox Brown, Burne Jones, and Morris have renewed and revived the art which appeared for a long time to be lost. When, later on, their works become classic, and are studied, it will be in the churches that we shall need to seek them. Then churches like St. Martin's will be of a special interest on account of the *ensemble* of works which it contains. However, if, as I have shown, this collection of works at St. Martin's is remarkable, it is not, from a pre-Raphaelite point of view, either complete or perfect ; the two rows of clerestory windows, with the exception of one by Mr. Morris, have nothing in common with this school, nor, as we have seen, have the decorative paintings of the choir benches ; while no work represents at St. Martin's three important members of the pre-Raphaelite school, Watts, Millais, and Hunt. It is true that I am unaware if they have done painted windows, but if it was desired, as I should imagine, to represent a pre-Raphaelite *ensemble*, they might have been asked to paint, in default of stained windows, votive pictures or decorative paintings. In thinking what might have been the church of Scarborough if these faults and failings which I point out had been avoided, I thought, while writing these lines, that it might still be possible to build a church and to render it unique in artistic interest by decorating it with a collection, complete this time, of pre-Raphaelite pictures and stained glass windows ; and surely this idea which comes to me of a pre-Raphaelite church is not, when one thinks of it, either fantastical or impossible to realize. There is in England a man whom all artists reverence for the splendid architectural work he has done. Admirer and friend of Rossetti, intimately acquainted with all the artists of the pre-Raphaelite school, Mr. Philip Webb seems the one designated to construct such a church, which, while being all that is required for public worship, would yet present under the most favourable light the stained glass windows and the religious paintings of the pre-Raphaelite school. The windows of Rossetti which can be admired at Scarborough, and which could be reproduced in this ideal church, are not the only ones he designed ; there is, notably, the magnificent series of cartoons illustrating the Legend of St. George, which is possessed by Mr. Fairfax Murray, and which is one of the most finished works of Rossetti in this style of decorative painting. By Ford Madox Brown there

is the characteristic series of cartoons illustrating the life and death of St. Oswald, which is now exhibited in the collection of water-colours and drawings at the South Kensington Museum. Burne Jones and Morris have done (a tremendous thing when one thinks of the enormous work they have produced in other branches of art!) more than five hundred stained glass windows; there is, therefore, in that which concerns them, but *l'embarras du choix*, and this difficulty even need not exist, for it is well known that Burne Jones and Morris consider as their best work in glass the "Adoration of the Shepherds" and "The Crucifixion," which decorate the church of St. Philip at Birmingham. To the names of Rossetti, Madox Brown, Burne Jones, and Morris, I would add the less known name of Mr. Selwyn Image, who, by the poetic and religious character of his stained glass windows, and notably those which he has designed for the church of St. Luke's at Camberwell, has revealed himself in this style of art a master as accomplished as any of his predecessors; and the interest of such a church would be complete, and as I previously said, unique, if to these windows were added decorative and votive paintings by Rossetti, Madox Brown, Watts, Millais, Holman Hunt, and Burne Jones.

Why should this project be but the dream of an enthusiastic poet? It is not money that is wanting in England; I have proved that it is not the materials, nor yet the men; it is then nothing but the goodwill which is required, and as this goodwill would have for object the raising of a useful and durable monument, witnessing to the height to which English art has risen in this century, I do not despair of seeing this idea one day realized by some generous men justly proud of an art which has so magnificently flourished in their country.

OLIVIER GEORGES DESTRÉE.





## A CAUSERIE

### FROM A CASTLE IN IRELAND



N the mysterious castle, lost among trees that start up suddenly around it, out of a land of green meadows and gray stones, where I have been so delightfully living through the difficult month of August, London, and the currencies of literature, and the duties of an editor, seem scarcely appreciable; too far away on the other side of this mountainous land inclosing one within the circle of its own magic. It is a castle of dreams, where, in the morning, I climb the winding staircase in the tower, creep through the secret passage, and find myself in the vast deserted room above the chapel, which is my retiring-room for meditation; or, following the winding staircase, come out on the battlements, where I can look widely across Galway, to the hills. In the evening my host plays Vittoria and Palestrina on the organ, in the half darkness of the hall, and I wander between the pillars of black marble, hearing the many voices rising into the dome: Vittoria, the many lamentable human voices, crying on the sins of the world, the vanity of pleasant sins; Palestrina, an exultation and a triumph, in which the many voices of white souls go up ardently into heaven. In the afternoon we drive through a strange land, which has the desolation of ancient and dwindling things; a gray land, into which human life comes rarely, and with a certain primitive savagery. As we drive seawards, the stone walls closing in the woods dwindle into low, roughly heaped hedges of unmortared stones, over which only an occasional cluster of trees lifts itself; and the trees strain wildly in the air, writhing away from the side of the sea, where the winds from the Atlantic have blown upon them and transfixed them in an eternity of flight from an eternal flagellation. As far as one can see, as far as the blue, barren mountains which rise up against the horizon, there are these endless tracts of harsh meadow-land, marked into squares by the stone hedges, and themselves heaped with rocks and stones, lying about like some gray fungous growth. Not a sign of human life is to be seen; at long intervals we

pass a cabin, white-washed, thatched roughly, with stopped-up windows, and a half-closed door, from behind which a gray-haired old woman will gaze at you with her steady, melancholy eyes. A few peasants pass on the road, moving sombrely, without speaking ; the men, for the most part, touch their hats, without change of expression ; the women, drawing their shawls about their faces, merely look at you, with a slow, scrutinizing air, more indifferent than curious. The women walk bare-footed, and with the admirable grace and straightness of all who go with bare feet. I remember, in the curve of a rocky field, some little way in from the road, seeing a young woman, wearing a blue bodice, a red petticoat, and a gray shawl, carrying a tin pail on her head, with that straight, flexible movement of the body, that slow and formal grace, of Eastern women who have carried pitchers from the well. Occasionally a fierce old man on a horse, wearing the old costume, that odd, precise, kind of dress-coat, passes you with a surly scowl ; or a company of tinkers (the Irish gipsies, one might call them) trail past, huddled like crouching beasts on their little, rough, open carts, driving a herd of donkeys before them. As we get nearer the village by the sea, the cabins become larger, and more frequent ; and just before reaching it, we pass a ruined castle, impregnably built on a green mound, looking over the water to the quay, where the thin black masts of a few vessels rise motionless against the little white-washed houses. The road goes down a steep hill, and turns sharply, in the midst of the gray village, with its thatched and ragged roofs. The doors all stand open, the upper windows are drawn half down, and from some of them I see a dishevelled dark head, the hair and eyes of a gipsy (one could well have fancied), looking down on the road and the passers by. As the road rises again, we see the blue mountains, coming nearer to us, and the place where, one knows, is Galway Bay, lying too low for any flash of the waters. Now we are quite near the sea, and in front of the house we are to visit (you will hear all about it in M. Bourget's next *nouvelle*) a brown mass of colour comes suddenly into the dull green and gray of the fields, and one smells the seaweed lying there in the pools.

I find all this bareness, grayness, monotony, solitude, at once primitive and fantastical, curiously attractive ; giving just the same kind of relief from the fat, luxurious English landscape that these gaunt, nervous, long-chinned peasants give from the red and rolling sleepiness of the English villager. And there is a quite national vivacity and variety of mood in the skies here, in the restless atmosphere, the humorous exaggerations of the sun and rain. To-day is a typical Irish day, soft, warm, gray, with intervals of rain and fine weather ; I can see a sort of soft mist of rain, blown loosely about between the trees of the

park, the clouds an almost luminous gray, the sun shining through them ; at their darkest, scarcely darker than the Irish stone of which the castle is built. Driving, the other day, we passed a large pool among the rocks, in the midst of those meadows flowering with stones ; the sky was black with the rain that was falling upon the hills, and the afternoon sun shone against the deep blackness of the sky and the shadowed blackness of the water. I have never seen such coloured darkness as this water ; green passing into slate, slate into purple, purple into dead black. And it was all luminous, floating there in the harbour of the grass like a tideless sea. Then there is the infinite variety of the mountains, sloping in uneven lines around almost the whole horizon. They are as variable as the clouds, and, while you look at them, have changed from a purple darkness to a luminous and tender green, and then into a lifeless gray ; and seem to float towards you and drift away from you, like the clouds.

Among these solid and shifting things, in this castle which is at once so ancient a reality and so essential a dream, I feel myself to be in some danger of loosening the tightness of my hold upon external things, of foregoing many delectable pleasures, of forgetting many things that I have passionately learnt in cities. If I lived here too long I should forget that I am a Londoner and remember that I am a Cornishman. And that would so sadly embarrass my good friends of the Celtic Renaissance ! No, decidedly I have no part among those remote idealists : I must come back to London ; for I have perceived the insidious danger of idealism ever since I came into these ascetic regions.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

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November 1896

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THE SAVOY—N° VII



# THE SAVOY

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CHISWICK PRESS: —CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO. — TOOKS CO. LTD., CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

## EDITORIAL NOTE



HAVE to announce that with the next number, completing a year's existence, the present issue of "THE SAVOY" will come to an end. It has done something of what I intended it should do: it has made warm friends and heated enemies: and I am equally content with both. It has, in the main, conquered the prejudices of the press; and I offer the most cordial thanks to those newspaper critics who have had the honesty and the courtesy to allow their prejudices to be conquered. But it has not conquered the general public, and, without the florins of the general public, no magazine such as "THE SAVOY," issued at so low a price, and without the aid of advertisements, can expect to pay its way. We therefore retire from the arena, not entirely dissatisfied, if not a trifle disappointed, leaving to those who care for it our year's work, which will be presented to you in three volumes, in a cover of Mr. Beardsley's designing. When we come before you again, it will be in a more luxurious form, for which you shall pay more, but less often.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

*November, 1896.*



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## MORAG OF THE GLEN

### I

T was a black hour for Archibald Campbell of Gorromalt in Strathglas, and for his wife, and for Morag their second daughter, when the word came that Muireall had the sorrow of sorrows. What is pain, and is death a thing to fear? But there is a sorrow that no man can have and yet go free for evermore of a shadow upon his brow : and there is a sorrow that no woman can have, and keep the moonshine in her eyes. And when a woman has this sorrow, it saves or mars her : though, for sure, none of us may discern just what that saving may be, or from whom or what, or what may be that bitter or sweet ruin. We are shaped as clay in the potter's hand : ancient wisdom, that we seldom learn till the hand is mercifully still, and the vessel, finished for good or evil, is broken.

It is a true saying that memory is like the seaweed when the tide is in—but the tide ebbs ! Each frond, each thick spray, each filicaun or pulpy globe, lives lightly in the wave : the green water is full of strange rumour, of sea-magic and sea-music : the hither flow and thither surge give continuity and connection to what is fluid and dissolute. But when the ebb is far gone, and the wrack and the weed lie sickly in the light, there is only one confused inter-tangled mass. For most of us, memory is this tide-left strand : though for each there are pools, or shallows which even the ebb does not lick up in its thirsty way depthward,—narrow overshadowed channels to which we have the intangible clues. But for me there will never be any ebb-tide of memory, for one black hour, and one black day.

A wild lone place it was where we lived : among the wet hills, in a country capped by slate-black mountains. To the stranger the whole scene must have appeared grimly desolate. We, dwellers there, and those of our clan, and the hill folk about and beyond, knew that there were three fertile straths hidden among the wilderness of rock and bracken : Strathmòr, Strathgorm, and Strathglas. It was in the last we lived. All Strathglas was farmed by Archibald Campbell, and he had Strathgorm to where the Gorromalt

Water cut it off from the head of Glen Annet. The house we lived in was a long two-storied whitewashed building with two projecting flanks. There was no garden, but only a tangled potato-acre, and a large unkempt space where the kail and the bracken flourished side by side, with the kail perishing day by day under the spreading strangling roots of the usurper. The rain in Strathglas fell when most other spots were fair. It was because of the lie of the land, I have heard. The gray or black cloud would slip over Ben-Bheac or Melbeinn, and would become blue-black while one were wondering if the wind would lift it on to Maoil-Dunn, whose gloomy ridge had two thin lines of pine-trees which, from Strathglas, stood out like bristling eyebrows. But, more likely than not, it would lean slowly earthward, and sometimes lurch like a water-logged vessel, and then spill through a rising misty vapour, a dreary downfall. Oh! the rain—the rain—the rain! how weary I grew of it, there; and of the melancholy *milling* of the sheep, that used to fill the hills with a lamentation, terrible, at times, to endure.

And yet, I know, and that well, too, that I am thinking this vision of Teenabraise, as the house was called, and of its dismal vicinage, in the light of tragic memory. For there were seasons when the rains suspended, or came and went like fugitive moist shadows: days when the sunlight and the wind made the mountains wonderful, and wrought the wild barren hills nearer us to take on a softness, and a dear familiar beauty: hours, even, when, in the hawthorn-time, the cuckoo called joyously across the pine-girt scours and corries in Melbeinn, or, in summer, the swallows filled the straths as with the thridding of a myriad shuttles.

Sure enough, I was too young to be there: though, indeed, Morag was no more than a year older, being twenty: but when my mother died, and my father went upon the seas upon one of his long whaling voyages, I was glad to leave my lonely home in the Carse o' Gowrie and go to Teenabraise in Strathglas, and to be with my aunt, that was wife to Archibald mac Alasdair Ruach—Archibald Campbell, as he would be called in the lowland way—or Gorromalt as he was named by courtesy, that being the name of his sheep-farm that ran into the two straths where the Gorromalt Water surged turbulently through a narrow wilderness of wave-scooped, eddy-hollowed stones and ledges.

I suppose no place could be called lifeless that had always that sound of Gorromalt Water, that ceaseless lamentation of the sheep crying upon the hills, that hoarse croaking of the corbies which swam black in the air betwixt us and Maoil-Dunn, that mournful plaining of the lapwings as they wheeled

querulously for ever and ever and ever. But, to a young girl, the whole of this was an unspeakable weariness.

Beside the servant-folk—not one of whom was to me anything, save a girl called Maisie, who had had a child and believed it had become a “pee-wit” since its death, and that all the lapwings were the offspring of the sorrow of joy—there were only Archibald Campbell, his wife, who was my aunt, Muireall the elder daughter, and Morag. These were my folk : but Morag I loved. In appearance she and I differed wholly. My cousin Muireall and I were like each other ; both tall, dark-haired, dark-browed, with dusky dark eyes, though mine with no flame in them ; and my face too, though comely I am glad to know, without that touch of wildness which made Muireall’s so strangely attractive, and at times so beautiful. Morag, however, was scarce over medium height. Her thick wavy hair always retained the captive gold that the sunshine had spilled there ; her soft, white, delicate, wild-rose face was like none other that I have ever seen : her eyes, of that heart-lifting blue which spring mornings have, held a living light that was fair to see, and gave pain too, perhaps, because of their plaintive hillside wildness. Ah, she was a fawn, Morag ! . . . soft and sweet, swift and dainty and exquisite as a fawn in the green fern.

Gorromalt himself was a gaunt stern man. He was 6 feet 3 inches, but looked less, because of a stoop. It always seemed to me as if his eyes pulled him forward : brooding, sombre, obscure eyes, of a murky gloom. His hair was iron-gray and matted ; blacker, but matted and tangled, his thick beard, and his face was furrowed like Ben Scorain of the Corries. I never saw him in any other garb than a gray shepherd tweed with a plaid, though no Campbell in Argyll was prouder than he, and he allowed no plaid or *tunag* anywhere on his land or in his house that was not of the tartan of MacCailin Mòr. He was what, there, they called a black protestant ; for the people in that part held to the ancient faith. True enough, for sure, all the same : for his pity was black, and the milk of kindness in him must have been like Gorromalt Water in spate. Poor Aunt Elspeth ! my heart often bled for her. I do not think Archibald Campbell was unkind to his wife, but he was harsh, and his sex was like a blank wall to her, against which her shallow waters surged or crawled alike vainly. There was to her something at once terrible and Biblical in this wall of cruel strength, this steadfast independence of love or the soft ways or the faltering speech of love. There are women who hate men with an unknowing hatred, who lie by their husband night after night, year after year ; who fear and serve him ; who tend him in life and minister

to him in death ; who die, before or after, with a slaying thirst, a consuming hunger. Of these unhappy housemates, of desolate hearts and unfrequented lips, my aunt Elspeth was one.

It was on a dull Sunday afternoon that the dark hour came of which I have spoken. The rain fell among the hills. There was none on the north side of Strathglas, where Teenabraise stood solitary. The remembrance is on me keen just now : how I sat there, on the bench in front of the house, side by side with Morag, in the hot August damp, with the gnats pinging overhead, and not a sound else save the loud raucous surge of Gorromalt Water, thirty yards away. In a chair near us sat my aunt Elspeth. Beyond her, on a milking-stool, with his chin in his hands and his elbows on his knees, was her husband.

There was a gloom upon all of us. The day before, as soon as Gorromalt had returned from Castle Avale, high up in Strathmòr, we had seen the black east wind in his eyes. But he had said nothing. We guessed that his visit to the Englishman at Castle Avale, who had bought the Three Straths from Sir Ewan Campbell of Drumdoon, had proved fruitless, or at least unsatisfactory. It was at the porridge on the Sabbath morning that he told us.

" And . . . and . . . must we go, Archibald ? " asked his wife, her lips white, and the deep withered creases on her neck ashy gray.

He did not answer, but the tumbler cracked in his grip, and the splintered glass fell into his plate. The spilt milk trickled off the table on to the end of his plaid, and so to the floor. Luath, the collie, slipped forward, with her tongue lolling greedily : but her eye caught the stare of the silent man, and with a whine, and a sudden sweep of her tail, she slunk back.

It must have been nigh an hour later, that he spoke.

" No, Elspeth," he said. " There will be no going away from here, for you and me, till we go feet foremost."

Before the afternoon we had heard all : how he had gone to see this English lord who had " usurped " Drumdoon : how he had not gained an interview, and had seen no other than Mr. Laing, the East Lothian factor. He had had to accept bitter hard terms. Sir Ewan Campbell was in Madras, with his regiment, a ruined man : he would never be home again, and, if he were, would be a stranger in the Three Straths, where he and his had lived, and where his kindred had been born and had died during six centuries back. There was no hope. This Lord Greyshott wanted more rent, and he also wanted Strathgorm for a deer-run.

We were sitting, brooding on these things : in our ears the fierce words

that Gorromalt had said, with bitter curses, upon the selling of the ancient land and the betrayal of the people.

Morag was in one of her strange moods. I saw her, with her shining eyes, looking at the birch that overhung the small foaming linn beyond us, just as though she saw the soul of it, and the soul with strange speech to it.

"Where is Muireall?" she said to me suddenly, in a low voice.

"Muireall?" I repeated, "Muireall? I am not for knowing, Morag. Why do you ask? Do you want her?"

She did not answer, but went on:

"Have you seen him again?"

"Him? . . . Whom?"

"Jasper Morgan, this English lord's son."

"No."

A long silence followed. Suddenly Aunt Elspeth started. Pointing to a figure coming from the peat-moss at the hither end of Strathmòr, she asked who it was, as she could not see without her spectacles. Her husband rose, staring eagerly. He gave a grunt of disappointment when he recognized Mr. Allan Stewart, the minister of Strathmòr parish.

As the old man drew near we watched him steadfastly. I have the thought that each one of us knew he was coming to tell us evil news; though none guessed why or what, unless Morag mayhap.

When he had shaken hands, and blessed the house and those within it, Mr. Stewart sat down on the bench beside Morag and me. I am thinking he wanted not to see the eyes of Gorromalt, nor to see the white face of Aunt Elspeth.

I heard him whisper to my dear that he wanted her to go into the house for a little. But she would not. The birdeen knew that sorrow was upon us all. He saw "no" in her eyes, and forbore.

"And what is the thing that is on your lips to tell, Mr. Stewart?" said Gorromalt at last, half mockingly, half sullenly.

"And how are you for knowing that I have anything to tell, Gorromalt?"

"Sure, man, if a kite can see the shadow of a mouse a mile away, it can see a black cloud on a hill near by!"

"It's a black cloud I bring, Archibald Campbell: alas, even so. Ay, sure, it is a black cloud it is. God melt the pain of it!"

"Speak, man!"

"There is no good in wading in heather. Gorromalt, and you, Mrs.

Campbell, and you, my poor Morag, and you too, my dear, must just be brave. It is God's will."

" Speak, man, and don't be winding the shroud all the time! Let us be hearing and seeing the thing you have brought to tell us."

It was at this moment that Aunt Elspeth half rose, and abruptly reseated herself, raising the while a deprecatory feeble hand.

" Is it about Muireall? " she asked quaveringly. " She went away, to the church at Kilbrennan, at sunrise: and the water's in spate all down Strathgorm. Has she been drowned? Is it death upon Muireall? Is it Muireall? Is it Muireall? "

" She is not drowned, Mrs. Campbell."

At that she sat back, the staring dread subsiding from her eyes. But at the minister's words, Gorromalt slowly moved his face and body so that he fronted the speaker. Looking at Morag, I saw her face white as the canna. Her eyes swam in wet shadow.

" It is not death, Mrs. Campbell," the old man repeated, with a strange, uneasy, furtive look, as he put his right hand to his stiff white necktie and flutteringly fingered it.

" In the name o' God, man, speak out! "

" Ay, ay, Campbell: ay, ay, I am speaking . . . I am for the telling . . . but . . . but, see you, Gorromalt, be pitiful . . . be . . . "

Gorromalt rose. I never realized before how tall he was. There was height to him, like unto that of a son of Anak.

" Well, well, well, it is just for telling you I'll be. Sit down, Gorromalt, sit down, Mr. Campbell, sit down, man, sit down! . . . Ah, sure now, that is better. Well, well, God save us all from the sin that is in us: but . . . ah, mothering heart, it is saving you I would be if I could, but . . . but . . . "

" But what! " thundered Gorromalt, with a voice that brought Maisie and Kirsteen out of the byre, where they were milking the kye.

" He has the mercy: He only! And it is this, poor people: it is this. Muireall has come to sorrow."

" What sorrow is the sorrow that is on her? "

" The sorrow of woman."

A terrible oath leapt from Gorromalt's lips. His wife sat in a stony silence, her staring eyes filming like those of a stricken bird. Morag put her left hand to her heart.

Suddenly Archibald Campbell turned to his daughter.

" Morag, what is the name of that man whom Muireall came to know

when she and you went to that Sodom, that Goimorrah, which men call London?"

"His name was Jasper Morgan."

"Has she ever seen him since?"

"I think so."

"You *think*? What will you be *thinking* for, girl! *Think!* There will be time enough to think while the lichen grows gray on a new-fall'n rock! Out with it! Out with it! Have they met. . . . Has he been here . . . is *he* the man?"

There was silence then. A plover wheeled by, plaining aimlessly. Maisie the milk-lass ran forward, laughing.

"Ah, 'tis my wee Seorsa," she cried. "Seorsa! Seorsa! Seorsa!"

Gorromalt took a stride forward, his face shadowy with anger, his eyes ablaze.

"Get back to the kye, you wanton wench!" he shouted savagely. "Get back, or it is getting my gun I'll be and shooting that pee-wit o' yours, that lemnayan-Seorsa!"

Then, shaking still, he turned to Morag.

"Out with it, girl! What do you know?"

"I know nothing."

"It is a lie, and it is knowing it I am!"

"It is no lie. I *know* nothing. I *fear* much."

"And what do *you* know, old man?" And, with that, Archibald Campbell turned like a baited bull upon Mr. Stewart.

"She was misled, Gorromalt, she was misled, poor lass! The trouble began last May, when she went away to the south, to that evil place. And then he came after her. And it was here he came . . . and . . . and . . . ?"

"And who will that man be?"

"Morag has said it: Jasper Morgan."

"And who will Jasper Morgan be?"

"Are you not for knowing that, Archibald Campbell, and you *Gorromalt?*"

"Why, what meaning are you at?" cried the man, bewildered.

"Who will Jasper Morgan be but the son of Stanley Morgan?"

"Stanley Morgan! . . . Stanley Morgan! . . . I am no wiser. Do you wish to send me mad, man! Speak out! . . . out with it!"

"Why, Gorromalt, what is Drumdoon's name?"

"Drumdoon . . . Why, Sir Ewan . . . Ah no, for sure 'tis now that

English bread-taker, that southern land-snatcher, who calls himself Lord Greyshott. And what then? . . . will it be for . . . ?

"Aren't you for knowing his name? . . . No? . . . Campbell, man, it is *Morgan* . . . *Morgan*."

All this time Aunt Elspeth had sat silent. She now gave a low cry. Her husband turned and looked at her. "Go into the house," he said harshly; "this will not be the time for whimpering; no, by God! it is not the time for whimpering, woman."

She rose, and walked feebly over to Mr. Stewart.

"Tell me all," she said. Ah, grief to see, the pain in her old, old eyes—and no tears there at all, at all.

"When this man Jasper Morgan, that is son to Lord Greyshott, came here, it was to track a stricken doe. And now all is over. There is this note only. It is for Morag."

Gorromalt leaned forward to take it. But I had seen the wild look in Morag's eyes, and I snatched it from Mr. Stewart, and gave it to my dear, who slipped it beneath her kerchief.

Sullenly her father drew up, scowled, but said nothing.

"What else?" he asked, turning to the minister.

"She is dying."

"Dying!"

"Ay, alas, alas—*tha cèo air a bhainn*—the mist is on the hill—and she so young, too, and so fair, ay, and so sweet and——"

"That will do, Allan Stewart! That will do! . . . It is dying she is, you are for telling us! Well, well, now, and she the plaything o' Jasper Morgan, the son of the man there at Drumdoon, the man who wants to drive me away from here . . . this *new* man . . . this, this lord . . . he . . . to drive *me* away, and who have the years and years to go upon, ay, for more than six hundred weary long years——"

"Muireall is dying, Alexander Campbell. Will you be coming to see her, who is your very own?"

"And for why is she dying?"

"She could not wait."

"Wait! Wait! She could wait to shame me and mine! No, no, no, Allan Stewart, you go back to Lord Greyshott's son and his *leannan*, and say that neither Gorromalt nor any o' Gorromalt's kith or kin will have aught to do with that wastrel-lass. Let her death be on her! But it's a soon easy death it is! . . . she that slept here this very last night, and away this

morning across the moor like a loping doe, before sunburst and an hour to that!"

"She is at the 'Argyll Arms' in Kilbrennan. She met the man there. An hour after he had gone, they found her, lying on the deerskin on the hearth, and she with the death-sickness on her, and grave-white, because of the poison there beside her. And now, Archibald Campbell, it is not refusing you will be to come to your own daughter, and she with death upon her, and at the edge o' the silence!"

But with that Gorromalt uttered wild, savage words, and thrust the old man before him, and bade him begone, and cursed Muireall, and the child she bore within her, and the man who had done this thing, and the father that had brought him into the world, latest adder of an evil brood!

Scarce, however, was the minister gone, and he muttering sore, and frowning darkly at that, than Gorromalt reeled and fell.

The blood had risen to his brain, and he had had a stroke. Sure, the sudden hand of God is a terrifying thing. It was all we could do, with the help of Maisie and Kirsteen, to lift and drag him to his bed.

But an hour after that, when the danger was over, I went to seek Morag. I could find her nowhere. Maisie had seen her last. I thought that she had taken one of the horses from the stable, and ridden towards Kilbrennan: but there was no sign of this. On the long weary moor-road that led across Strathglas to Strathgorm, no one could have walked without being seen by some one at Teenabrae. And everyone there was now going to and fro, with whispers and a dreadful awe.

So I turned and went down by the linn. From there I could see three places where Morag loved to lie and dream: and at one of these I hoped to desry her.

And, sure, so it was. A glimpse I caught of her, across the spray of the linn. She was far up the brown Gorromalt Water, and crouched under a rowan-tree.

When I reached her she looked up with a start. Ah, the pain of those tear-wet May-blue eyes—deep tarns of grief to me they seemed.

In her hand she clasped the letter that I had won for her.

"Read it, dear," she said, simply.

It was in pencil, and, strangely, was in the Gaelic: strangely, for though, when with Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, Morag and I spoke the language we all loved, and that was our own, Muireall rarely did. The letter ran somewhat thus:

## "MORAG-À-GHRAIDH,

"When you get this I shall not be your living sister any more, but only a memory. I take the little one with me. You know my trouble. Forgive me. I have only one thing to ask. The man has not only betrayed me, he has lied to me about his love. He loves another woman. And that woman, Morag, is *you: and you know it.* He loved you *first.* And now, Morag, I will only tell you one thing. Do you remember the story that old Sheen McIan told us—that about the twin sisters of the mother of our mother—one that was a Morag too?

"I am thinking you do: and here—where I shall soon be lying dead, with that silence within me, where such a wild clamouring voice has been, though inaudible to other ears than mine—here, *I am thinking you will be remembering, and realizing, that story!*

"If, Morag, if you do not remember—but ah, no, we are of the old race of Siol Dharmid, *and you will remember!*

"Tell no one of this, except F.—*at the end.*

"Morag, dear sister, till we meet—

"MUIREALL."

"I do not understand, Morag-my-heart," I said. Even now, my hand shook because of these words: "*and that woman, Morag, is you: and you know it.*"

"Not now," she answered, weakly. "I will tell you to-night: but not now."

And so we went back together, she too tired and stricken for tears, and I with so many in my heart that there none for my hot eyes.

As we passed the byre we heard Kirsteen finishing a milking song, but we stopped when Maisie suddenly broke in, with her strange, wild, haunting-sweet voice.

I felt Morag's fingers tighten in their grasp on my arm as we stood silent, with averted eyes, listening to an old Gaelic ballad of "Morag of the Glen."

When Morag of the Glen was fèy  
They took her where the Green Folk stray :  
And there they left her, night and day,  
A day and night they left her, fèy.

And when they brought her home again,  
Aye of the Green Folk was she fain :  
They brought her *leannan*, Roy McLean,  
She looked at him with proud disdain.

"For I have killed a man," she said,  
"A better man than you to wed :  
I slew him when he claspt my head,  
And now he sleepeth with the dead.

"And did you see that little wren ?  
My sister dear it was, flew then !  
That skull her home, that eye her den,  
Her song is, *Morag o' the Glen* !"

"For when she went I did not go,  
But washed my hands in blood-red woe :  
O wren, trill out your sweet song's flow,  
*Morag is white as the driven snow !*"

## II

That night the wind had a dreadful soughing in its voice—a lamentable voice that came along the rain-wet face of the hills, with a prolonged moaning and sobbing.

Down in the big room, that was kitchen and sitting-room in one, where Gorromalt sat—for he had risen from his bed, for all that he was so weak and giddy—there was semi-darkness. His wife had pleaded for the oil-lamp, because the shadows within and the wild wind without—though, I am thinking, most the shadows within her brain—filled her with dread ; but he would not have it, no, not a candle even. The peats glowed, red-hot ; above them the small narrow pine-logs crackled in a scarlet and yellow blaze.

Hour after hour went by in silence. There were but the three of us. Morag ? Ah, did Gorromalt think she would stay at Teenabrac, and Muireall near by, and in the clutch of the death-frost, and she, her sister dear, not go to her ? He had put the ban upon us, soon as the blood was out of his brain, and he could half rise from his pillow. No one was to go to see her, no one was to send word to her, no one was to speak of her.

At that, Aunt Elspeth had fallen on her knees beside the bed, and prayed to him to show pity. The tears rained upon the relentless heavy hand she held and kissed. "At the least," she moaned, "at the least, let some one go to her, Archibald ; at least a word, only one word !"

"Not a word, woman, not a word. She has sinned, but that's the way o' women o' that kind. Let her be. The wind'll blow her soul against God's heavy hand, this very night o' the nights. It's not for you nor for me. But I'm saying this, I am : curse her, ay, curse her again and again, for that she let

the son of the stranger, the son of our enemy, who would drive us out of the home we have, the home of our fathers, ay, back to the time when no English foot ever trod the heather of Argyll, that she would let him do her this shame and disgrace, her and me, an' you too, ay, and all of our blood, and the Strath too, for that—ay, by God, and the clan, the whole clan !”

But though Gorromalt's word was law there, there was one who had the tide coming in at one ear and going out at the other. As soon as the rainy gloom deepened into dark, she slipped from the house ; I wanted to go with her, but she whispered to me to stay. It was well I did. I was able to keep back from him, all night, the story of Morag's going. He thought she was in her bed. So bitter on the man was his wrath, that, ill as he was, he would have risen, and ridden or driven over to Kilbrennan, had he known Morag was gone there.

Angus Macallum, Gorromalt's chief man, was with the horses in the stable. He tried to prevent Morag taking out Gealcas, the mare, she that went faster and surer than any there. He even put hand upon the lass, and said a rough word. But she laughed, I am told ; and I am thinking that whoever heard Morag laugh, when she was “strange,” for all that she was so white and soft, she with her hair o' sunlight, and the blue, blue eyes o' her!—whoever heard *that* would not be for standing in her way.

So Angus had stood back, sullenly giving no help, but no longer daring to interfere. She mounted Gealcas, and rode away into the dark rainy night where the wind went louping to and fro among the crags on the braes as though it were mad with fear or pain, and complaining wild, wild—the lamentable cry of the hills.

Hour after hour we sat there. We could hear the roaring sound of Gorromalt Water as it whirled itself over the linn. The stream was in spate, and would be boiling black, with livid clots of foam flung here and there on the dripping heather overhanging the torrent. The wind's endless sough came into the house, and wailed in the keyholes and the chinks. Rory, the blind collie, lay on a mat near the door, and the long hair of his felt was blown upward, and this way and that, by the ground-draught.

Once or twice Aunt Elspeth rose, and stirred the porridge that seethed and bubbled in the pot. Her husband took no notice. He was in a daze, and sat in his flanked leathern armchair, with his arms laid along the sides, and his down-clasping hands catching the red gleam of the peats, and his face, white and set, like that of a dead man looking out of a grated prison.

Once or twice, an hour or so before, when she had begun to croon some

hymn, he had harshly checked her. But now when she hummed, and at last openly sang the Gaelic version of "The Lord's my Shepherd," he paid no heed. He was not hearing that, or anything she did. I could make nothing of the cold bitterness that was on his face. He brooded, I doubt not, upon doom for the man, and the son of the man, who had wrought him this evil.

His wife saw this, and so had her will at last. She took down the great Gaelic Bible, and read Christ's words about little children. The rain slashed against the window-panes. Beyond, the wind moaned, and souged, and moaned. From the kennel behind the byre a mournful howling rose and fell ; but Gorromalt did not stir.

Aunt Elspeth looked at me despairingly. Poor old woman ; ah, the misery and pain of it, the weariness and long pain of starved hearts and barren hope. Suddenly an idea came to her. She rose again, and went over to the fire. Twice she passed in front of her husband. He made no sign.

"He hates those things," she muttered to me, her eyes wet with pain, and with something of shame, too, for admitting that she believed in incantations. And why not, poor old woman ? Sure there are stranger things than *sean* or *rosad*, charm or spell ; and who can say that the secret old wisdom is mere foam o' thought. "He hates those things, but I am for saving my poor lass if I can. I will be saying that old ancient *colas*, that is called the *Eolas an-t-Snaithnean*."

"What is that, Aunt Elspeth? What are the three threads?"

"That *colas* killed the mother of my mother, dearie ; she that was a woman out of the isle of Benbecula."

"Killed her!" I repeated, awe-struck.

"Ay ; 'tis a charm for the doing away of bewitchment, and sure it is my poor Muirecall who has been bewitched. But my mother's mother used the *colas* for the taking away of a curse upon a cow that would not give milk. She was saying the incantation for the third time, and winding the triple thread round the beast's tail, when in a moment all the ill that was in the cow came forth and settled upon her, so that she went back to her house quaking and sick with the blight, and died of it next day, because there was no one to take it from her in turn by that or any other *colas*."

I listened in silence. The thing seemed terrible to me then ; no, no, not then only, but now, too, whenever I think of it.

"Say it then, Aunt Elspeth," I whispered ; "say it, in the name of the Holy Three."

With that she went on her knees, and leaned against her chair, though with her face towards her husband, because of the fear that was ever in her. Then in a low voice, choked with sobs, she said this *olas*, after she had first uttered the holy words of the "Pater Noster":

"Chi suil thu,  
Labhráidh bial thu;  
Smuainichidh cridhe thu.  
Tha Fear an righthighe  
Gad' choisreagadh.

An t-Athair, am Mac, 's an Spioraid Naomh.

"Ceathrar a rinn do chron—  
Fear agus bean,  
Gille agus nighean.  
Co tha gu sin a thilleadh?

Tri Fearsannan na Trianaid ro-naomh.  
An t-Athair, am Mac, 's an Spioraid Naomh.

"Tha mi 'cur fianuis gu Moire, agus gu Brighde,  
Ma 's e duine rinn do chron,

Le droch run,  
No le droch shuil,  
No le droch chridhe.

Gu'm bi thusa, Muireall gu math  
Ki linn so a chur mu'n cuairt ort.  
An ainm an Athar, a' Mhic, 's an Spioraid Naomh!

"An eye will see you,  
Tongue will speak of you  
Heart will think of you  
The Man of Heaven  
    Blesses you—  
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

"Four caused your hurt—  
Man and Wife,  
Young man, and maiden.  
Who is to frustrate that?

The three Persons of the most Holy Trinity,  
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

"I call the Virgin Mary and St. Bridget to witness  
That if your hurt was caused by man,  
    Through ill will,  
    Or the evil eye,  
    Or a wicked heart.

That you, Muireall, my daughter, may be whole—  
And this in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost!"

Just as she finished, and as she was lingering on the line, "*Ga'm bi thusa, Muireall, gu math,*" Rory, the blind collie, rose, whimpered, and stood with snarling jaws.

Strangely enough, Gorromalt heard this, though his ears had been deaf to all else, or so it seemed, at least.

"Down, Rory! down, beast!" he exclaimed, in a voice strangely shrill and weak.

But the dog would not be still. His sullen fear grew worse. Suddenly he sidled and lay on his belly, now snarling, now howling, his blind eyes distended, his nostrils quivering, his flanks quaking. My uncle rose and stared at the dog.

"What ails the beast?" he asked angrily, looking now at Rory, now at us. "Has any one come in? Has any one been at the door?"

"No one, Archibald."

"What have you been doing, Elspeth?"

"Nothing."

"Woman, I heard your voice droning at your prayers. Ah, I see—you have been at some of your *sians* and *colais* again. Sure, now, one would be thinking you would have less foolishness, and you with the grayness upon your years. What *colas* did she say, lass?"

I told him. "Aw, silly woman that she is, the *colas an t-Snaithnean!* madness and folly . . . Where is Morag?"

"In bed." I said this with truth in my eyes. God's forgiveness for that good lie!

"And it's time you were there also, and you too, Elspeth. Come now, no more of this foolishness. We have nothing to wait for. Why are we waiting here?"

At that moment Rory became worse than ever. I thought the poor blind beast would take some dreadful fit. Foam was on his jaws; his hair bristled. He had sidled forward, and crouched low. We saw him look again and again towards the blank space to his right, as if, blind though he was, he saw some one there, some one that gave him fear, but no longer a fierce terror. Nay, more than once we saw him swish his tail, and sniff as though longingly. But when he turned his head towards the door his sullen fury grew, and terror shook upon every limb. It was now that Gorromalt was speaking.

Suddenly the dog made a leap forward—a terrible bristling wolf he seemed to me, though no wolf had I ever seen, or imagined any more fearsome, than Rory, now.

He dashed himself against the door, snarling and mouthing, with his snout nosing the narrow slit at the bottom.

Aunt Elspeth and I shook with fear. My uncle was death-white, but stood strangely brooding. He had his right elbow upon his breast, and supported it with his left arm, while with his right hand he plucked at his beard.

"For sure," he said at last, with an effort to seem at ease; "for sure the dog is fey with his age and his blindness." Then, more slowly still, "and if that were not so, it might look as though he had the fear on him, because of someone who strove to come in."

"It is Muireall," I whispered, scarce above my breath.

"No," said Aunt Elspeth, and the voice of her now was as though it had come out of the granite all about us, cold and hard as that. "No! Muireall is already in the room."

We both turned and looked at her. She sat quite still, on the chair betwixt the fire and the table. Her face was rigid, ghastly, but her eyes were large and wild.

A look first of fear, then almost of tenderness, came into her husband's face.

"Hush, Elspeth," he said, "that is foolishness."

"It is not foolishness, Archibald," she resumed in the same hard, unemotional voice, but with a terrible intensity. "Man, man, because ye are blind, is there no sight for those who can see?"

"There is no one here but ourselves."

But now Aunt Elspeth half rose, with supplicating arms:

"Muireall! Muireall! Muireall! O Muirnean, muirnean!"

I saw Archibald Campbell shaking as though he were a child and no strong man. "Will you be telling us this, Elspeth," he began in a hoarse voice—"will you be telling me this: if Muireall is in the room, beyond Rory there, who will be at the door? Who is trying to come in at the door?"

"It's a man. I do not know the man. It is a man. It is Death, maybe. I do not know the man. O Muirnean, mo muirnean!"

But now the great gaunt black dog—terrible in his seeing blindness he was to me—began again his savage snarling, his bristling insensate fury. He had ceased a moment while our voices filled the room, and had sidled a little way towards the place where Aunt Elspeth saw Muireall, whining low as he did so, and swishing his tail furtively along the whitewashed flagstones.

I know not what awful thing would have happened. It seemed to me that Death was coming to all of us.

But at that moment we all heard the sound of a galloping horse. There was a lull in the wind, and the rain lashed no more like a streaming whistling whip. Even Rory crouched silent, his nostrils quivering, his curled snout showing his fangs.

Gorromalt stood, listening intently.

"By the living God," he exclaimed suddenly, his eyes like a goaded bull's—"I know that horse. Only one horse runs like that at the gallop. 'Tis the grey stallion I sold three months ago to the man at Drumdoon—ay, ay, for the son of the man at Drumdoon! A horse to ride for the shooting—a good horse for the hills—that was what he wanted! Ay, ay, by God, a horse for the son of the man at Drumdoon! It's the grey stallion: no other horse in the Straths runs like that—d'ye hear? d'ye hear? Elspeth woman, is there hearing upon you for that? Hey, *lot-a-lot, lot-a-lot, lot-dot-dot-dot-dot, lot-a-lot, lot-dot-dot-dot!* I tell you, woman, it's the grey stallion I sold to Drumdoon: it's that and no other! Ay, by the Sorrow, it's Drumdoon's son that will be riding here!"

By this time the horse was close by. We heard his hoofs clang above the flagstones round the well at the side of the house. Then there was a noise as of scattered stones, and a long scraping sound: then silence.

Gorromalt turned and put his hand to the door. There was murder in his eyes, for all the smile, a grim terrible smile, that had come to his lips.

Aunt Elspeth rose and ran to him, holding him back. The door shook. Rory the hound tore at the splinters at the base of the door, his fell again bristling, his snarling savagery horrible to hear. The pine-logs had fallen into a smouldering ash. The room was full of gloom, though the red sullen eye of the peat-glow stared through the semi-darkness.

"Don't be opening the door! Don't be opening the door!" she cried, in a thin screaming voice.

"What for no, woman? Let me go! Hell upon this dog—out o' the way, Rory—get back! Down wi' ye!"

"No, no, Archibald! Wait! Wait!"

Then a strange thing happened.

Rory ceased, sullenly listened, and then retreated, but no longer snarling and bristling.

Gorromalt suddenly staggered.

"Who touched me just now?" he asked in a hoarse whisper.  
No one answered.

"Who touched me just now? Who passed? Who slid past me?" His voice rose almost to a scream.

Then, shaking off his wife, he swung the door open.

There was no one there. Outside could be heard a strange sniffling and whimpering. It was the grey stallion.

Gorromalt strode across the threshold. I had time only to prevent Aunt Elspeth from falling against the lintel in a corner, but in a moment's interval I saw that the stallion was riderless.

"Archibald!" wailed his wife faintly out of her weakness. "Archibald, come back! Come back!"

But there was no need to call. Archibald Campbell was not the man to fly in the face of God. He knew that no mortal rider rode that horse to its death that night. Even before he closed the door we heard the rapid, sliding, catching gallop. The horse had gone: rider or riderless I know not.

He was ashy-grey. Suddenly he had grown quite still. He lifted his wife, and helped her to her own big leathern armchair at the other side of the ingle.

"Light the lamp, lass," he said to me, in a hushed strange voice. Then he stooped, and threw some small pine-logs on the peats, and stirred the blaze till it caught the dry splintered edges.

Rory, poor blind beast, came wearily and with a low whine to his side, and then lay down before the warm blaze.

"Bring the Book," he said to me.

I brought the great leather-bound Gaelic Bible, and laid it on his knees.

He placed his hand in it, and opened at random.

"With Himself be the word," he said.

"Is it Peace?" asked Aunt Elspeth in a tremulous whisper.

"It is Peace," he answered, his voice gentle, his face stern as a graven rock. And what he read was this, where his eye chanced upon as he opened at the place where is the Book of the Vision of Nahum the Elkoshite:

"What do ye imagine against the Lord? He will make a full end."

After that there was a silence. Then he rose, and told me to go and lie down and sleep: for, on the morrow, after dawn, I was to go with him to where Muireall was.

I saw Aunt Elspeth rise and put her arms about him. They had peace. I went to my room, but after a brief while returned, and sat, in the quietness there, by the glowing peats, till dawn.

The greyness came at last; with it, the rain ceased. The wind still soughed and wailed among the corries and upon the rocky braes; with low moans sighing along the flanks of the near hills, and above the stony water-course where the Gorromalt surged with swirling foam and loud and louder tumult.

My eyes had closed in my weariness, when I heard Rory give a low growl, followed by a contented whinper. Almost at the same moment the door opened. I looked up, startled.

It was Morag.

She was so white, it is scarce to be wondered at that I took her at first for a wraith. Then I saw how drenched she was, chilled to the bone too. She did not speak as I led her in, and made her stand before the fire, while I took off her soaked dress and shoes. In silence she made all the necessary changes, and in silence drank the tea I brewed for her.

"Come to my room with me," she whispered, as with quiet feet we crossed the stone flags and went up the wooden stair that led to her room.

When she was in bed she bade me put out the light and lie down beside her. Still silent, we lay there in the darkness, for at that side of the house the hill-gloom prevailed, and moreover the blind was down-drawn. I thought the weary moaning of the wind would make my very heart sob.

Then, suddenly, Morag put her arms about me, and the tears streamed warm about my neck.

"Hush, Morag-aghray, hush, mo-rùn," I whispered in her ear. "Tell me what it is, dear! Tell me what it is!"

"Oh, and I loved him so! I loved him."

"I know it, dear; I knew it all along."

I thought her sobs would never cease till her heart was broken, so I questioned her again.

"Yes," she said, gaspingly, "yes, I loved him when Muireall and I were in the South together. I met him a month or more before ever she saw him. He loved me, and I promised to marry him; but I would not go away with him, as he wished: for he said his father would never agree. And then he was angry, and we quarrelled. And I—Oh! I was glad too, for I did not wish to marry an Englishman—or to live in a dreary city; but . . . but . . . and

then he and Muireall met, and he gave all his thought to her ; and she, her love to him."

" And now ? "

" Now ? . . . Now Muireall is dead."

" Dead ? O Morag, *dead* ? O poor Muireall that we loved so ! But did you see her ? was she alive when you reached her ? "

" No ; but she was alone. And now, listen. Here is a thing I have to tell you. When Ealasaid Cameron, that was my mother's mother, was a girl, she had a cruel sorrow. She had two sisters whom she loved with all her heart. They were twins, Silis and Morag. One day an English officer at Fort William took Silis away with him as his wife ; but when her child was heavy within her she discovered that she was no wife, for the man was already wedded to a woman in the south. She left him that night. It was bitter weather, and midwinter. She reached home through a wild snowdrift. It killed her ; but before she died she said to Morag, ' He has killed me and the child.' And Morag understood. So it was that before any wind of spring blew upon that snow, the man was dead."

When Morag stopped here, and said no more, I did not at first realize what she meant to tell me. Then it flashed upon me.

" O Morag, Morag !" I exclaimed, terrified. " But, Morag, you do not . . . you will not . . . "

" *Will* not !" she repeated, with a strange catch in her voice.

" Listen," she resumed suddenly after a long, strained silence. " While I lay beside my darling Muireall, weeping and moaning over her, and she so fair, with such silence where the laughter had always been, I heard the door open. I looked up. It was Jasper Morgan.

" You are too late,' I said. I stared at the man who had brought her, and me, this sorrow. There was no light about him at all, as I had always thought. He was only a man as other men are, but with a cold selfish heart and loveless eyes.

" She sent for me to come back to her,' he answered, though I saw his face grow ashy-grey as he looked at Muireall and saw that she was dead.

" She is dead, Jasper Morgan.'

" *Dead* . . . *Dead* ? '

" Ay, dead. It is upon you, her death. Her you have slain, as though with your sword that you carry : her, and the child she bore within her, and that was yours.'

" At that he bit his lip till the blood came.

"It is a lie," he cried. "It is a lie, Morag. If she said that thing, she lied."

"I laughed.

"Why do you laugh, Morag?" he asked, in a swift anger.

"Once more I laughed.

"Why do you laugh like that, girl?"

"But I did not answer. 'Come,' I said, 'come with me. I have something to say to you. You can do no good here now. She has taken poison, because of the shame and the sorrow.'

"Poison!" he cried, in horror; and also, I could see in the poor cowardly mind of him, in a sudden sick fear.

"But when I rose to leave the room he made ready to follow me. I kissed Muireall for the last time. The man approached, as though to do likewise. I lifted my riding-whip. He bowed his head, with a deep flush on his face, and came out behind me.

"I told the inn-folk that my father would be over in the morning. Then I rode slowly away. Jasper Morgan followed on his horse, a grey stallion that Muireall and I had often ridden, for he was from Teenabraise farm.

"When we left the village it was into a deep darkness. The rain and the wind made the way almost impassable at times. But at last we came to the ford. The water was in spate, and the rushing sound terrified my horse. I dismounted, and fastened Gealcas to a tree. The man did the same.

"What is it, Morag?" he asked in a quiet steady voice—"Death?"

"Yes," I said. "Death."

"Then he suddenly fell forward, and snatched my hand, and begged me to forgive him, swearing that he had loved me and me only, and imploring me to believe him, to love him, to . . . Ah, the *hound*!"

"But all I said was this:

"Jasper Morgan, soon or late I would kill you, because of this cruel wrong you did to her. But there is one way: best for *her* . . . best for *me* . . . best for *you*!"

"What is that?" he said hoarsely, though I think he knew now. The roar of the Gorromalt Water filled the night.

"There is one way. It is the only way . . . *Go!*"

"He gave a deep quavering sigh. Then without a word he turned, and walked straight into the darkness."

Morag paused here. Then, in answer to my frightened whisper, added simply :

"They will find his body in the shallows, down by Drumdoon. The spate will carry it there."

After that we lay in silence. The rain had begun to fall again, and slid with a soft stealthy sound athwart the window. A dull light grew indiscernibly into the room. Then we heard someone move downstairs. In the yard, Angus, the stableman, began to pump water. A cow lowed, and the clattering of hens was audible.

I moved gently from Morag's side. As I rose, Maisie passed beneath the window on her way to the byre. As her wont was, poor wild wildered lass, she was singing fitfully. It was the same ballad again. But we heard a single verse only.

"For I have killed a man," she said,  
"A better man than you to wed :  
I slew him when he clasped my head,  
And now he sleepeth with the dead."

Then the voice was lost in the byre, and in the sweet familiar lowing of the kine. The new day was come.

FIONA MACLEOD.



C



## THE UNLOVED



HESE are the women whom no man has loved.  
Year after year, day after day has moved  
These hearts with many longings, and with tears,  
And with content ; they have received the years  
With empty hands, expecting no good thing ;  
Life has passed by their doors, not entering.

In solitude, and without vain desire,  
They have warmed themselves beside a lonely fire ;  
And, without scorn, beheld as in a glass  
The blown and painted leaves of Beauty pass.  
Their souls have been made fragrant with the spice  
Of costly virtues lit for sacrifice ;  
They have accepted Life, the unpaid debt,  
And looked for no vain day of reckoning.

Yet

They too in certain windless summer hours  
Have felt the stir of dreams, and dreamed the powers  
And the exemptions and the miracles  
And the cruelty of Beauty. Citadels  
Of many-walled and deeply-moated hearts  
Have suddenly surrendered to the arts  
Of so compelling magic ; entering,  
They have esteemed it but a little thing  
To have won so great a conquest ; and with haste  
They have cast down, and utterly laid waste,  
Tower upon tower, and sapped their roots with flame ;  
And passed on that eternity of shame  
Which is the way of Beauty on the earth.  
And they have shaken laughter from its mirth,  
To be a sound of trumpets and of horns  
Crying the battle-cry of those red morns  
Against a sky of triumph.

On some nights  
Of delicate Springtide, when the hesitant lights  
Began to fade, and glimmer, and grow warm,  
And all the softening air is quick with storm,  
And the ardours of the young year, entering in,  
Flush the gray earth with buds ; when trees begin  
To feel a trouble mounting from their roots,  
And all their green life blossoming into shoots,  
They too, in some obscure, unblossoming strife,  
Have felt the stirring of the sap of life.  
And they have wept, with bowed heads ; in the street  
They hear the twittering of little feet,  
The rocking of the cradles in their hearts.

This is a mood, and, as a mood, departs  
With the dried tears ; and they resume the tale  
Of the dropt stitches : these must never fail  
For a dream's sake ; nor, for a memory,  
The telling of a patient rosary.

ARTHUR SYMONS.





## CASANOVA



HERE are few more delightful books in the world than Casanova's "Mémoires."—That is a statement I have long vainly sought to see in print. It is true, one learns casually that various eminent literary personages have cherished a high regard for this autobiography, have even considered it the ideal autobiography, that Wendell Holmes was once heard defending Casanova, that Thackeray found him good enough to borrow from. But these eminent personages—and how many more we shall never know—locked up the secret of their admiration for this book in some remote casket of their breasts; they never confided it to the cynical world. Every properly constituted "man of letters" has always recognized that any public allusion to Casanova should begin and end with lofty moral reprobation of his unspeakable turpitude.

No doubt whatever—and this apart from the question as to whether his autobiography should be counted as moral or immoral literature—Casanova delivered himself bound into the hands of the moralists. He may or may not have recognized this. He wrote at the end of a long and full life, in the friendly seclusion of a lonely Bohemian castle, when all things had become indifferent to him save the vivid memories of the past. It mattered little to him that the whirlwind of 1789 had just swept away the eighteenth century together with the moral maxims that passed current in that century. We have to accept this cardinal fact at the outset when we approach Casanova. And if a dweller in the highly respectable nineteenth century may be forgiven a first exclamation of horror at Casanova's wickedness, he has wofully failed in critical insight if he allows that exclamation to be his last word concerning these "Mémoires."

There are at least three points of view from which Casanova's "Mémoires" are of deep and permanent interest. In the first place they constitute a document of immense psychological value as the full and veracious presentation of a certain human type in its most complete development. In the second place, as a mere story of adventure and without reference to their veracity, the

"Mémoires" have never been surpassed, and only equalled by books written on a much smaller scale. In the third place, we here possess an unrivalled picture of the eighteenth century in its most characteristic aspects throughout Europe.

Casanova lived in an age which seems to have been favourable for the spontaneous revelation of human nature in literature. It was not only the age in which the novel reached full development ; it was the age of diaries and autobiographies. Pepys, indeed, though he died in the eighteenth century, had written his diary long before ; but during Casanova's lifetime Boswell was writing that biography which is so wonderful largely because it is so nearly an autobiography. Casanova's communicative countryman, Gozzi, was also his contemporary. Rousseau's "Confessions" only preceded Casanova's "Mémoires" by a few years, and a little later Restif de la Bretonne wrote "Monsieur Nicolas," and Madame Roland her "Mémoires Particulières." All these autobiographies are very unlike Casanova's. They mostly seem to present the *coulisses* of otherwise eminent and respectable lives. The highly-placed government official of versatile intellectual tastes exhibits himself as a monster of petty weaknesses ; the eloquent apostle of the return to Nature uncovers the corroding morbidities we should else never suspect ; the philanthropic pioneer in social reform exposes himself in a state of almost maniacal eroticism ; the austere heroine who was nourished on Plutarch confesses that she is the victim of unhappy passion. We are conscious of no such discords in Casanova's autobiography. Partly it may be because we have no other picture of Casanova before our eyes. Moreover, he had no conventional ideals to fall short of ; he was an adventurer from the first. "I am proud because I am nothing," he used to say. He could not boast of his birth ; he never held high position ; for the greatest part of his active career he was an exile ; at every moment of his life he was forced to rely on his own real and personal qualities. But the chief reason why we feel no disturbing discord in Casanova's "Mémoires" lies in the admirable skill with which he has therein exploited his unquestionable sincerity. He is a consummate master in the dignified narration of undignified experiences. Fortified, it is true, by a confessed and excessive *amour propre*, he never loses his fine sense of equilibrium, his power of presenting his own personality broadly and harmoniously. He has done a few dubious things in his time, he seems to say, and now and again found himself in positions that were ridiculous enough ; but as he looks back he feels that the like may have happened to any of us. He views these things with complete human tolerance as a necessary part of the whole picture, which it would be idle to slur over

or apologize for. He records them simply, not without a sense of humour, but with no undue sense of shame. In his heart, perhaps, he is confident that he has given the world one of its greatest books, and that posterity will require of him no such rhetorical justification as Rousseau placed at the head of his "Confessions."

In the preface to the "Mémoires," Casanova is sufficiently frank. He has not scrupled, he tells us, to defraud fools and rascals, "when necessary," and he has never regretted it. But such incidents have been but episodes in his life. He is not a sensualist, he says, for he has never neglected his duty—"when I had any"—for the allurements of sense; yet the main business of his life has ever been in the world of sense; "there is none of greater importance." "I have always loved women and have done my best to make them love me. I have also delighted in good cheer, and I have passionately followed whatever has excited my curiosity." Now in old age he reviews the joys of his life. He has learnt to be content with one meal a day, in spite of a sound digestion, but he recalls the dishes that delighted him: Neapolitan macaroni, Spanish olla podrida, Newfoundland cod, high-flavoured game, old cheese (has he not collected material for a "Dictionnaire des Fromages?"), and without any consciousness of abrupt transition he passes on to speak of the sweetness of the women he had loved. Then with a smile of pity he turns on those who call such tastes depraved, the poor insensate fools who think the Almighty is only able to enjoy our sorrow and abstinence, and bestows upon us for nought the gift of self-respect, the love of praise, the desire to excel, energy, strength, courage, and the power to kill ourselves when we will. And with the strain of Stoicism which is ever present to give fibre to his Epicureanism, he quotes the maxim which might well belong to both philosophies: "Nemo laeditur nisi a seipso."

The fact that Casanova was on one side a Venetian must count for something in any attempt to explain him. Not indeed that Venice ever produced more than one Casanova; I would imply no such disrespect to Venice—or to Casanova; but the racial soil was favourable to such a personality. The Venetians are a branch of a northern people—allied by race as well as in art and commerce to the full-bodied, fair-haired people of the Rhine valley—who long since settled by the southern sea to grow mellow in the sunshine. It suited them well, for they expanded into one of the finest races in Christendom, and certainly one of the least Christian races there, a solid, well-tempered race, self-controlled and self-respecting. The Venetian genius is the genius of sensuous enjoyment, of tolerant humanity, of unashamed earthliness. What-

ever was sane and stable in Casanova, and his instinctive distaste for the morbid and perverse, he owes to his Venetian maternal ancestry. If it is true that he was not a mere sensualist, it was by no means because of his devotion to duty—"when I had any,"—but because the genuine sensualist is only alive on the passive side of his nature, and in Casanova's nervous system the development of the sensory fibres is compensated and held in balance by the equal vigour of the motor fibres ; what he is quick to enjoy he is strong and alert to achieve. Thus he lived the full and varied life that he created for himself at his own good pleasure out of nothing, by the sole power of his own magnificent wits. And now the self-sufficing Venetian sits down to survey his work and finds that it is good. It has not always been found so since. A "self-made" man, if ever there was one, Casanova is not beloved of those who worship self-help. The record of his life will easily outlive the largest fortune ever made in any counting house, but the life itself remains what we call a "wasted" life. Thrift, prudence, modesty, scrupulous integrity, strict attention to business—it is useless to come to Casanova for any of these virtues. They were not even in his blood ; he was only half Venetian.

The Casanova family was originally Spanish. The first Casanova on record was a certain Don Jacobo, of illegitimate birth, who in the middle of the fifteenth century became secretary to King Alfonso. He fell in love with Doña Anna Palafox, who was destined to the religious life, and the day after she had pronounced her vows he carried her off from her convent to Rome, where he finally obtained the forgiveness and benediction of the Pope. The son of this union, Don Juan, killed an officer of the King of Naples, fled from Rome, and sought fortune with Columbus, dying on the voyage. Don Juan's son, Marcantonio, secretary to a cardinal, was noted in his day as an epigrammatic poet ; but his satire was too keen, and he also had to flee from Rome. His son became a colonel, but, unlike his forefathers, he died peacefully, in extreme old age, in France. In this soldier's grandson, Casanova's father, the adventurous impulsiveness of the family again came out ; he ran away from home at nineteen with a young actress, and himself became an actor ; subsequently he left the actress and then fell in love with a young Venetian beauty of sixteen, Zanetta Farusi, a shoemaker's daughter. But a mere actor could find no favour in a respectable family; so the young couple ran away and were married ; the hero of these "*Mémoires*," born on the 2nd April, 1725, was their first-born. There is probably no reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of this family history, but if one desired to invent an ancestry for Casanova one could scarcely better it.

His race helps to account for Casanova, but the real explanation of the

man can only lie in his own congenital organization. That he was a radically abnormal person is fairly clear. Not that he was morbid either in body or mind. On the contrary, he was a man of fine presence, of abounding health—always looking ten years younger than his age—of the most robust appetites, a great eater, who delighted to see others, especially women, eat heartily also, a man of indubitable sexual vigour; however great the demands he made upon his physical energy it seldom failed to respond, and his capacity for rest was equally great; he could sleep nineteen hours at a stretch. His mental health was not less sound. The most punctilious alienist, with this frank and copious history before him, could not commit Casanova to an asylum. Whatever offences against social codes he may have committed, Casanova can scarcely be said to have sinned against natural laws. He was only abnormal because so natural a person within the gates of civilization is necessarily abnormal and at war with his environment. Far from being the victim of morbidities and perversities, Casanova presents to us the natural man *in excelsis*. He was a man for whom the external world existed, and who reacted to all the stimuli it presents to the healthy normal organism. His intelligence was immensely keen and alert, his resourcefulness, his sagacious audacity, his presence of mind, were all of the first order. He was equally swift to feel, to conceive, and to act. His mental organization was thus singularly harmonious, and hence his success in gratifying his eager and immense appetite for the world, an appetite unsatiated and insatiable even to the last, or he would have found no pleasure in writing these "Mémoires." Casanova has been described as a psychological type of instability. That is to view him superficially. A man who adapts himself so readily and so effectively to any change in his environment or in his desires only exhibits the instability which marks the most intensely vital protoplasm. The energy and ability which Casanova displayed in gratifying his instincts would have sufficed to make a reputation of the first importance in any department, as a popular statesman, a great judge, a merchant prince, and enabled him to die worn out by the monotonous and feverish toil of the senate, the court, or the counting-house. Casanova chose to *live*. A crude and barbarous choice, it seems to us with our hereditary instinct to spend our lives in wasting the reasons for living. But it is certain that Casanova never repented his choice. Assuredly we need not, for few judges, statesmen, or merchants have ever left for the joy of humanity any legacy of their toil equal to these "Mémoires."

But such swift energy of vital action and reaction, such ardour of deed in keeping pace with desire, are in themselves scarcely normal. Casanova's

abnormality is suggested by the tendency to abnormality which we find in his family. We have seen what men his ancestors were; in reading the "Mémoires" we gather incidentally that one of his brothers had married, though impotent, and another brother is described as a somewhat feeble-minded ne'er-do-well. All the physical and mental potency of the family was intensely concentrated in Casanova. Yet he himself in early childhood seems to have been little better than an idiot either in body or mind. He could recall nothing that happened before he was eight years of age. He was not expected to live; he suffered from prolonged haemorrhages from the nose, and the vision of blood was his earliest memory. He habitually kept his mouth open, and his face was stupid. "Thickness of the blood," said the physicians of those days; it seems probable that he suffered from growths in the nose which, as we now know, produce such physical and mental inferiority as Casanova describes. The cure was spontaneous. He was taken to Padua, and shortly afterwards began to develop wonderfully both in stature and intelligence. In after years he had little cause to complain either of health or intellect. It is notable, however, that when, still a boy, he commenced his ecclesiastical training (against his wishes, for he had chosen to be a doctor) he failed miserably as a preacher, and broke down in the pulpit; thus the Church lost a strange ornament. Moreover, with all his swift sensation and alert response, there was in Casanova an anomalous dullness of moral sensibility. The insults to Holy Religion which seem to have brought him to that prison from which he effected his marvellous escape, were scarcely the serious protests of a convinced heretic; his deliberate trickery of Mme. d'Urfé was not only criminal but cruel. His sense of the bonds of society was always somewhat veiled, and although the veil never became thick, and might be called the natural result of an adventurer's life, it might also, perhaps, be said that it was a certain degree of what is sometimes called moral imbecility that made Casanova an adventurer. But while we thus have to recognize that he was a man of dulled moral sensibility, we must also recognize that he possessed a vigorous moral consciousness of his own, or we misunderstand him altogether. The point to be remembered is that the threshold of his moral sensibility was not easily reached. There are some people whose tactile sensibility is so obtuse that it requires a very wide separation of the asthesiometer to get the right response. It was so with Casanova's moral sensitiveness. But, once aroused, his conscience responded energetically enough. It seems doubtful whether, from his own point of view, he ever fell into grave sin, and therefore he is happily free from remorse. No great credit is thus due to him; the same

psychological characteristic is familiar in all criminals. It is not difficult to avoid plucking the apples of shame when so singularly few grow on your tree.

Casanova's moral sensibility and its limits come out, where a man's moral sensibility will come out, in his relations with women. As in the life of the natural man generally, women played a large part in Casanova's life. He was always in love. We may use the word "love" here in no euphemistic sense, for although Casanova's passions grew and ripened with the rapidity born of long experience in these matters, so great is the fresh vitality of the man that there is even a virginal bloom on every new ardour. He was as far removed from the cold-blooded libertine typified in Laclos's *Valmont*, unscrupulously using women as the instruments of his own lust, as from Laura's sonneteering lover. He had fully grasped what the latest writer on the scientific psychology of sex calls the secondary law of courting, namely, the development in the male of an imaginative attentiveness to the psychical and bodily states of the female, in place of an exclusive attentiveness to his own gratification. It is not impossible that in these matters Casanova could have given a lesson to many virtuous husbands of our own highly moral century. He never sank to the level of the vulgar maxim that "all's fair in love and war." He sought his pleasure in the pleasure, and not in the complaisance, of the women he loved, and they seem to have gratefully and tenderly recognized his skill in the art of love-making. Casanova loved many women, but broke few hearts. The same women appear again and again through his pages, and for the most part no lapse of years seems to deaden the gladness with which he goes forth to meet them anew. That he knew himself well enough never to take either wife or mistress must be counted as a virtue, such as it was, in this incomparable lover of so many women. A man of finer moral fibre could scarcely have loved so many women; a man of coarser fibre could never have left so many women happy.

This very lack of moral delicacy which shuts Casanova off from the finest human development is an advantage to the autobiographer. It insures his sincerity because he is unconscious of offence; it saves us from any wearisome self-justification, because, for all his amused self-criticism, he sees no real need for justification. In Rousseau's "Confessions" we hear the passionate pleader against men at the tribunal of God; here we are conscious neither of opponent nor tribunal. Casanova is neither a pillar of society nor yet one of the moral Samsons who delight to pull down the pillars of society he has taken the world as it is, and he has taken himself as he is, and he has

enjoyed them both hugely. So he is free to set forth the whole of himself, his achievements, his audacities, his failures, his little weaknesses and superstitions, his amours, his quarrels, his good fortune and his bad fortune in the world that on the whole he has found so interesting and happy a place to dwell in. And his book remains an unending source of delightful study of the man of impulse and action in all his moods. The self-reliant man, immensely apt for enjoyment, who plants himself solidly with his single keen wit before the mighty oyster of the world has never revealed himself so clearly before.

What manner of man Casanova seemed to his contemporaries has only been discovered of recent years; and while the picture which we obtain of him has been furnished by his enemies, and was not meant to flatter, it admirably supports the "Mémoires." In 1755 a spy of the Venetian Inquisition reported that Casanova united impiety, imposture, and wantonness to a degree that inspired horror. It was in that same year that Casanova was arrested, chiefly on the charge of contempt for Holy Religion, and sentenced to five years imprisonment. Fifteen months later he had effected his famous escape, and was able to pursue his career as an assured and accomplished adventurer who had brilliantly completed his apprenticeship. It is not until many years later, in 1772, when his long efforts to obtain pardon from his country still remained unsuccessful, that we obtain an admirable picture of him from the Venetian agent at Ancona. "He comes and goes where he will," the agent reports, "with open face and haughty mien, always well equipped. He is a man of some forty years at most [really about forty-eight, thus confirming Casanova's statement that he was always taken for some ten years younger than his years], of lofty stature, of fine and vigorous aspect, with bright eyes and very brown skin. He wears a short chestnut-coloured periuke. I am told that his character is bold and disdainful, but especially that he is full of speech, and of witty and well-instructed speech." Two years later Casanova was at last permitted to return to Venice. He there accepted the post of secret agent of the State Inquisition for service within the city. Like Defoe and Toland, who were also secret political agents, he attempted to justify himself on grounds of public duty. In a few years, however, he was dismissed, perhaps, as Baschet suggests, on account of the fact that his reports contained too much philosophy and not enough espionage: probably it was realized that a man of such powerful individuality and independence was not fitted for servile uses. Finally, in 1782, he was banished from Venice for an offence to which the blood of the Casanovas had always been easily inclined—he published an audacious satire against a patrician. From Venice he went to

Trieste, and thence to Vienna. There he met Count Waldstein, a fervent adept of Kabbalistic science, a subject in which Casanova himself was proficient ; he had found it useful in certain dealings with credulous people. In 1784 the count offered him the post of librarian, with a salary of one thousand florins, at his castle of Dux, near Teplitz, in Bohemia. It is said to be a fine castle, and is still noted for its charming park. Here this prince of Bohemians spent the remainder of his life, devoting seven years to the "Mémoires," on which he was still engaged at his death. A terra-cotta bust discovered at the castle (and etched some years ago for "Le Livre") shows him in mature age, a handsome, energetic, and imposing head, with somewhat deep-set eyes ; it is by no means the head of a scamp, but rather that of a philosopher, a philosopher with unusual experience of affairs, a successful statesman, one might say. A medallion portrait, of later date, which has also been reproduced, shows him at the age of sixty-three with lean, eager face, and lofty, though receding forehead, the type of the man of quick perception and swift action, the eagle type of man. The Prince de Ligne has also left a description of him as he appeared in old age, now grown very irritable, ready to flare up at any imagined insult, engaged in perpetual warfare with domestics, but receiving the highest consideration from those who knew how to appreciate the great qualities of the man and his unequalled experiences, and who knew also how to indulge his susceptibilities and smile at his antique fashions. Once he went off in a huff to Weimar, and was graciously received by the Duke, but he soon came back again ; all the favours there were showered on a certain court favourite, one Goethe. It is clear, as we read the Prince de Ligne's detailed description, that the restless old adventurer had need, even in the peaceful seclusion of Dux, of all the consolation yielded by Socrates, Horace, Seneca, and Boethius, his favourite philosophers. Here, at Dux, on the 4th of June, 1798, Casanova died, at the age of sixty-eight. "Bear witness that I have lived as a philosopher and die as a Christian ;" that, we are told, was his last utterance after he had taken the sacraments.

From that moment Casanova and everything that concerned him was covered by a pall of oblivion. He seems to have been carelessly cast aside, together with the century of which he was so characteristic, and, as it now appears, so memorable a child. The world in which he had lived so joyously and completely had been transformed by the Revolution. The new age of strenuous commercialism and complacent philosophy was in its vigorous youth, a sword in its right hand and a Bible in its left. The only adventurer who found favour now was he who took the glad news of salvation to the

heathen, or mowed them down to make new openings for trade. Had he been born later, we may be well assured, Casanova would have known how to play his part ; he would not have fallen short of Borrow, who became an agent of the Bible Society. But as it was, what had the new age to do with Casanova ? No one cared, no one even yet has cared, so much as to examine the drawers and cupboards full of papers which he left behind at Dux. Only on the 13th of February, 1820, was the oblivion a little stirred. On that date a certain Carlo Angiolieri appeared at Leipzig in the office of the famous publisher, Brockhaus, bearing a voluminous manuscript in the handwriting (as we now know) of Casanova, and bearing the title, " *Histoire de ma Vie jusqu'à l'an 1797.*"

But even the appearance of Carlo Angiolieri failed to dissipate the gloom. Fifty years more were to pass before the figure of Casanova again became clear. This man, so ardently alive in every fibre, had now become a myth. The sagacious world—which imparts the largest dole of contempt to the pilgrim who brings back to it the largest gifts—refused to take Casanova seriously. The shrewd critic wondered who wrote Casanova, just as he has since wondered who wrote Shakespeare. Paul Lacroix paid Stendhal the huge compliment of suggesting that he had written the "*Mémoires*," a sufficiently ingenious suggestion, for in Stendhal's Dauphiné spirit there is something of that love of adventure which is supremely illustrated in Casanova. But we now know that, as Armand Baschet first proved, Casanova himself really wrote his own "*Mémoires*." Moreover, so far as investigation has yet been able to go, he wrote with strict regard to truth. Wherever it is possible to test Casanova, his essential veracity has always been vindicated. In the nature of things it is impossible to verify much that he narrates. When, however, we remember that he was telling the story of his life primarily for his own pleasure, it is clear that he had no motive for deception ; and when we consider the surpassingly discreditable episodes which he has recorded, we may recall that he has given not indeed positive proof of sincerity, but certainly the best that can be given in the absence of direct proof. It remains a question how far a man is able to recollect the details of the far past—the conversations he held, the garments he wore, the meals he ate—so precisely as Casanova professes to recollect them. This is a psychological problem which has not yet been experimentally examined. There are, however, great individual differences in memory, and there is reason to believe that an organization, such as Casanova's, for which the external world is so vivid, is associated with memory-power of high quality.

That this history is narrated with absolute precision of detail Casanova himself would probably not have asserted. But there is no reason to doubt his good faith, and there is excellent reason to accept the substantial accuracy of his narrative. It remains a personal document of a value which will increase rather than diminish as time goes by. It is one of the great auto-biographical revelations which the ages have left us, with Augustine's, Cellini's, Rousseau's, of its own kind supreme.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

## CATULLUS

CARMEN CI



Y ways remote and distant waters sped,  
Brother, to thy sad grave-side am I come,  
That I may give the last gifts to the dead,  
And vainly parley with thine ashes dumb :  
Since she who now bestows and now denies  
Hath ta'en thee, hapless brother, from mine eyes.

But lo! these gifts, the heirlooms of past years,  
Are made sad things to grace thy coffin shell,  
Take them, all drenchèd with a brother's tears,  
And, brother, for all time, hail and farewell !

AUBREY BEARDSLEY.



AVE ATQVE VALE

A.B.



## IN SLIGO

### ROSSES POINT AND GLEN CAR

**R**OSSES POINT is a village of pilots and fishing people, stretching out seawards in a long thin single line of thatched and whitewashed houses along the branch of the sea which goes from the little harbour of Sligo to broaden out into the bay beyond the edge of Dorren's or Coney Island, and the rocks of Dead Man's Point. It is a lazy village, where no one is very rich or very poor, but all are able, without too much exertion, to make just enough not to need to work any harder. The people are slow, sturdy, contented people, with a singular dislike of doing anything for money, except that they let rooms during the summer to the people of Sligo, who make it their watering-place ; going in and out daily, when needful, on the little paddle-steamer which plies backward and forward between Sligo and the Point, or on the long car which takes in their messages and their marketing-baskets. Very few people from the outer world ever find their way here ; and there are peasants living at the far end of the village who have never been so far as the village of Lower Rosses, on the other side of the green lands. They know more of the coast of Spain, the River Plate, and the Barbadoes, than they know of the other side of their own mountains ; for sea-faring men go far. I have just been talking with a seaman, now a pilot here, who has told me of Venice, and of the bull-fights he saw at Huelva, and of Antwerp, and the Riga, and Le Havre ; and of the coast of Cornwall, and Milford Haven, and the Firth of Forth ; and of America, and the West Indies. Yesterday I saw a bright green parrot on a child's hand ; they have been telling me of "the black girl" who came here from some foreign ship, and lived here, and knew better than anyone else where to find the plovers' eggs ; and I have seen the rim of a foreign ship, rising out of the sand at low tide, which was wrecked here seventy years ago, and is now turning green under the water.

Men and women, here at the Point, loiter about all day long ; there are benches outside most of the cabins, and they sit there, or on the low, rough

wall which skirts the road, or on the big stones at the edge of the water, or upon the green lands. Most of the women are bare-headed, none go barefoot, and only a few of the poorer children. And the children here are very proud. They will row you about all day for nothing, but they will not bring you a can of water from the well if you pay them for it. That is a point of view they have learnt from their parents, and it seems to me a simple and sufficing one. For these people have attained comfort, a certain dignity (that dignity which comes from concerning yourself only with what concerns you), and they have the privilege of living in a beautiful, harmonious place, without any of the distractions which harass poorer or less contented people in towns, and keep them from the one thing worth living for, the leisure to know oneself. This fine laziness of theirs in the open air, with the constant, subduing sense of the sea's peril, its hold upon their lives and fortunes, moulds them often into a self-sufficing manliness, a hardy womanhood; sometimes it makes them dreamers, and they see fairies, and hear the fairy piper calling in the caves.

How, indeed, is it possible that they should not see more of the other world than most folk do, and catch dreams in their nets? For it is a place of dreams, a gray, gentle place, where the sand melts into the sea, the sea into the sky, and the mountains and the clouds drift one into the other. I have never seen so friendly a sea, nor a sea so full of the ecstasy of sleep. On one of those luminous gray days, which are the true atmosphere of the place, it is like being in an eternal morning of twilight to wander over the undulating green lands, fringed at the shore by a soft rim of bent, a pale honey-coloured green, and along the delicate gray sands, from Dead Man's Point to the point of the Third Rosses. The sea comes in softly, rippling against the sand with a low plashing, which even on very warm days has a cool sound, and a certain gentleness even on days of rough weather. The headland of Roughley O'Byrne runs on, a wavering line of faint green, from the dark and cloudy masses of the Lissadell woods into the hesitating line of the gray waters. On the other side of the bay Dorren's Island curves around, almost like part of the semicircle of the mainland, its sickle-point leaning out towards the white lighthouse, which rises up out of the water like a phantom, or the stone image of a wave that has risen up out of the sea on a day of storm. Faint mountains glimmer out to sea, many-coloured mountains close in upon the land, shutting it off from the world of strange cities. And if you go a little in from the sea-edge, over the green lands, you will come to a great pool, where the waters are never troubled, nor the reeds still; but there is always a sighing of wind in the reeds, as of a very gentle and melancholy peace.

Go on a little further still, and you come to the fighting village of Magherow, where the men are red-bearded, fierce, great shouters, and not readier to row than to do battle with their oars. They come into Rosses Point, generally, at the regatta; and at that time the Point is at its liveliest, there is much whiskey drunk, and many quarrels flame up. There is a great dance, too, most years, at the time of the regatta. It is known as the cake dance, and not so long ago a cake and a bottle of whiskey were hung out of a window by green ribbons, the cake for the best woman dancer, and the bottle of whiskey for the best man dancer. Now there is no cake at all, and if there is much whiskey, it is handed over the counter in big glasses, and not hung out of the window by green ribbons. The prize now is money, and so the people of the Point, with their fine, independent objection to doing anything for money, are less ready to show off their notable powers of dancing; and the women, who, besides, are getting to prefer the waltzes and quadrilles of the towns, will not take part in the dance at all.

The regatta this year was not too well managed, having passed out of the hands of the village pilots; and it was unwisely decided that the dance should be held the same evening, outside the door of a public-house where the crews of the losing boats had been drinking at the expense of the captains of the winning boats. It was very dark, and there was a great crowd, a great confusion. A somewhat battered door had been laid down for the dancing, and the press of people kept swaying in upon the narrow limits of the door, where only a few half-t tipsy fellows pounded away, lurching into one another's arms. Everybody swayed, and yelled, and encouraged, and expostulated, and the melodion sounded fitfully; and presently the door was pulled from under the feet of the dancers, and the police shouldered into the midst of what would soon have been a very pretty fight. The dance was postponed to Monday, when some of the boats were to race again.

On Monday, at about half-past six, I met eight small boys carrying a large door upon their shoulders. They were coming up through the village to the green lands, where they laid down the door on the grass. About an hour afterwards, as it began to get very dark, the people came slowly up from the village, and a wide ring was made by a rope carried around stakes set in the earth, and the people gathered about the ring, in the middle of which lay the door, lit on one side by a ship's lantern and on the other by the lamp of a bicycle. A chair was put for the judge, who was a pilot and a publican, and one of the few Gaelic speakers in the village, and a man of few words, and a man of weight; and another chair was put for the musician, who played on

the melodion, an instrument which has long since replaced the fiddle as the national instrument of Ireland. A row of very small children lay along the grass inside the rope, the girls in one place, the boys in another. It was so dark that I could only vaguely distinguish, in a curve of very black shadow, the people opposite to me in the circle; and presently it began to rain a little; and still we waited. At last a man came forward, and the musician began to play a lively tune on his melodion, keeping time with his feet; and there was a great cry of "Gallagher! Gallagher!" and much shouting and whistling. It was a shepherd from Lower Rosses, a thin and solemn young man, who began to dance with great vigour and regularity, tapping heavily on the rough boards with very rough and heavy boots. He danced several step-dances, and was much applauded. Then, after a pause, an old man from the Point, Redmond Bruen by name, a pilot, who had very cunningly won the duck-hunt at the regatta, stepped forward unevenly, and began to walk about on the door, shuffling his feet, bowing to right and left, and waving a stick that he held in his hand. "When he's sober, he's a great dancer," we were assured. He was not sober, and at first did no more than shuffle. Then he stopped, seemed to recollect himself, and the reputation he had to keep up, and with more bowing to the public, began to sing, with variations, a song popular among the Irish peasants, "On the Rocky Road to Dublin." It is a dramatic song, and after every stanza he acted, in his dance, the fight on the road, the passage from Holyhead, and the other stirring incidents of the song. The old man swayed there in the vague light, between the two lanterns, a whimsical and pathetic figure, with his gray beard, his helpless gestures, and the random gaiety of his legs; he danced with a wonderful lightness, and one could but just hear his boots passing over the boards.

We applauded him with enthusiasm, and he came and sat on the grass inside the ring, near the children, who were gradually creeping closer in; and his place was taken by the serious Gallagher, who was quite sober, and who pounded away like clockwork, holding his body quite stiff, and rattling his boots with great agility. The old man watched him keenly, and presently got up and made for the door again. He began to dance, stopped, flung off his coat, and set off again with a certain elaboration, variety, and even delicacy in his dancing, which would have won him the prize, I think, if he had been sober enough to make the most of his qualities. He at least thoroughly appreciated his own skill. "That's a good reel," he would say, when he halted for breath and emphasis.

Meanwhile Gallagher was looking for a partner, and one or two young

fellows took the boards, and did each a single dance, in pairs or singly. Then a young man who, like Bruen, was "a grand dancer" when sober, but who was even less sober than Bruen, reeled across the grass, kicked over one of the lanterns, and began to dance opposite Gallagher. Then he pushed Gallagher off the board, and danced by himself. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and without hat or collar, and much of his dance was merely an unsteady walking. He stopped frequently, and appeared to think; and, after much thinking, it occurred to him that it was the music which would not keep time with his dancing. So he walked up to the musician, snatched the melodion away from him, and marched off with it, I suppose to find another player. He passed into the darkness; the melodion in his hands squealed out of the darkness. Then he came back dangling it, and was told to give it back again, which he did sulkily, with exactly the look and gesture of a naughty child who has been called to order. And then Gallagher came forward again, and, taking off his hat, said he would sing a song. He got through a verse or two, chanting gravely in a kind of sing-song, and then, coming to the line, "And *he* said to the landlord," paused, and said, "I am not able to do any more." There was a great laugh, and Gallagher returned to his dancing, in which he was presently joined by a new rival. Gallagher got the prize.

I was told that so poor a dance had not been seen before at Rosses Point, and the blame was laid on new ways, and the coming of the waltzes and quadrilles, and the folly of young people who think old things not good enough for them. And the old people shook their heads that night over the turf fires in their cabins.

Seven miles inland from Rosses Point, the mountains open; and, entering a great hollow called the Windy Gap, you come upon a small lake with green fields around it, and mountains full of woods and waterfalls rising up behind it. This is Glencar, and there is a cabin by the side of the lake where I spent a few enchanted days of rain and sunshine, wandering over the mountain-side, and among the wild and delicate woods. Above the cabin there is a great mountain, and the woods climb from about the cabin to almost the summit of the mountain. Fir-trees rise up like marching banners, line upon line; between them the foliage is softer, green moss grows on the tree-trunks and ferns out of the moss; quicken-berries flame on the heights above the streams; the many-coloured green of leaves is starred with bright orange, shadowed with spectral blue, clouded with the exquisite ashen pallor of

decaying heather. Rocky steps lead from height to height along the edge of chasms veiled with leafy branches, and there is always a sound of many waters, falling in torrents down black stairways of rock, and rushing swiftly along narrow passages between grass and ferns. Here and there a bridge of fallen trunks, set roughly together, and covered with the adventurous soil, which, in these parts, bears fruit wherever it has an inch to cling to, crosses a waterfall, just above the actual descent. Winding paths branch off in every direction, and in the soft earth of these narrow and precipitous ways one can see little hoof-prints, and occasionally one meets a donkey going slowly uphill, with the creels on its back, to fetch turf from the bog. And always there is the sound of water, like the cool singing voice of the rocks, above the sound of rustling leaves, and birds piping, and the flapping of great wings, which are the voices of the many-instrumented orchestra of the woods. Here one is in the heart of the mountains, and in the heart of the forest; and, wandering along a grassy path at evening, one seems to be very close to something very ancient and secret.

The mountains here are whole regions, and when you have climbed to their summit through the woods, you find yourself on a vast plain, and this plain stretches so far that it seems to fill the horizon, and you cannot see anything on the other side of it. Looking down into the valley, which seems scooped out of the solid mountains, you can see, on the other side of the Windy Gap, the thin line of Rosses Point going out into the sea, and the sea stretches out so far before it reaches the horizon, that you can catch a yellow glimmer of sunlight, lying out beyond the horizon visible from the shore. The fields, around and beyond the polished mirror of the lake, seem, in their patchwork of greens and browns, like a little map of the world. The mountain-top, which you have fancied from below to be such solid ground, proves, if you try to cross it, to be a great yielding bog, with intervals of rock or hard soil. To walk over it is to move in short jumps, with an occasional longer leap across a dried-up water-course. I like the voluptuous softness of the bog, for one's feet sink luxuriously into even the pale golden mounds of moss which rise between the rusty heather and starveling grasses of the sheer morass. And it has the treachery which is always one of the allurements of voluptuous things. Nor is it the bog only which is treacherous on these mountains. The mist comes down on them very suddenly, and in that white darkness even the natives sometimes lose their way, and are drawn over the sheer edge of the mountain. My host has just come in to tell me that last night there was a great brewing of poteen on Ben Bulben, and that many of

the drinkers wandered all night, losing their way in the mist, and that one of them, not having the drunkard's luck, fell over a rocky place, and is now lying dead on the mountain.

I had been thinking of such possibilities yesterday, as I climbed, peak after peak, the mountains on the other side of the lake, Cope's Mountain, Lugnagall, Cashlagall, Cragnamoona. They are bare and treeless, crossed by a few donkey-tracks ; and I sometimes deserted these looped and coiling ways for the more hazardous directness of the dry water-courses which seam the mountains from head to foot. Once at the top, you look over almost the whole county, lying out in a green plain, ridged with hedges, clustered with woods, glittering with lakes ; here and there a white cabin, a scattered village, and just below, in the hollow of the land and water, the little curving gray town of Sligo, with its few ships resting in harbour, and beyond them the long black line which is Rosses Point, and then the sea, warm with sunlight, and, as if islanded in the sea, the hills of Mayo. I have never seen anything resembling the view from these mountains ; I have never seen anything, in its way, more beautiful. And when, last night, after a tossed and blood-red sunset, the white mist curdled about the heads of Ben Bulben and Knocknarea, and a faint, luminous mist filled the whole hollow of the valley, there seemed to be a mingling of all the worlds ; and the world in which ships went out from the harbour of Sligo, and the poteen-makers wandered over the mountain, was not more real than the world of embodied dreams in which the fairies dance in their forts, or beat at the cabin doors, or chuckle among the reeds.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

## WINDLE-STRAWS

### 1. O'SULLIVAN RUA TO THE CURLEW



CURLEW, cry no more in the air,  
Or only to waters in the west ;  
Because your crying brings to my mind  
Passion-dimmed eyes and long heavy hair  
That was shaken out over my breast :  
There is enough evil in the crying of wind.

### 2. OUT OF THE OLD DAYS



E you still, be you still, trembling heart ;  
Remember the wisdom out of the old days :  
*Who trembles before the flame and the flood,*  
*And the winds blowing through the starry ways,*  
*And blowing us evil and good :*  
*Let the starry winds and the flame and the flood*  
*Cover over and hide, for he has no part*  
*With the lonely, proud, wingèd multitude.*

W. B. YEATS.





## EMILE VERHAEREN



THE frontiers of literature, independent of political dissension or civil authority, are fixed by language alone. Indeed, it will often happen that those most divided by conditions of race, place, and government, but possessed of a common tongue, can boast a more richly-stored treasure-house of letters than their homogeneous neighbours. How continually is our broad Anglo-Saxon river nourished by widely-severed tributaries! Now it is a Celtic current, now an Anglo-Indian, now an American, which brings new wealth of observed experience to the mother-stream. France, too, may well be consoled for the loss of Alsace and Lorraine by the annexation of Belgium, since no three men among the younger writers of Paris can be named as the equals of Maeterlinck, Rodenbach, and Verhaeren. Not that Paris has shown any disposition to slight her step-children; on the contrary, it was M. Octave Mirabeau, who happily discovered (and unhappily labelled) the author of "L'Intruse" and "Tintagiles," while George Rodenbach's mystical "bégueine" made her début in "Le Voile" at the "Comédie Française." If Emile Verhaeren is not yet as familiarly known, it is because the playbill advertises more rapidly than the catalogue, and because a poet, whose taste is fastidious and whose themes are difficult, must wait for recognition, until the public standard has approximated to his own. Portents of recognition are at hand: brilliant and weighty appreciations by Mallarmé, de Régnier, Albert Mockel, and Vielé-Griffin, the widely-promoted banquet at Brussels and the decoration of the Order of Leopold (not to speak of simultaneous publication in the "Revue des deux Mondes" and "The Fortnightly Review") will set people reading him, and asking themselves, whether a worthy successor has not been found to Hugo, Leconte de Lisle, and Verlaine.

In seeking to define this poet's genius the comparative method is peculiarly futile. One critic, with a weakness for epigram, was pleased to hail "l'enfant sauvage de Hugo," and another was reminded of Henry de Groux, by the tumultuous and epic largeness of particular poems, but, in truth, if parallels must be sought, they are best found in the work of certain Flemish and Spanish

painters, for, like these, M. Verhaeren invests monstrous or mean subjects with tragic grandeur, and appals or allures the eye with sombre magnificence. Unparalleled is his faculty of expressing intense, obscure emotion ; his way of presenting a landscape or a passion is paroxysmal ; the words cease to be words, that is, to veil their meaning ; an almost direct appeal is made to the senses, to the nerves, even, without the intervention of intelligence. For instance, what actual glimpse of storm-tortured trees, silhouetted by a lightning-flash, could be more vivid than this ?

“ Un supplice d’arbres écorchés vifs  
Se tord, bras convulsifs,  
En façade, sur le bois proche.”

And cannot you feel a gnashing of teeth in this counsel of an obstinate sufferer agonized to frenzy ?

“ Exaspère sinistrement ta toute exsangue  
Carcasse, et pousse au vent en des sols noirs, rougis  
De sang, ta course, et flaire et léche avec ta langue  
Ta plaie et lutte et butte et tombe—et ressurgis !”

It is impossible, however, to convey by excerpt any idea of those poems, and they form the majority, which hammer, hammer, hammer, or drip, drip, drip, through a hundred lines or more of a metre, elaborately yet inevitably adapted to the repercussion of a single note, the representation of a single scene. One would suppose that an effect, based so largely on metrical artifice and protracted by however masterly skill, must repel and tire. And, in fact, to read through “Les Débâcles” or “Les Villes Tentaculaires” is like sitting out the “Meistersinger” or “Götterdämmerung.” But the reward is great for those who have the patience to follow and the intelligence to apprehend. Each poem is so enriched with gorgeous colouring, the mind is stimulated by such fine and pregnant images, that one is carried at a rush from start to finish without having occasion or desire to elude its overmastering spell.

The potency and complexity of this rather cryptic art has passed through three stages of marked development both in chosen subject and means employed. When a political and forensic disciple of the eminent Brussels barrister, M. Edmond Picard, published “Les Flamandes” in 1883, and “Les Moines” in 1886, the critics were forced to ransack the vocabulary of the studio to appraise those pictorial revelations of Flemish peasant and monastic life. A painter with as avid an eye for colour and shape as Gautier, a realist

with as keen a sense of the dismal and horrific as Zola, had co-operated, it would seem, to depict the bestialities of the kermesse, the beatitudes of the cloister. But sonnet succeeded alexandrine and four-lined stanza succeeded sonnet with academic regularity. Nor was docility of form atoned for by depth of vision. The figures were painted in with extraordinary vigour and truth; not a pose was omitted, not a possible light or shade wanting; but one felt that it was all superficial, external. It was the work of a strong and haughty colourist, whose heart and brain were all in his task, absorbed by and concentrated on execution, more concerned with efficient workmanship than moved by that intimate, humane sympathy, from which the most living art springs. More particularly was this the case with the second volume, in which the exterior aspects of the trappist life—its labour, its legend, its ceremonial—were celebrated without a pang or throb of spiritual sympathy. Neither the brutal vigour of the labourer's struggle for life nor the ascetic rigour of a life withdrawn from struggle, struck deep enough root in the seed-plot of a soul, destined to bring forth more rare and splendid flowers in due season. The eye had been caught and the fancy fired, but that was all. Perhaps at this time "La Jeune Belgique" and "l'Art Moderne" gained what the poems lacked, the whole-hearted enthusiasm which championed and expounded with lucid force the art of Manet, Moreau, Fernand Khnopff, Odilon Redon, Van Rysselbergh. In the midst of ardent battle for his ideals, the young poet was prostrated by a shattering illness, which seems to have torn away the veils, concealing his inmost "ego" from himself. The pains were birth-pains, setting free a psychologist of relentless daring and patience, a seer of unexampled gravity and grandeur. If the psychology stopped at self-analysis, if the visions came through a gate of ebony, they are none the less authentic. Of the sombre trilogy, which appeared between 1887 and 1891, the author has been anxious to describe "Les Soirs" as "les décors du cri," "Les Débâcles" as "le cri," and "Les Flambeaux Noirs," as the echoes of the cry in the thinking-chamber of his brain. What is more important for us—since the terse distinction compresses with Procrustean violence the quivering bodies of live poems—is that now Emile Verhaeren had found himself, had found the necessity and the faculty of declaring his bitterest and bravest thoughts; had found, above all, a novel instrument of surprising delicacy and strength in the warmly-abused and warmly-defended *vers libre*.

The quarrels which rend foreign coteries on questions of technique must always seem a little wasteful to English spectators. Instinct prompts the skilled craftsman in selecting his tool; if he so wield it as to satisfy his

judgment and accomplish his design, no amount of theoretic disputation will arrest or affect him. Baudelaire had appropriated the sonnet, Hugo had exhausted the thousand and one variations of the alexandrine, Banville had reduced rhyming to a juggler's trick of deftly manipulated balls: it was felt that the time-honoured stricture of regular sound-recurrence and equivalent feet fettered the writer and reminded the reader too persistently of an art which lacked art to hide itself. More difficult, perhaps, but more supple, more free to catch and render the actual rhythms of life, would be the "free verse" in a master's hand, for only a master could supply the balance, the lilt, that gratification of the ear, associated with old metres. In a letter of congratulation on the appearance of "*Les Soirs*," M. Mallarmé wrote in praise of its metrical innovations, "l'ouvrier disparaît, le vers agit;" and it is not too much to say that, at its best, the verse moves with apt, active spontaneity, leaps or sinks, exalts or moans, rushes or drags, in accordance with its theme. An excellent object-lesson, consisting of two poems from the same pen on the same subject, "*Les Plaines*," enables one to compare the two methods and gauge their relative value. The first poem begins thus:

"Partout, d'herbes en Mai, d'orges in Juillet pleines,  
De lieue et lieue, au loin, depuis le sable ardent  
Et les marais sur la Campine s'étendant,  
Des plaines, jusqu' aux mers du Nord, partout des plaines !  
\* \* \* \* \*

Partout, soit champ d'avoine, où sont les marjolaines,  
Coins de seigle, carrés de lins, arpents de prés,  
Partout, bien au-delà des horizons pourprés,  
La verte immensité des plaines et des plaines !"

The second, written ten years later, thus :

"Sous la tristesse et l'angoisse des cieux  
Les lieues  
S'en vont autour des plaines ;  
Sous les cieux bas  
Dont les nuages traînent,  
Immensement les lieues  
Marchent, là-bas.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
C'est la plaine, la plaine blême,  
Interminablement toujours la même."

The intrinsic importance, however, of the poet's "cry," for those who had ears to hear, outweighed its extrinsic variety of modulation. It was the cry of a violent fighter, of an iron will, grappling with Death. The sick bed, which

generally silences or softens the voice of a singer, braced and inspired its prisoner with an obstinate, victorious song, half dirge and half paean, recording every incident of the long fight, every change of mood through the whole gamut of suffering, doubt, defiance, ennui, pride, dizziness, and delirium. The only other instance that occurs to me of malady so successfully transmuted to melody is furnished by James Thomson's "In the Room," and "To our Ladies of Death," apart from exercises in hymnology, which seldom rise to the level of literature. The resultant emotion, in one reader, at least, of this melancholy and sometimes maniacal verse, is not compassion with the racked body, though the flesh ache and the nerves tingle to read, but rather exultant sympathy with a valorous spirit, which, scorning the cheap virtues of humility and faith, meets and beats the leagued mysteries of dissolution and eternity, as though conscious of an immortality, equal to theirs. It must be noted, too, that not only had proximity to destruction evoked its utmost ounce of energy from an adamantine will, but the conditions and the field of battle were exactly suited to the peculiar bent of racial imagination. The greatest art of the Netherlands has ever been haunted by the sombre, the saturnine, the macabre; if we cannot read Van Vondel's "Lucifer" we have all observed this trait in certain pictures of Rubens, Jordaens, Gerard David, Jan Bosch, Jan Luijken, and Wiertz. Small wonder, then, that a black-wanded Prospero, in temporary servitude to powers of darkness, turned their very terrors to artistic account and twisted their sharpest thorns into a crown. To characterize concisely the three phases of disorder, the three facets of a gem, bearing the carver's portrait, which diversify and justify the triune design of the whole, one might hazard the assertion, that in "Les Soirs" a sick poet draws from nature the evening-coloured pictures which are in keeping with his state, desolate country, decadent town, the fall of the year; that, in "Les Debâcles," a sick hero draws from disease its sting; that, in "Flambeaux Noirs," a sick thinker draws from pitifully naked premisses his negative conclusions about the universe. It is always a sick man who speaks, a *détragié*; but this *détragié* has a strange power of clothing general ideas, abstractions, with vivid, plausible words, so that his ebbing philosophy wakes in us as much concern as his ebbing life. And this brings me to the last stage of development in the writer, whose line of work I am endeavouring to trace.

The highest quality, perceptible in "Les Flamandes," and brought to greater perfection in each subsequent volume, is the result of inner, not outer, vision, betokening less the painter's eye for difference than the seer's eye for analogy; indeed, for as keen a sense of the applicability of symbol, for such

striking co-ordination of pictorial and psychical terms one must go back to Shelley, perhaps to Plato. Not that Verhaeren ever uses verse as a vehicle for philosophic or political doctrine; he tries to translate the sacred works, which we call by the names of Nature, Mind, Society, without editorial interpolation. Above all, when striking the stars, he is careful not to lose his head in the clouds. To quote his own wise words: "You can never dispense entirely with the real for the same reason that you can never escape entirely from what lies beyond. Art is a two-faced unity; as the catholic divinity consists of three persons, art consists of two. You must feel your footing from time to time, and use the ground as a spring-board. The vague is as dangerous as the *terre-à-terre* is lugubrious." Disregard of this danger has swamped many a French poet's fragile barque in floods of incomprehensible metaphor, and brought discredit on the Symbolist movement.

This is not the place to assign respective measures of merit to the first Symbolists, to Mallarmé, to Arthur Rimbaud, or to Gustave Kahn; but I cannot refrain from quoting at some length the clear statement of what Symbolism seeks to achieve, on the testimony of its most gifted exponent. Speaking of the Naturalism, which preceded it, M. Verhaeren writes: "This was descriptive decomposition, a microscopic and minute analysis, without *résumé*, without an attempt to concentrate or generalize. You studied a corner, an anecdote, an individual, and the whole school was based on the science of the day, and, consequently, on positive philosophy. Symbolism will do the opposite. It follows the German philosophy of Kant and Fichte, as Naturalism followed the French philosophy of Comte and Littré. And this is perfectly logical. With us, the fact and the world serve simply as pretext for the idea; they are treated as phenomena, condemned to perpetual variation, and they appear to be, in fine, merely the figments of our brain. It is the idea which determines them by adaptation or evocation. If Naturalism accorded so much space to objectivity in art, Symbolism will restore as much and more to subjectivity. We enthrone the idea in absolute sovereignty. Our art, then, is one of thought, reflection, combination, will. In it is no place for improvisation, for that sort of literary fever, which carried the pen across enormous and inextricable subjects. Every word, every sound must be weighed, examined, willed. Every phrase must be regarded as a thing, endowed with life of its own, independent, owing its existence to the words, its movement to their subtle, artful, sensitive juxtaposition." Elsewhere he contrasts modern with Greek Symbolism. The Greek sought to materialize the abstract, to incarnate force in Zeus, love in Aphrodite, wisdom in Athene;

the modern aims at abstracting the idea from matter, at evoking the soul and suggesting the whole by electric, quintessential phrase. Here there is a warning of what we shall find in the poet's mature work: not "a substitute for a glass of wine and a cigarette," not an excuse for sentimental reverie, not empty rhetoric or "sensual caterwauling," but a strenuous attempt to make the empire of poetry conterminous with the empire of modern thought, to turn the lyric muse from a mistress to a priestess.

Ambitious as it is, this scheme of establishing platonic friendship between platonic foes, mimicry and philosophy, has enriched French literature with at least three noteworthy books, "Les Campagnes Hallucinées," "Les Villes Tentaculaires," and "Les Villages Illusoires." I might describe the first two as the obverse and reverse sides of a gold coin, that being the fittest token of a money-making age, of the capitalistic era. In no country has the crushing pressure of industrial competition been felt so severely as in Belgium, whose manufacturing centres absorb the densest population in Europe to the detriment and ruin of agriculture. On the one side, then, the tumultuous, teeming town, and on the other, desolate, spell-stricken country offered congenial matter to the insurgent idealist, burning to reinstate other than commercial ideals, to depict and defeat the insidious strangulation by commerce of beauty, nobility, happiness. "The absolute sovereignty of the idea" is patent in every line, but not at the expense of verisimilitude: if anything, the real is made to seem more real, the tyranny of matter more heavy and more obvious. The "Campagnes Hallucinées" are as realistically painted as a panorama by M. Philippotaux: between the stagnant marshes and waste heaths, past fireless hearths, neglected Madonnas, and mouldering mill, tramp beggars, thieves, and migratory families of homeless poor. But more ghostly and ghastly habitants than these infest the sterile acres: Fever, in gauze woven of swampy mists, the Giver of Bad Counsel, who comes at sunset in his green cart and whispers of suicide to the sullen yokel, of prostitution to the despairing wench, and Mother Death, a tipsy crone on a spavined white horse, whom neither the Blessed Virgin nor Jesus himself can propitiate. Insanity, which waits on famished body and mind, and is rendered more familiar by the Belgian custom of boarding out lunatics in cottage-homes, inspires six *Chansons de Fou*, almost worthy of Shakespeare. That this is not exaggerated praise, the reader may judge from the following specimen:

" Le crapaud noir sur le sol blanc  
Me fixe indubitablement  
Avec des yeux plus grands que n'est grande sa tête ;

Ce sont les yeux qu'on m'a volés,  
Quand mes regards s'en sont allés  
Un soir, que je tournai la tête.

"Mon frère il est quelqu'un qui ment,  
Avec de la farine entre ses dents ;  
C'est lui, jambes et bras en croix,  
Qui tourne au loin, là-bas,  
Qui tourne au vent  
Sur ce moulin de bois.

"Et celui-ci, c'est mon cousin,  
Qui fut curé et but si fort du vin  
Qui le soleil en devient rouge,  
J'ai su qu'il habitait un bouge  
Avec des morts dans ses armoires.

"Car nous avons pour génitoires  
Deux Cailloux  
Et pour monnaie un sac de poux,  
Nous, les trois fous,  
Qui épousons, au clair de lune,  
Trois folles dames sur la dune."

It is in the "Villes Tentaculaires," however, that the Symbolist poet may most directly challenge comparison with the Naturalistic novelist, for Zola alone among great writers has caught and wielded the spell of great modern institutions, of the factory, the exchange, the mine. Or take, for instance, the crowd of business men in a city street. Seven pages of Rougon-Macquart enumeration would not convey more than these seven lines :

"La rue—et ses remous comme des câbles  
Noués autour des monuments—  
Fuit et revient en longs enlacements ;  
Et ses foules inextricables,  
Les mains folles, les pas fiévreux,  
La haine aux yeux,  
*Happent des dents le temps qui les devance.*"

But the power of the verse lies not so much in large delineation of movement as in perpetual suggestion of the unseen forces which sway human puppets and mould their environment. The town itself, like a giant octopus, gathers in youth, ambition, strength, with resistless tentacle. At a hundred points the individual is seen to be helpless in the coils of the corporate

monster. The artisan becomes a cog in the wheel of a Juggernaut car; the investor is a counter for rogues to gamble with, the clerk and shopman mere items in bureau and bazaar. Cathedral and barrack recall the religious and military currents of tradition, persisting along with the industrial. And against the background of general reflection the particular subject of each poem stands out in sharp, vivid relief: the frenzied fighters of "La Révolte," the debauched dancers and pleasure-seekers of "Les Spectacles," the daring speculators of "La Bourse," rehearse an animated *rôle* in the eternal "problem-play," which is fraught with Homeric significance, for with and against the gesticulating combatants are allied invisible deities,

(*"On les rêve parmi les brumes, accoudées  
En des lointaines, là-haut, près du soleil,"*)

whom for want of better names we call Force, Justice, Pity, Beauty. You must not leave this symbolic capital without regarding its "Statues" of dead heroes. Here by a Gothic gateway the meek founder-monk clasps his cross; surrounded by civic palaces, the opportunist demagogue thunders in bronze; the soldier-autocrat dominates a square "of barracks and of abattoirs : "

*"Un élan fou, un bond brutal  
Jette en avant son geste et son cheval  
Vers la Victoire."*

"Les Aubes," the author's first essay in dramatic form, is to complete the trilogy and will set forth the brighter side of his social and political creed. Its import may be guessed from the lines, which terminate the poem entitled "l'Âme de la Ville :"

*"Et qu'important les maux et les heures démentes,  
Et les cuves de vices, où la cité fermenté,  
Si quelque jour, du fond des brouillards et des voiles,  
Surgit un nouveau Christ, en lumière sculpté,  
Qui soulève vers lui l'humanité  
Et la baptise au feu de nouvelles étoiles ?"*

In spite of similarity of title, the "Villages Illusoires" stands by itself. The most popular and the most composite of all M. Verhaeren's works, it is a triptych, of which the leaves might be labelled spiritual, elemental, macabre. The largest section presents familiar moral or spiritual types under the guise of humble village trades, with which for Symbolist ends they are identified. Thus we have the Idealist, a ferryman, who, hailed by a receding figure on

the bank, pulls sturdily on, though oars break, rudder fail, and the current drive him ashore. Then the Rationalist carpenter, busily at work on little squares and circles, soon puts together the puzzle of existence with wooden syllogisms, from which the doctor and parson easily deduce opposite conclusions. And the grave-digger? You or I, or any man, who tries to heap oblivion on his own "multiple and fragmentary death," on crippled pride, cowed courage, smirched purity. Space forbids a long enough citation to show how deftly æsthetic and ethical strands are interwoven, but the happiest imagery and loftiest outlook are found, perhaps, in "*Les Cordiers*." While the mystic ropemakers ply their calling, they draw into their souls the utmost horizons of humanity. They look far back to man the nomad :

"Jadis, c'était la vie énorme, exaspérée,  
Sauvagement pendue aux crins des étalons,  
Soudaine, avec de grands éclairs à ses talons,  
Et vers l'espace immense immensément cabrée."

They look far forward to the reconciliation of knowledge and faith :

"Là-haut parmi les loins sereins et harmoniques  
Un double escalier d'or suspend ses degrés bleus,  
Le rêve et le savoir le gravissent tous deux  
Séparément partis vers un pailier unique."

Turning from man to nature and from seer to singer, the author devotes four long poems to snow, rain, wind, silence : they are masterpieces of form and rhythm, though necessarily owing much of their success to these onomatopœia effects, which are the easiest triumphs of a consummate metricist. The finest example of the macabre manner recalls Cyril Tourneur, for the theme is the adoration of a skeleton-mistress by a mad lover.

Without forfeiting the crown of fantastic horror, which enables him, as it enabled Coleridge, Poe, and Maeterlinck to raise the abject and the abnormal to the sublime, M. Verhaeren has given his admirers the satisfaction of noting that his later work is more sane and various than they might have apprehended. The most accomplished Paganini could not continue playing on one string without tiring his audience. But if from "*Les Soirs*" to "*Les Villes Tentaculaires*" the atmosphere be most often thick with "inspissated gloom," yet the interludes of happy light have grown in frequency and radiance. The turning-point coincides with the publication in 1891 of "*Les appareus dans mes chemins*" (midway between "*Les Flambeaux Noirs*" and "*Les Campagnes*

Hallucinées"), a veiled record of spiritual convalescence. The dreary landscape of the *détragié*, described as :

"Mon pays sans un seul pli, un seul,  
C'est mon pays de grand linceul,"

changes to a garden, where :

"Des fleurs droites comme l'ardeur  
Extatique des âmes blanches  
Fusent en un élan de branches  
Vers leur splendeur."

The troop of spectres ("celui de l'Horizon, celui de la Fatigue, celui du Rien"), who had immolated the broken, ridiculous thinker on the altar of his "grand moi futile," are expelled by "le Saint-Georges du haut devoir," giving place to four angels.

"L'une est le bleu pardon, l'autre la bonté blanche,  
La troisième l'amour pensif, la dernière le don  
D'être, même pour les méchants, le sacrifice ;  
Chacune a bu dans le chrétien calice  
Tout l'infini."

There is nothing of mysticism nor any whining of religious remorse in the poet's return on himself, but as the exquisite concluding poem, "Très Simplement," implies, it was a woman's gentleness and devotion, which turned the current of his life and of his art. Henceforward, between the peaks and chasms of his vertiginous or abysmal verse, blow many tender blossoms of delicate humanity. The "Almanach," published last year (and beautifully "ornamented" by M. Théo van Rysselberghe) exhibits attractively the sunnier qualities of his later work : vigorous sympathy, rippling fancy, and loving scrutiny of Nature.

It is unfortunate that so many of M. Verhaeren's earlier writings are now inaccessible. The "Mercure de France" has indeed reprinted "Les Flamandes," "Les Moines," and other verse in one volume, but the "Soirs," "Débâcles," and "Flambeaux Noir," enhanced by a superb frontispiece of Odilon Redon, are entombed in collectors' libraries and the British Museum. English readers are bound to regret this, for the grandeur and squalor of London, which deeply impressed the Flemish poet, are reflected in several poems, worthy to be set beside those of Wordsworth for beauty, though Verhaeren's convulsive vision is in violent contrast with Wordsworth's classic

calm. The sight of heaped-up lion skins in a Thames warehouse moves him to cry :

“O cet orgueil des vieux déserts, vendus par blocs ! . . .  
Hurleurs du Sahara, hurleurs du Labrador,  
Rois de la force errante, au clair des nuits australes !  
Hélas, voici pour vous, voici les pavés noirs, . . .  
Voici Londres, cuvant en des brouillards de bière  
Enormément son rêve d'or et son sommeil  
Suragité de fièvre et de cauchemars rouges.”

This is his usual note, a cry ; but it is a seer, who cries, and a thinker, not a rhetorician ; he is careful so to fuse emotion and thought as to win the suffrages of truth-lovers and beauty-lovers. His pictorial minuteness tempers his passion for grandiose effect; such fertile fancy has not often been yoked with such omnipresent, architectonic reason. Discarding the facile lures of legend and romance he evokes the essential majesty of common things, with magic far from common. Studiously impersonal, he cannot hide a personality of ardent sympathy, of profound earnestness. Like Landor, he may be destined to “dine late ;” but, assuredly, “the dining-room will be well-lighted, the guests few and select.”

OSMAN EDWARDS.





## THE TABLES OF THE LAW

### I

ILL you permit me, Aherne," I said, "to ask you a question, which I have wanted to ask you for years; and have not asked because we have grown nearly strangers. Why did you refuse the cassock and the berretta, and almost at the last moment? I never expected you, of all men, to become 'a spoilt priest.' When you and I lived together, you cared neither for wine, women, nor money, and were absorbed in theological and mystical studies." I had watched through dinner for a moment to put my question, and ventured now, because he had thrown off a little of the reserve and indifference, which, ever since his last return from Italy, had taken the place of our once close friendship. He had just questioned me too, about certain private and almost sacred things, and my frankness had earned, I thought, a like frankness from him.

When I began to speak he was lifting to his lips a glass of that old wine which he could choose so well and valued so little; and while I spoke, he set it slowly and meditatively upon the table and held it there, its deep red light dyeing his long delicate fingers. The impression of his face and form, as they were then, is still vivid with me, and is inseparable from another and fanciful impression: the impression of a man holding a flame in his naked hand. He was to me, at that moment, the supreme type of our race, which, when it has risen above, or is sunken below, the formalisms of half-education and the rationalisms of conventional affirmation and denial, turns away from practicable desires and intuitions, towards desires so unbounded that no human vessel can contain them, intuitions so immaterial that their sudden and far-off fire leaves heavy darkness about hand and foot. He had the nature, which is half alchemist, half soldier of fortune, and must needs turn action into dreaming, and dreaming into action; and for such there is no order, no finality, no contentment in this world. At the Jesuit school in Paris he had made one of

the little group, which used to gather in corners of the playing field, or in remote class rooms, to hear the speculative essays which we wrote and read in secret. More orthodox in most of his beliefs than Michael Robartes, he had surpassed him in a fanciful hatred of all life, and this hatred had found expression in the curious paradox, half borrowed from some fanatical monk, half invented by himself; that the beautiful arts were sent into the world to overthrow nations, and finally life herself, by sowing everywhere unlimited desires, like torches thrown into a burning city. This idea was not at the time, I believe, more than a paradox, a plume of the pride of youth; and it was only after his leaving school that he endured the fermentation of belief which is coming upon our people with the reawakening of their imaginative life.

Presently he stood up, saying :

"Come, and I will show you, for you at any rate will understand," and taking candles from the table, he lit the way into the long paved passage that led to his private chapel. We passed between the portraits of the Jesuits and priests, some of no little fame, whom his family had given to the Church; and framed photographs of the pictures which had especially moved him; and the few paintings his small fortune, eking out by an almost penurious abstinence from the things most men desire, had enabled him to buy in his travels. The photographs of pictures were from the masterpieces of many schools; but in all, the beauty, whether it was a beauty of religion, of love, or of some fantastical vision of mountain and wood, was the beauty achieved by temperaments which seek always an absolute of emotion, and have their most continual, though not most perfect expression, in the legends and music and vigils of the Celtic peoples. The certitude of a fierce or gracious fervour in the enraptured faces of Francesca's and Crivelli's Madonnas, and in the august faces of the sibyls of Michael Angelo; and the incertitude, as of souls trembling between the excitement of the spirit and the excitement of the flesh, in the wavering faces Sodoma made for the churches of Siena, and in the faces like thin flames, imagined by the modern symbolists and pre-Raphaelites, had often made that long, gray, dim, echoing passage seem to me like a vestibule of eternity.

Almost every detail of the chapel, which we entered by a narrow Gothic door, whose threshold had been worn smooth by the secret worshippers of the penal times, was vivid in my memory; for it was in this chapel that I had first, and when but a boy, been moved by the mediævalism which is now, I think, the governing influence on my life. The only thing that seemed new

was a square bronze box ; like those made in ancient times of more precious substances to hold the sacred books ; which stood before the six unlighted candles and the ebony crucifix upon the altar. Aherne made me sit down on a long oaken bench, and having bowed very low before the crucifix, took the bronze box from the altar, and sat down beside me with the box upon his knees.

" You will perhaps have forgotten," he said, " most of what you have read about Joachim of Flora, for he is little more than a name to even the best read. He was an abbot in Corace in the twelfth century, and is best known for his prophecy, in a book called *Expositio in Apocalypsin*, that the Kingdom of the Father was passed, the Kingdom of the Son passing, the Kingdom of the Spirit yet to come. The Kingdom of the Spirit was to be a complete triumph of the Spirit, the *spiritualis intelligentia* he called it, over the dead letter. He had many followers among the more extreme Franciscans, and these were accused of possessing a secret book of his called the *Liber Inducens in Evangelium Aeternum*. Again and again groups of visionaries were accused of possessing this terrible book, in which the freedom of the Renaissance lay hidden, until at last Pope Alexander IV. had it found and cast into the flames. I have here the greatest treasure the world contains. I have a copy of that book, and see what great artists have made the robes in which it is wrapped. This bronze box was made by Benvenuto Cellini, who covered it with gods and demons, whose eyes are closed to signify an absorption in the inner light." He lifted the lid and took out a book bound in old leather, covered with filigree work of tarnished silver. " And this cover bound for Canevari ; while Giulio Clovio, the one artist of the later Renaissance who could give to his work the beauty of a hidden hope, tore out the beginning page of every chapter of the old copy and set in its place a page, surmounted by an elaborate letter, and a miniature of some one of the great whose example was cited in the chapter ; and wherever the writing left a little space elsewhere, he put some delicate emblem or intricate pattern."

I took the book in my hands and began turning over the jewel-like pages, holding it close to the candle to discover the texture of the paper.

" Where did you get this amazing book ? " I said. " If genuine, and I cannot judge by this light, you have discovered one of the most precious things in the world."

" It is certainly genuine," he replied. " When the original was destroyed, one copy alone remained, and was in the hands of a lute player of Florence, and from him it passed to his son, and so from generation to generation,

until it came to the lute player, who was father to Benvenuto Cellini, and from him it passed to Giulio Clovio, and from Giulio Clovio to a Roman engraver ; and then from generation to generation, the story of its wandering passing on with it, until it came into the possession of the family of Aretino, and so to Giulio Aretino, an artist and worker in metals, and student of the kabalistic heresies of Pico della Mirandola. He spent many nights with me at Rome discussing philosophy ; and at last I won his confidence so perfectly that he showed me this, his greatest treasure ; and, finding how much I valued it, and feeling that he himself was growing old and beyond the help of its mysterious teaching, he sold it me for no great sum, considering its great preciousness."

" What is the doctrine ? " I said. " Some mediaeval straw-splitting about the nature of the Trinity, which is only useful to-day to show how many things are unimportant to us, which once shook the world ? "

" I could never make you understand," he said with a deep sigh, " that nothing is unimportant in belief, but even you will admit that this book goes to the heart. Do you see the tables on which the commandments were written in Latin ? " I looked to the end of the room opposite to the altar, and saw that the two marble tablets were gone, and two large empty tablets of ivory, like large copies of the little tablets we set over our desks, had taken their place. " It has swept the commandments of the Father away," he went on, " and displaced the commandments of the Son by the commandments of the Holy Spirit. The first book is called *Fractura Tabularum*. In the first chapter it mentions the names of the great artists who made them graven things and the likeness of many things, and adored them and served them ; and in the second the names of the great wits who took the name of the Lord their God in vain ; and that long third chapter, set with the emblems of sanctified faces, and having wings upon its borders, is the praise of breakers of the seventh day and wasters of the six days. Those two chapters tell of men and women who railed upon their parents, remembering that their god was older than the god of their parents ; and that, which has the sword of Michael for an emblem, commends the kings that wrought secret murder and so won for the people a peace that was *amore sonnoque gravata et vestibus versicoloribus*, ' heavy with love and sleep and many-coloured raiment ; ' and that with the pale star at the closing has the lives of the noble youths who loved the wives of others and were transformed into memories, which have transformed many poorer hearts into sweet flames ; and that with the winged head is the history of the robbers, who lived, upon the sea or in the desert, lives which it compares

to the twittering of the string of a bow, *nervi stridentis instar*; and those two last, that are fire and gold, are devoted to the satirists who bore false witness against their neighbours and yet illustrated eternal wrath; and to those that have coveted more than other men the house of God, and all things that are his, which no man has seen and handled, except in madness and in dreaming.

"The second book, which is called *Straminis Deflagratio*, recounts the conversations Joachim of Flora held in his monastery at Corace, and afterwards in his monastery in the mountains of Sylae, with travellers and pilgrims, upon the laws of many countries; how chastity was a virtue and robbery a little thing in such a land, and robbery a crime and unchastity a little thing in such a land; and of the persons who had flung themselves upon these laws and become *decussa veste dei sidera*, 'stars shaken out of the raiment of God.'

"The third book, which is the finish, is called *Lex Secreta*, and describes the true inspiration of action, the only Eternal Evangel; and ends with a vision, which he saw among the mountains of Sylae, of his disciples sitting throned in the blue deep of the air and laughing aloud, with a laughter which it compares to the rustling of the wings of Time."

"I know little of Joachim of Flora," I said, "except that Dante set him in Paradise among the great doctors. If he held a heresy so singular, I cannot understand how no rumours of it came to the ears of Dante; and Dante made no peace with the enemies of the Church."

"Joachim of Flora acknowledged openly the authority of the Church, and even asked that all his published writings, and those to be published by his desire after his death, should be submitted to the censorship of the Pope. He considered that those, whose work was to live and not to reveal, were children and that the Pope was their father; but he taught in secret that certain others, and in always increasing numbers, were elected, not for life's sake, but to reveal that hidden substance of God which is colour and music and softness and a sweet odour; and that these have no father but the Holy Spirit. Just as poets and painters and musicians labour at their works, building them with lawless and lawful things alike so long as they embody the beauty that is beyond the grave; these children of the Holy Spirit labour at their moments with eyes upon the shining substance on which Time has heaped the refuse of creation; for the world only exists to be a tale in the ears of coming generations; and terror and content, birth and death, love and hatred and the fruit of the Tree are but instruments for that supreme art

which is to win us from life and gather us into eternity like doves into their dove-cots.

"I shall go away in a little while and travel into many lands, that I may know all accidents and destinies, and when I return, will write my secret law upon those ivory tablets, just as poets and romance writers have written the principles of their art in prefaces ; and will gather pupils about me that they may discover their law in the study of my law, and the Kingdom of the Holy Spirit be more widely and firmly established."

He was pacing up and down, and I listened to the fervour of his words and watched the excitement of his gestures with not a little concern. I had been accustomed to welcome the most singular speculations, and had always found them as harmless as the Persian cat, who half closes her meditative eyes and stretches out her long claws, before my fire. But now I longed to battle in the interests of orthodoxy, even of the commonplace : and yet could find nothing better to say than :

"It is not necessary to judge everyone by the law, for we have also Christ's commandment of love."

He turned and said, looking at me with shining eyes :

"Jonathan Swift made a soul for the gentlemen of this city by hating his neighbour as himself."

"At any rate, you cannot deny that to teach so dangerous a doctrine is to accept a terrible responsibility."

"Leonardo da Vinci," he replied, "has this noble sentence, 'The hope and desire of returning home to one's former state, is like the moth's desire for the light ; and the man, who with constant longing awaits each new month and new year—deeming that the things he longs for are ever too late in coming —does not perceive that he is longing for his own destruction.' How then can the pathway which will lead us into the heart of God be other than dangerous ? why should you, who are no materialist, cherish the continuity and order of the world as those do who have only the world ? You do not value the writers who will express nothing unless their reason understands how it will make what is called the right more easy ; why then will you deny a like freedom to the supreme art, the art which is the foundation of all arts ? Yes, I shall send out of this chapel saints, lovers, rebels, and prophets : souls which will surround themselves with peace, as with a nest made of grass ; and perhaps others over whom I shall weep. The dust shall fall for many years over this little box ; and then I shall open it ; and the tumults, which are, perhaps, the flames of the last day, shall come from under the lid."

I did not reason with him that night, because his excitement was great and I feared to make him angry ; and when I called at his house a few days later, he was gone and his house was locked up and empty. I have deeply regretted my failure both to combat his heresy and to test the genuineness of his strange book. Since my conversion I have indeed done penance for an error which I was only able to measure after some years.

## II

I was walking along one of the Dublin quays, about ten years after our conversation, stopping from time to time to turn over the books upon an old bookstall, and thinking, curiously enough, of the destinies of the little group of fellow-students who had shared so many speculations at the school in Paris, and particularly of the terrible destiny of Michael Robartes and his disciples, when I saw a tall, bent man walking slowly in front of me. He stopped presently at a little shop, in the window of which were blue and white statues of the Virgin, and gilded statues of St. Patrick and his crozier. His face was now half turned towards me, and I recognized in the lifeless mask with dim eyes what had been the resolute, delicate face of Owen Aherne. I walked towards him, but had not gone many yards before he turned away, as though he had seen me, and went hastily down a side street.

During the next few weeks I inquired of all who had once known him, but he had made himself known to no one, and knocked without result at the door of his old house. I had nearly persuaded myself that I was mistaken, when I saw him again, and this time in a back street behind the Four Courts, and followed him until he stopped at the door of his house.

I laid my hand upon his arm ; he turned round, and quite without surprise ; and, indeed, it is possible that to him, whose inner life had soaked up the outer life, a parting of many years was a parting from forenoon to afternoon. He stood holding the door half open, as though he would keep me from entering, and would, perhaps, have parted from me with no further words had I not said :

"Aherne, you trusted me once, will you not trust me again, and tell me what has come of the ideas we discussed ten years ago ? but perhaps you have long forgotten them."

"You have a right to hear," he answered ; "for having told you the ideas, it is necessary that I tell you the terrible danger they contain ; but when

you have heard, we part for good and all : I must be hidden away, for I am lost."

I followed him through the paved passage, and saw that its corners were choked with dust and cobwebs ; and that the pictures were shrouded with cobwebs and gray with dust ; and, when he opened the door of the chapel, I saw that the dust and cobwebs which covered the ruby and sapphire of the saints in the window had made it very dim. He sat down wearily, not seeming to notice whether I was standing or sitting, and pointed to where the ivory tablets glimmered faintly in the deep gloom. I saw that they were covered with very small writing, and went up to them and began to read them. The writing was an elaborate casuistry, illustrated apparently with many examples, but whether from his own life, or from the life of others, I do not know. Before I had done more than read a sentence here and there, I turned from them, for Aherne had begun to speak in a low monotonous voice.

"I am outside the salvation of Him who died for sinners, because I have lost the power of committing a sin. I found the secret law of my life, and, finding it, no longer desired to transgress, because it was my own law. Whatever my intellect and my soul commanded, I did, and sin passed from me, and I ceased to be among those for whom Christ died." And at the name of Christ he crossed himself with that involuntary gesture which marks those who have crossed themselves from childhood. "At first I tried to sin by breaking my law, although without desire; but the sin without desire is shadowy, like the sins of some phantom one has not visited even in dreams. You who are not lost, who may still speak to men and women, tell them that it is necessary to make an arbitrary law that one may be among those for whom Christ has died."

I went over and stood beside him, and said :

"Prayer and penance will make you like other men."

"Not," he replied, "unless they can take from me my knowledge of the secret law."

I used some argument, which has passed out of my memory, but his strong intellect, which seemed all the stronger and more active from contrast with the weary monotony of his voice, tore my argument in pieces. I had gone on to heap argument on argument, had he not risen and led me from the chapel, repeating, "We part for good and all ; for I must be hidden away."

I followed, intending to come to him again the next day ; but as I stood in the door of the house a sudden hope came into my mind, and I said :

"Will you lend me the *Liber Inducens in Evangelium Aeternum* for a few days, that I may have it examined by an expert?"

"I have burned the book and flung the box into the sea."

When I came the next day with a Jesuit Father from the College of St. Francis Xavier, the house was locked up and apparently empty once more.

W. B. YEATS.

## EPILOGUE



ET us go hence : the night is now at hand ;  
The day is overworn, the birds all flown,  
And we have reaped the crops the gods have sown,  
Despair and death ; deep darkness o'er the land

Broods like an owl : we cannot understand  
Laughter or tears, for we have only known  
Surpassing vanity ; vain things alone  
Have driven our perverse and aimless band.

Let us go hence somewhither strange and cold,  
To hollow lands, where just men and unjust  
Find end of labour ; where's rest for the old,  
Freedom to all from fear and love and lust.  
Twine our torn hands ! O, pray, the earth enfold  
Our life-sick hearts and turn them into dust !

ERNEST DOWSON.

## A LITERARY CAUSERIE ON THE "INVECTIVES" OF VERLAINE



NEVER read a book with more regret than this book of "Invectives," which has appeared since the death of Verlaine. I do not see why it should not have been written, if the writing of a petulance helped to clear that petulance away. But what might have been a sort of sad or vexed amusement to Verlaine, in some sleepless hour in hospital, should never have been taken for more than what it was, and should never, certainly, have gone further than one of the best-locked cupboards in Vanier's publishing office. I should like to think that Verlaine never intended it to go further; and I am quite sure that, in the first instance, he never did intend it to go further. But I know Vanier, and I know that whatever Vanier got hold of he was not likely to loose. Gradually the petulances would have heaped themselves one upon another, until they had come to about the size of a book. Then there would be the suggestion: why should we not make a book of them? Then jest would turn into earnest; Verlaine would be persuaded that he was a great satirist: it was so easy to persuade him of anything! And now here is the book.

Well, the book has some admirable things in it, and, as perhaps the most admirable, I will quote a piece called "Deception":

"Satan de sort, Diable d'argent!"  
Parut le Diable  
Qui me dit : "L'homme intelligent  
Et raisonnable  
  
Que te voici, que me veux-tu?  
Car tu m'évoques  
Et je crois, l'homme tout vertu,  
Que tu m'invoques.  
  
Or je me mets, suis-je gentil?  
A ton service :  
Dis ton vœu naif ou subtil :  
Bêtise ou vice?"

Que dois-je pour faire plaisir  
A ta sagesse?  
L'impuissance ou bien le désir  
Croissant sans cesse?

L'indifférence ou bien l'abus?  
Parle, que puis-je?"  
Je répondis : "Tous vins sont bus,  
Plus de prestige,

La femme trompe et l'homme aussi,  
Je suis malade,  
JE VEUX MOURIR." Le Diable : "Si  
C'est là l'auabade

Qu tu m'offres, je rentre. En Bas.  
Tuer m'oifusque.  
Bon pour ton Dieu. Je ne suis pas  
A ce point brusque."

Diable d'argent et par la mort !  
Partit le Diable,  
Me laissant en proie à ce sort  
Irrémédiable.

In such a poem as this we have the Verlaine of the finer parts of "Parallèlement." But what of the little jokes for and against M. Moréas, the pointless attack on Leconte de Lisle, the unworthy rage against M. Rod, the political squibs, the complaints against doctors and magistrates, the condescension to the manner of M. Raoul Ponchon? Here is neither a devouring rage, which must flame itself out, nor a fine malice, justifying its existence, as the serpent does, by the beauty of its coils. Verlaine's furies, which were frequent, were too brief, and too near the surface, to be of much use to him in the making of art. He was a big child, and his furies meant no more than the squalling and kicking of a baby. His nature was essentially good-humoured, finding pleasure on the smallest opportunity; often despondent, and for reasons enough, but for the most part, and in spite of everything—ill-health, poverty, interminable embarrassments—full of a brave gaiety. He often grumbled, even then with a sort of cheerfulness; and when he grumbled he used very colloquial language, some of which you will not find in the dictionaries of classical French. These poems are his grumblings; only, unfortunately, they are written down, and we can read them in print, critically, instead of listening to them in sympathetic amusement. And what injustice they do him, alike as poet and man! How impossible it will be, now that this book

has appeared, to convince anyone, to whom Verlaine is but a name, that the writer of these "Invectives" was the most charming, the most lovable of men. The poet will recover from it, for, at all events, there are the "Fêtes Galantes," the "Romances sans Paroles," "Sagesse," "Amour," and the others, which one need but turn to, and which are there for all eyes. But the man!

Well, the man will soon become a legend, and this book will, no doubt, be one of the many contradictory chapters of the legend. In a few years' time Verlaine will have become as distant, as dubious, as distorted, as Gilles de Retz. He will once more re-enter that shadow of unknown horror from which he has but latterly emerged. People will refuse to believe that he was not always drunk, or singing "Chansons pour elle." They will see in his sincere Catholicism only what des Esseintes, in the book of Huysmans, saw in it : "des rêveries clandestines, des fictions d'un amour occulte pour une Madone byzantine qui se muait, à un certain moment, en une Cydalise égarée dans notre siècle." And they will see, perhaps, only a poetical licence in such lines as these, in which, years ago, Verlaine said all that need ever be said in excuse, or in explanation, of the problem of himself :

Un mot encore, car je vous dois  
Quelque lueur en définitive  
Concernant la chose qui m'arrive :  
Je compte parmi les maladroits.

J'ai perdu ma vie et je sais bien  
Que tout blâme sur moi s'en va fondre :  
A cela je ne puis que répondre  
Que je suis vraiment né Saturnien.

ARTHUR SYMONS.





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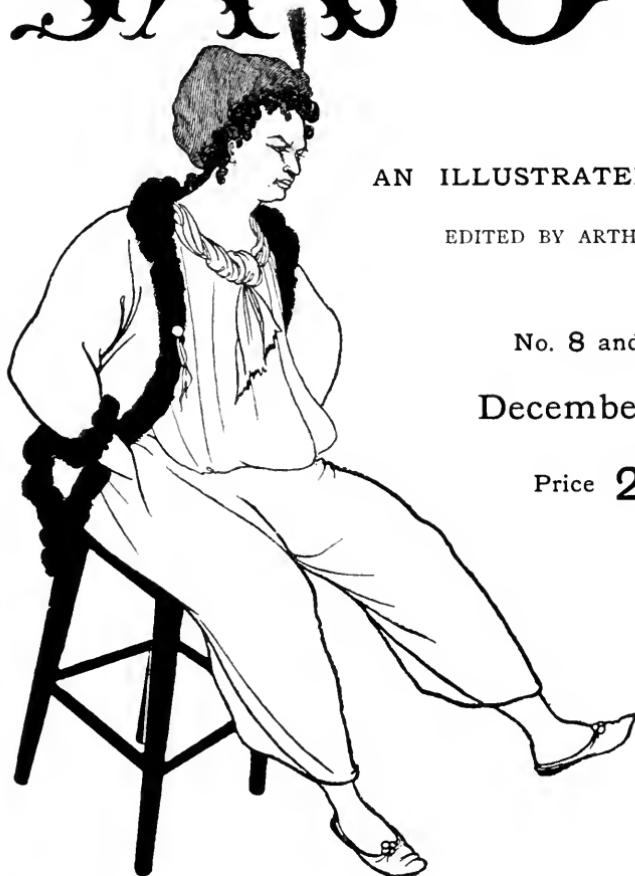
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# A Répétition of “Tristan and Isolde”

By Aubrey Beardsley.





AB



## MUNDI VICTIMA

### I



ENCEFORTH for each of us remains the world.  
The gates have closed behind us, we are hurled  
From the fixed paradise of our content  
Into an outer world of banishment,  
And, in this anger of the garden's Lord,  
His serene angel with the fiery sword  
Has yet more pitilessly cast us forth,  
You by the gate that looks upon the North  
And I by the gate looking on the South.  
And so the lamentations of your mouth  
I shall not hear, nor tears for this distress  
Water my hours' unwatered barrenness.  
For love is ended, love that was to be  
Endless ; nay, love endures perpetually,  
But I shall never kiss your lips again,  
Nor hold your hand, nor feel your arms enchain  
Body and soul in one extreme embrace,  
Nor find again the kingdom of your face.  
For I have lost you, you return no more.  
And I have lost in you the years before  
You gather'd all my years within the glance  
Of your supreme and triumphing countenance.  
And all the years whose desultory flame  
Shall yet smoke flickeringly after them.  
Passion has burnt itself clean out for you.  
I go back empty-hearted, to renew  
The unprofitable, the vain following  
Of every vain, unprofitable thing ;  
You, with all seemly wishes satisfied,  
Go forth to be the most unhappy bride

The sun shall shine upon in rich men's halls.  
Hearken, I hear a voice, a voice that calls ;  
What shall remain for him ? sadly it cries :  
Desolate years, eternal memories.  
And what for her ? it cries, it cries with tears :  
Eternal memories, desolate years.

## II

If the astrologers speak truth, who tell  
That the stars make for us our heaven and hell,  
My passionate and perverse horoscope,  
Where the intellectual forces may not cope  
With Scorpio, Herschel, Venus, and the Moon,  
Marked in my life that love in me should swoon  
Into the arms of strange affinities.  
It was myself looked at me with your eyes,  
Where Venus and the Moon with Herschel strove  
In some ambiguous paradox of love.  
When first I touched your hand I felt the thrill  
Knit heart to heart, and at the touch your will  
Became as my will, and my will became  
As your will, and an unappeasable flame  
Was lighted when your lips and mine first met  
In that long kiss my lips shall not forget  
When I am aged with eternity.  
I knew that my desire had come to me,  
And that the world was ended and begun,  
And I should never more beneath the sun  
Go lightly forth on any wayfaring.  
I knew that I should suffer for this thing,  
For this completion of the impossible,  
This mystical marriage of heaven and hell,  
With anguish and with extreme agony,  
Knowing that my desire had come to me.

## III

I gaze upon your portrait in my hand.  
And slowly, in a dream, I see you stand  
Silent before me, with your pressing gaze  
Of enigmatic calm, and all your face  
Smiling with that ironical repose  
Which is the weariness of one who knows.  
Dare I divine, then, what your visage dreams,  
So troubled and so strangely calm it seems ?  
Consuming eyes consenting to confess  
The extreme ardour of their heaviness,  
The lassitude of passionate desires  
Denied, pale smoke of unaccomplished fires ;  
Ah ! in those shell-curved, purple eyelids bent  
Towards some most dolorous accomplishment,  
And in the painful patience of the mouth,  
(A sundered fruit that waits, in a great drouth,  
One draught of living water from the skies)  
And in the carnal mystery of the eyes,  
And in the burning pallor of the cheeks :  
Voice of the Flesh ! this is the voice that speaks,  
In agony of spirit, or in grief  
Because desire dare not desire relief.

## IV

I have known you, I have loved you, I have lost.  
Here in one woman I have found the host  
Of women, and the woman of all these  
Who by her strangeness had the power to please  
The strangeness of my difficult desires ;  
And here the only love that never tires  
Even with the monotony of love.  
It was your strangeness I was amorous of,  
Mystery of variety, that, being known, yet does  
Leave you still infinitely various,

And leave me thirsting still, still wondering  
At your unknowable and disquieting  
Certainty of a fixed uncertainty.  
And thus I knew that you were made for me,  
For I have always hated to be sure,  
And there is nothing I could less endure  
Than a fond woman whom I understood.  
I never understood you : mood by mood  
I watched you through your changes manifold,  
As the star-gazing shepherd from his fold  
Watches the myriad changes of the moon.  
Is not love's mystery the supreme boon ?  
Ah rare, scarce hoped-for, longed-for, such a goal  
As this most secret and alluring soul !  
Your soul I never knew, I guessed at it,  
A dim abode of what indefinite  
And of what poisonous possibilities !  
Your soul has been a terror to mine eyes,  
Even as my own soul haunts me, night and day,  
With voices that I cannot drive away,  
And visions that I scarce can see and live.  
And you, from your own soul a fugitive,  
Have you not fled, did not your pride disown  
The coming of a soul so like your own,  
Eyes that you fancied read you, yet but drew  
Unknown affinities, yourself from you,  
And hands that held your destiny, because  
The power that held you in them, yours it was ?  
Did you not hate me, did you not in vain  
Avoid me and repel me and refrain ?  
Was not our love fatal to you and me,  
The rapture of a tragic ecstasy  
Between disaster and disaster, given  
A moment's space, to be a hell in heaven ?  
Love, being love indeed, could be no less,  
For us, than an immortal bitterness,  
A blindness and a madness, and the wave  
Of a great sea that breaks and is a grave.

Ah, more to us than many prosperous years,  
 So brief a rapture and so many tears ;  
 To have won, amid the tumults round about,  
 The shade of a great silence from the shout  
 Of the world's battles and the idle cry  
 Of those vain faiths for which men live and die !  
 And have we not tasted the very peace  
 So passionate an escape must needs release,  
 Being from the world so strangely set apart,  
 The inmost peace that is the whirlpool's heart ?

## V

Let me remember when you loved me best.  
 When the intolerable rage possessed  
 The spirit of your senses, and the breath  
 As of the rushing of the winds of death  
 Rapt you from earth, and in a fiery trance  
 Exalted your transfigured countenance  
 And bade your heart be rapturously still ?  
 Or in the holy silence of that thrill  
 Which stirs the little heart of grass, and swings  
 The worlds upon their windy chariotings ?  
 Or in the haunted trouble of those deep  
 Enchantments of your visionary sleep,  
 Ardent with dreams, and the delicious strife  
 Of phantoms passionate with waking life ?  
 Or when, as a fond mother o'er her child,  
 You bent above me, and the mother smiled  
 Upon the man re-born to be her own,  
 Flesh of her very flesh, bone of her bone ?  
 Of all your kisses which supremest one  
 Out of the immeasurable million ?  
 Or which denied, as on a certain day  
 You tremulously turned your lips away,  
 And I, who wronged you, thinking you unkind,  
 Found it love's penance for a troubled mind,  
 Grieved it had done some little wrong to love ?

Out of your silences which most did move  
 The eternal heart of silence, ancient peace ?  
 Or did you love me best, and then increase  
 The best with better, till at last we stood,  
 As he who was love's laureate in each mood  
 Of passionate communion, bids us stand,  
 First among lovers when but hand in hand

## VI

It is all over, I am left alone.  
 O visiting ghost, these eyes have never known  
 So cold, calm, tearless, proud, dispassionate,  
 Desperate, desolate, importunate,  
 Whose wrong denied you life, and rent from me  
 Your love, to be this ghost of memory ?  
 Not yours, though you have left me ; and not mine,  
 Though I have bade you leave me : the divine  
 Right of the world's injustice, and that old  
 Tyranny of dumb, rooted things, which hold  
 The hearts of men in a hard bondage. Yet,  
 Not for the world's sake, let me not forget  
 That, in the world's eyes, I have done you wrong.  
 And since to the world's judgment must belong  
 The saving and damnation of all souls  
 Whom that usurped sovereignty controls,  
 Indeed I have done you wrong. I loved you more  
 Than your own soul. I had not loved before,  
 And love possessed me, fixed my wandering mind,  
 And drove me onward, heedless, deaf, and blind,  
 Wrapt in the fiery whirlwind, passion, drove  
 Life to annihilation upon love.  
 I had not loved before : I had been love's lord,  
 I had delicately feasted at the board  
 Where Folly's guests luxuriously admire  
 Each dainty waiting handmaiden desire ;  
 Where, when the feast is over, choice is free.  
 I had feasted long, I had chosen riotously,

Kisses, and roses, and warm scented wine,  
I had bound my forehead with the tangled vine,  
I had bound about my heart the tangled hair  
Of laughing light loves ; I had found love fair,  
Of delicate aspect, and free from guile,  
And I had bartered kisses for a smile,  
And my vine-wreath for poppies twined for sleep,  
And of a sleepy bowl I had drunk deep,  
And, dreaming, never dreamed that hearts could ache,  
For over-much desire, or for love's sake.  
And then you came. The rose of yesterday  
Petal by petal drooped, withering away,  
And all my bright flowers drooped, withering dead,  
And the vine-wreath had fallen from my head,  
And the wine-red poppies dripped to earth, and spilled  
The bowl of sleep, and all the air was filled,  
As with the fluttering voices of soft doves,  
With lamentations of the little loves.  
Then a new life was born of the last breath  
Of that which never lived ; I knew that death  
Which love is, ere it is eternity.  
And then I knew that love, I had thought so fair,  
Is terrible of aspect, and heavy care  
Follows the feet of love where'er he goes,  
And lovers' hearts, because of many woes,  
Ache sorer than all hearts most desolate,  
And dearest love works most the work of hate.

## VII

The world has taken you, the world has won.  
In vain against the world's dominion  
We fought the fight of love against the world.  
For since about the tree of knowledge curled  
The insidious snake, the snake's voice whispering  
Has poisoned every fair and fruitful thing.  
Did not the world's voice treacherously move  
Even your fixed soul ? Did you not hold our love

Guilty of its own ardour, and the immense  
 Sacrifice to its own omnipotence  
 A sacrilege and not a sacrifice?  
 Even in our love our love could not suffice  
 (Not the rapt silence whose warm wings abound  
 With all the holy plenitude of sound,  
 At love's most shadowy and hushed hour of day)  
 To keep the voices of the world away.  
 O subtle voices, luring from the dream  
 The dreamer, till love's very vision seem  
 The unruffled air that phantom feet have crossed  
 In the mute march of that processional host  
 Whose passing is the passing of the wind ;  
 Avenging voices, hurrying behind  
 The souls that have escaped, and yet look back  
 Reluctantly along the flaming track ;  
 O mighty voices of the world, I have heard  
 Between our heart-beats your reiterate word,  
 And I have felt our heart-beats slackening.

## VIII

Love, to the world, is the forbidden thing ;  
 And rightly, for the world is to the strong,  
 And the world's honour and increase must belong  
 To the few mighty triumphing through hate  
 And to the many meek who humbly wait  
 The grudging wage of daily drudgery.  
 The world is made for hate, for apathy,  
 For labouring greed that mines the earth for gold,  
 And sweats to gather dust into its hold :  
 Is not the world bought for a little dust ?  
 Kingdoms are shaken from their ancient trust,  
 And kingdoms established upon treacheries ;  
 Under the temple-roof of the same skies  
 The stones of altars older than their gods  
 Are beaten down, and in the old abodes  
 The smoke of a new incense blinds the stars ;

The rind of earth is eaten up by wars,  
As a rat, gnawing, leaves a mouldering heap ;  
And the world drowses in a downy sleep,  
The world being sworn confederate with success.  
Yet will it pardon the forgetfulness  
Of laughing loves that linger but a night  
In the soft perfumed chambers of delight.  
How should it pardon love ? love whose intent  
Is from the world to be in banishment,  
Love that admits but fealty to one,  
Love that is ever in rebellion.  
The world is made for dutiful restraint,  
Its martyrs are the lover and the saint,  
All whom a fine and solitary rage  
Urges on some ecstatic pilgrimage  
In search of any Holy Sepulchre.  
The lover is a lonely voyager  
Over great seas and into lonely lands,  
He speaks a tongue which no man understands,  
Much given to silence, no good citizen,  
His utmost joy to be apart from men,  
For his creating mind has given birth,  
God-like, to a new heaven and a new earth ;  
Where, if he dwell apart or in the crowd,  
He talks with angels in a fiery cloud  
Upon the mount of vision all his days.  
Therefore the world, beholding in his face  
Only the radiance of reflected light  
Left by that incommunicable sight,  
Which to the dim eyes of the world may seem  
But the marsh-glimmer of a fevered dream,  
Bids love renounce love, or be cast aside.  
Has not the world's hate ever crucified,  
From age to age, rejoicing in its loss,  
Love on the same inevitable cross,  
In every incarnation from above  
Of the redeeming mystery of love ?

## IX

The world has taken you, the world has won.  
Accursed be the world ! Was it well done  
To give the world, once more, its victory ?  
Was it well done to let you go from me ?  
For your own sake I suffered you to go.  
Did I do right, for your sake ? Say not no,  
Say not that I have left you to your fate,  
That I have made my own life desolate,  
Casting adrift upon a shoreless tide,  
While you, blind, shipwrecked, and without a guide.  
Fasting and footsore, desolately went  
Across an undiscovered continent !  
Should I have held you fast, in spite of all ?  
Perchance. Yet it was well, whate'er befall,  
To have renounced love, merely for love's sake.  
Ah, when in lonely nights I lie awake,  
And hear the windy voices of the rain,  
At least I shall not hear your voice complain  
" If you had loved me, you had let me go !"  
Have we not loved and sorrowed ? and we know  
It is well to have loved and sorrowed and not striven,  
And to endure hell, having passed through heaven,  
To know what heaven is, having passed through hell.  
Love's moment is a moment of farewell,  
Sorrow and weariness are all our years,  
And life is full of sighing, and much tears.

## X

What shall your life be in the years to come ?  
The world, that recks not of love's martyrdom,  
Shall praise in you a weary passionate face,  
Where tears and memories have left their trace,  
Into a finer beauty fashioning  
Your beauty, ever an unquiet thing.

You shall have riches : jewels shall be brought  
From the earth's ends to please a wandering thought,  
And the red heart of rubies shall suspire  
To kiss your fingers, and the inner fire  
That wastes the diamond's imprisoned soul  
Shall flame upon your brows, an aureole,  
And your white breast shall be devoutly kissed  
By the pale fasting lips of amethyst,  
And the cold purity of pearls enmesh  
Your throat that keeps my kisses in its flesh.  
Your beauty shall be clothed in raiment fit  
For the high privilege, to cover it ;  
You shall be served ere any wish arise  
With more than had seemed meet in your own eyes ;  
You shall be shielded lest the sun should light  
A rose too red on cheeks that blossom white ;  
You shall be shielded from the wind that may  
Tangle a tress delicately astray ;  
You shall be fenced about with many friends ;  
You shall be brought to many journeys' ends  
By leisured stages ; what was mine of old  
Shall now be yours, cities and skies of gold,  
And golden waters, and the infinite  
Renewal of the myriad-vested night.  
Where cool stars tessellated the lagoon,  
In Venice, under some old April moon,  
Shall not some April, too, for you be lit  
By the same moon that then wept over it ?  
Shall you not drive beneath the boulevard trees  
In that young Paris where I lived at ease ?  
And you shall see the women I have known,  
Before your voice called me to be your own  
Out of that delicate, pale, lilac air.  
And all this you shall find, as I did, fair,  
And all this you shall find, as now I find,  
Withered as leaves a ruinous winter wind  
Casts in the face of any summer's guest  
Revisiting some valley of old rest.

You will remember me in all these things,  
I shall go with you in your wanderings,  
I shall be nearer to you, far away,  
Than he who holds you by him, night and day ;  
Close let him hold you, close : what can he do ?  
For am I not the heart that beats in you ?  
And if, at night, you hear beside your bed  
The night's slow trampling hours with ceaseless tread  
Bearing the haggard corpse of morning on,  
You shall cry in vain for sleep's oblivion,  
Haunted by that unsleeping memory  
That wakes and watches with you ceaselessly.  
What shall your life be ? Loneliness, regret,  
A weary face beside a hearthstone set,  
A weary head upon a pillow laid  
Heavier than sleep ; pale lips that are afraid  
Of some betraying smile, and eyes that keep  
Their haunting memory strangled in its sleep.  
“ O mother ! ” is it I who hear you cry ?  
“ O mother ! mother ! ” is it only I ?  
“ O my lost lover ! ” shall she not, even she,  
Hear, and one moment pity you and me ?  
She must not hear, only the silence must  
Share in the jealous keeping of that trust.  
And when, perchance, telling some idle thing,  
Your husband rests his finger on my ring ;  
When your eye rests upon the casket where  
My letters keep the scent of days that were,  
My verses keep the perfume that was yours,  
And the key tells you how my love endures ;  
When you shall read of me, shall hear my name,  
On idle lips, in idle praise or blame ;  
Ah, when the world, perhaps, some day shall cry  
My name with a great shouting to the sky ;  
You must be silent, though your eyes, your cheek,  
Will answer for your heart, you must not speak,  
Though you would gladly dare a thousand harms  
To cry “ The joy of life was in his arms ! ”

Though you would give up all to cry one cry :  
“ I loved him, I shall love him till I die,  
I am the man you tell of, he is I ! ”

## XI

I write this for the world's eye, yet for one.  
When she shall hear of me, and not alone,  
Let her know always that my heart is hers,  
As it was always. If my fancy errs  
Into strange places, wildly following  
The flying track of any flitting thing,  
If I recapture any cast aside  
Garlands, or twine for roses that have died  
Fresh roses, or bid flower-soft arms entwine  
My forehead flushed with some bewildering wine,  
Then let her know that I am most forlorn.  
There is no penance harder to be borne  
Than, amid happy faces and the voice  
Of revellers who in revelling rejoice,  
To hear one's own sad heart keep time in vain  
With some sad unforgotten old refrain.  
For me, the world's eternal silence dwells  
Not in the peace of those ecstatic cells  
Where recollection goes the way of prayer  
Into the void, the welcoming void air,  
But here, in these bright crowds to be alone.  
Then let her know that I am most her own !  
Yet, if it might but save my soul from her,  
O come to me, Folly the Comforter,  
Fling those wild arms around me, take my hand,  
And lead me back to that once longed-for land,  
Where it is always midnight, and the light  
Of many tapers has burnt out the night,  
And swift life finds no moment set apart  
For rest, and the seclusion of the heart,  
And the return of any yesterday.  
Come to me, Folly, now, take me away ;

I will be faithful to you until death  
Puff out this wavering and unsteady breath.  
Folly, the bride of such unhappy men  
As I am, were you not my mistress, when,  
Love having not yet chosen me to be proud,  
I followed all the voices of the crowd?  
But I forsook you : I return anew,  
And for my bride I claim, I capture you.  
Folly, I will be faithful to you now.  
I will pluck all your roses for my brow,  
And, with the thorns of ruined roses crowned,  
I will drink every poison life has found  
In the enchantments that your fingers brew.  
Finally I commend myself to you,  
Multitudinous senses : carry me  
Upon your beating wings where I may see  
The world and all the glory of the world,  
And bid my soul from lust to lust be hurled,  
Endlessly, precipitously, on.  
Only in you is there oblivion,  
Multitudinous senses ; in your fire  
I light and I exterminate desire.  
Though it cry all night long, shall I not steep  
My sorrow in the fever of your sleep ?  
Where, if no phantom with faint fingers pale  
Beckon to me, wildly, across the veil  
Of the dim waving of her sorcerous hair,  
I may yet find your very peace, despair !  
Benignant principalities and powers  
Of evil, powers of the world's abysmal hours,  
Take me and make me yours : I am yours : O take  
The sacrifice of soul and body, break  
The mould of this void spirit, scatter it  
Into the vague and shoreless infinite,  
Pour it upon the restless arrogant  
Winds of tumultuous spaces ; grant, O grant  
That the loosed sails of this determinate soul  
Hurry it to disaster, and the goal

Of swiftest shipwreck ; that this soul descend  
The unending depths until oblivion end  
In self-oblivion, and at last be lost  
Where never any other wandering ghost,  
Voyaging from other worlds remembered not,  
May find it and remind of things forgot.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

## Two Drawings by Aubrey Beardsley

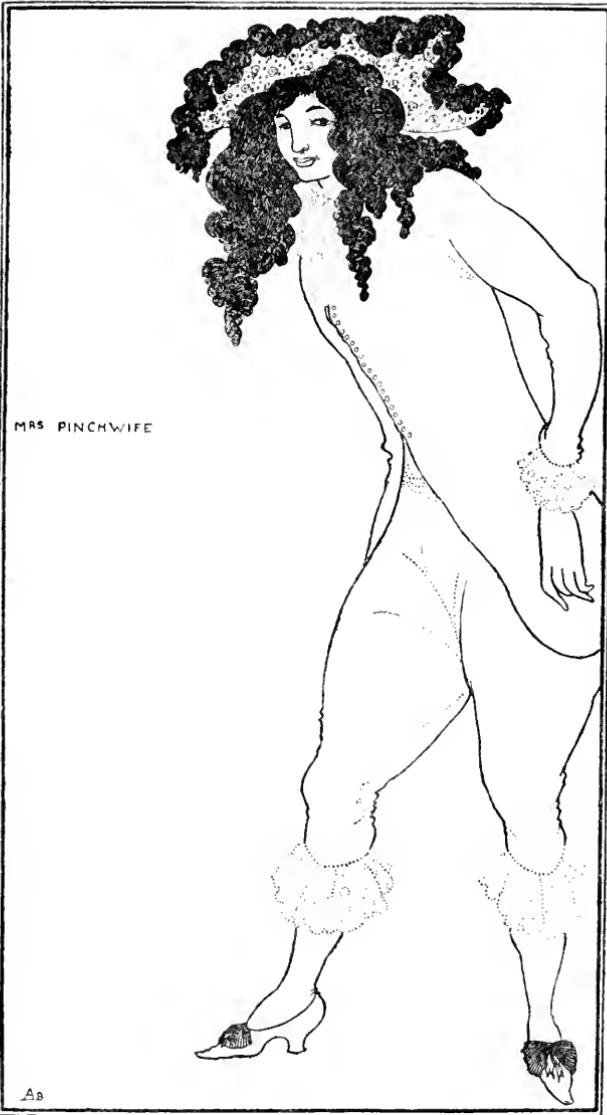
Don Juan, Sganarelle, and the Beggar, from Molière's  
"Don Juan."

Mrs. Pinchwife, from Wycherley's "Country Wife."



AB





MRS PINCHWIFE

AB



## WALTER PATER

### SOME CHARACTERISTICS



ALTER PATER was a man in whom fineness and subtlety of emotion were united with an exact and profound scholarship ; in whom a personality singularly unconventional, and singularly full of charm, found for its expression an absolutely personal and an absolutely novel style, which was the most carefully and curiously beautiful of all English styles. The man and his style, to those who knew him, were identical ; for, as his style was unlike that of other men, concentrated upon a kind of perfection which, for the most part, they could not even distinguish, so his inner life was peculiarly his own, centred within a circle beyond which he refused to wander ; his mind, to quote some words of his own, "keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world." And he was the most lovable of men ; to those who rightly apprehended him, the most fascinating ; the most generous and helpful of private friends, and in literature a living counsel of perfection, whose removal seems to leave modern prose without a contemporary standard of values.

"For it is with the delicacies of fine literature especially, its gradations of expression, its fine judgment, its pure sense of words, of vocabulary—things, alas! dying out in the English literature of the present, together with the appreciation of them in our literature of the past—that his literary mission is chiefly concerned." These words, applied by Pater to Charles Lamb, might reasonably enough have been applied to himself; especially in that earlier part of his work, which remains to me, as I doubt not it remains to many others, the most entirely delightful. As a critic, he selected for analysis only those types of artistic character in which delicacy, an exquisite fineness, is the principal attraction ; or if, as with Michel Angelo, he was drawn towards some more rugged personality, some more massive, less finished art, it was not so much from sympathy with these more obvious qualities of ruggedness and strength, but because he had divined the sweetness lying at the heart of the strength : "ex

forti dulcedo." Leonardo da Vinci, Joachim du Bellay, Coleridge, Botticelli : we find always something a little exotic, or subtle, or sought out, a certain rarity, which it requires an effort to disengage, and which appeals for its perfect appreciation to a public within the public ; those fine students of what is fine in art, who take their artistic pleasures consciously, deliberately, critically, with the learned love of the amateur.

And not as a critic only, judging others, but in his own person as a writer, both of critical and of imaginative work, Pater showed his pre-occupation with the "delicacies of fine literature." His prose was from the first conscious, and it was from the first perfect. That earliest book of his, "Studies in the History of the Renaissance," as it was then called, entirely individual, the revelation of a rare and special temperament, though it was, had many affinities with the poetic and pictorial art of Rossetti, Mr. Swinburne, and Burne-Jones, and seems, on its appearance in 1873, to have been taken as the manifesto of the so-called "aesthetic" school. And, indeed, it may well be compared, as artistic prose, with the poetry of Rossetti ; as fine, as careful, as new a thing as that, and with something of the same exotic odour about it : a savour in this case of French soil, a *Watteau* grace and delicacy. Here was criticism as a fine art, written in prose which the reader lingered over as over poetry ; modulated prose which made the splendour of Mr. Ruskin seem gaudy, the neatness of Matthew Arnold a mincing neatness, and the brass sound strident in the orchestra of Carlyle.

That book of "Studies in the Renaissance," even with the rest of Pater to choose from, seems to me sometimes to be the most beautiful book of prose in our literature. Nothing in it is left to inspiration : but it is all inspired. Here is a writer who, like Baudelaire, would better nature ; and in this goldsmith's work of his prose he too has "*rêvé le miracle d'une prose poétique, musicale sans rythme et sans rime.*" An almost oppressive quiet, a quiet which seems to exhale an atmosphere heavy with the odour of tropical flowers, broods over these pages ; a subdued light shadows them. The most felicitous touches come we know not whence—"a breath, a flame in the doorway, a feather in the wind ;" here are the simplest words, but they take colour from each other by the cunning accident of their placing in the sentence, "the subtle spiritual fire kindling from word to word."

In this book prose seemed to have conquered a new province ; and further, along this direction, prose could not go. Twelve years later, when "Marius the Epicurean" appeared, it was in a less coloured manner of writing that the "sensations and ideas" of that reticent, wise, and human soul were

given to the world. Here and there, perhaps, the goldsmith, adding more value, as he thought, for every trace of gold that he removed, might seem to have scraped a little too assiduously. But the style of "Marius," in its more arduous self-repression, has a graver note, and brings with it a severer kind of beauty. Writers who have paid particular attention to style have often been accused of caring little *what* they say, knowing how beautifully they can say anything. The accusation has generally been unjust: as if any fine beauty could be but skin-deep! The merit which, more than any other, distinguishes Pater's prose, though it is not the merit most on the surface, is the attention to, the perfection of, the *ensemble*. Under the soft and musical phrases an inexorable logic hides itself, sometimes only too well. Link is added silently, but faultlessly, to link; the argument marches, carrying you with it, while you fancy you are only listening to the music with which it keeps step. Take an essay to pieces, and you will find that it is constructed with mathematical precision; every piece can be taken out and replaced in order. I do not know any contemporary writer who observes the logical requirements so scrupulously, who conducts an argument so steadily from deliberate point to point towards a determined goal. And here, in "Marius," which is not a story, but the philosophy of a soul, this art of the *ensemble* is not less rigorously satisfied; though indeed "Marius" is but a sequence of scenes, woven around a sequence of moods.

In this book and in the "Imaginary Portraits" of three years later—which seem to me to show his imaginative and artistic faculties at their point of most perfect fusion—Pater has not endeavoured to create characters, in whom the flesh and blood should seem to be that of life itself; he had not the energy of creation, and he was content with a more shadowy life than theirs for the children of his dreams. What he has done is to give a concrete form to abstract ideas; to represent certain types of character, to trace certain developments, in the picturesque form of narrative; to which, indeed, the term portrait is very happily applied; for the method is that of a very patient and elaborate brush-work, in which the touches that go to form the likeness are so fine that it is difficult to see quite their individual value, until, the end being reached, the whole picture starts out before you. Each, with perhaps one exception, is the study of a soul, or rather of a consciousness; such a study as might be made by simply looking within, and projecting now this now that side of oneself on an exterior plane. I do not mean to say that I attribute to Pater himself the philosophical theories of Sebastian van Storck, or the artistic ideals of Duke Carl of Rosenmold. I mean that the

attitude of mind, the outlook, in the most general sense, is always limited and directed in a certain way, giving one always the picture of a delicate, subtle, aspiring, unsatisfied personality, open to all impressions, living chiefly by sensations, little anxious to reap any of the rich harvest of its intangible but keenly possessed gains ; a personality withdrawn from action, which it despises or dreads, solitary with its ideals, in the circle of its "exquisite moments," in the Palace of Art, where it is never quite at rest. It is somewhat such a soul, I have thought, as that which Browning has traced in "Sordello;" indeed, when reading for the first time "Marius the Epicurean," I was struck by a certain resemblance between the record of the sensations and ideas of Marius of White-Nights and that of the sensations and events of Sordello of Goito.

The style of the "Imaginary Portraits" is the ripest, the most varied and flawless, their art the most assured and masterly, of any of Pater's books : it was the book that he himself preferred in his work, thinking it, to use his own phrase, more "natural" than any other. And of the four portraits the most wonderful seems to me the poem, for it is really a poem, named "Denys l'Auxerrois." For once, it is not the study of a soul, but of a myth ; a transposition (in which one hardly knows whether to admire most the learning, the ingenuity, or the subtle imagination) of that strangest myth of the Greeks, the "Pagan after-thought" of Dionysus Zagreus, into the conditions of mediaeval life. Here is prose so coloured, so modulated, as to have captured, along with almost every sort of poetic richness, and in a rhythm which is essentially the rhythm of prose, even the suggestiveness of poetry, that most volatile and unseizable property, of which prose has so rarely been able to possess itself. The style of "Denys l'Auxerrois" has a subdued heat, a veiled richness of colour, which contrasts curiously with the silver-grey coolness of "A Prince of Court Painters," the chill, more leaden grey of "Sebastian van Storck," though it has a certain affinity, perhaps, with the more variously-tinted canvas of "Duke Carl of Rosenmold." Watteau, Sebastian, Carl : unsatisfied seekers, all of them, this after an artistic ideal of impossible perfection, that after a chill and barren ideal of philosophic thinking and living, that other after yet another ideal, unattainable to him in his period, of life "im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen," a beautiful and effective culture. The story of each, like that of "Marius," is a vague tragedy, ending abruptly, after so many uncertainties, and always with some subtly ironic effect in the accident of its conclusion. The mirror is held up to Watteau while he struggles desperately or hesitatingly forward, snatching from art one after another of her reticent secrets ; then, with a stroke, it is broken, and this artist

n immortal things sinks out of sight, into a narrow grave of red earth. The mirror is held up to Sebastian as he moves deliberately, coldly onward in the midst of a warm life which has so little attraction for him, freeing himself one by one from all obstructions to a clear philosophic equilibrium ; and the mirror is broken, with a like suddenness, and the seeker disappears from our sight ; to find, perhaps, what he had sought. It is held up to Duke Carl, the seeker after the satisfying things of art and experience, the dilettante in material and spiritual enjoyment, the experimenter on life ; and again it is broken, with an almost terrifying shock, just as he is come to a certain rash crisis : is it a step upward or downward ? a step, certainly, towards the concrete, towards a possible material felicity.

We see Pater as an imaginative writer, pure and simple, only in these two books, "Marius" and the "Imaginary Portraits," in the unfinished romance of "Gaston de Latour" (in which detail had already begun to obscure the outlines of the central figure), and in those "Imaginary Portraits," reprinted in various volumes, but originally intended to form a second series under that title : "Hippolytus Veiled," "Apollo in Picardy," "Emerald Uthwart ;" and that early first chapter of an unwritten story of modern English life, "The Child in the House." For the rest, he was content to be a critic : a critic of poetry and painting in the "Studies in the Renaissance" and the "Appreciations," of sculpture and the arts of life in the "Greek Studies," of philosophy in the volume on "Plato and Platonism." But he was a critic as no one else ever was a critic. He had made a fine art of criticism. His criticism—abounding in the close and strenuous qualities of really earnest judgment, grappling with his subject as if there were nothing to do but that, the "fine writing" in it being largely mere conscientiousness in providing a subtle and delicate thought with words as subtle and delicate—was, in effect, written with as scrupulous a care, with as much artistic finish, as much artistic purpose, as any imaginative work whatever ; being indeed, in a sense in which, perhaps, no other critical work is, imaginative work itself.

"The aesthetic critic," we are told in the preface to the "Studies in the Renaissance," "regards all the objects with which he has to do, all works of art, and the fairer forms of nature and human life, as powers or forces producing pleasurable sensations, each of a more or less peculiar and unique kind. This influence he feels, and wishes to explain, analyzing it, and reducing it to its elements. To him, the picture, the landscape, the engaging personality in life or in a book, 'La Gioconda,' the hills of Carrara, Pico of Mirandola, are valuable for their virtues, as we say in speaking of a herb, a wine, a gem ; for

the property each has of affecting one with a special, a unique, impression of pleasure." To this statement of what was always the aim of Pater in criticism, I would add, from the later essay on Wordsworth, a further statement, applying it, as he there does, to the criticism of literature. "What special sense," he asks, "does Wordsworth exercise, and what instincts does he satisfy? What are the subjects which in him excite the imaginative faculty? What are the qualities in things and persons which he values, the impression and sense of which he can convey to others, in an extraordinary way?" How far is this ideal from that old theory, not yet extinct, which has been briefly stated, thus, by Edgar Poe: "While the critic is *permitted* to play, at times, the part of the mere commentator—while he is *allowed*, by way of merely *interesting* his readers, to put in the fairest light the merits of his author—his *legitimate* task is still, in pointing out and analyzing defects, and showing how the work might have been improved, to aid the cause of letters, without undue heed of the individual literary men." And Poe goes on to protest, energetically, against the more merciful (and how infinitely more fruitful!) principles of Goethe, who held that what it concerns us to know about a work or a writer are the merits, not the defects, of the writer and the work. Pater certainly carried this theory to its furthest possible limits, and may almost be said never, except by implication, to condemn anything. But then the force of this implication testifies to a fastidiousness infinitely greater than that of the most destructive of the destructive critics. Is it necessary to *say* that one dislikes a thing? It need but be ignored; and Pater ignored whatever did not come up to his very exacting standard, finding quite enough to write about in that small residue that remained over.

Nor did he merely ignore what was imperfect, he took the further step, the taking of which was what made him a creative artist in criticism. "It was thus," we are told of Gaston de Latour, in one of the chapters of the unfinished romance, "it was thus Gaston understood the poetry of Ronsard, *generously expanding it to the full measure of its intention*." That is precisely what Pater does in his criticisms, in which criticism is a divining-rod over hidden springs. He has a unique faculty of seeing, through every imperfection, the perfect work, the work as the artist saw it, as he strove to make it, as he failed, in his measure, quite adequately to achieve it. He goes straight to what is fundamental, the true root of the matter, leaving all the rest out of the question. The essay on Wordsworth is perhaps the best example of this, for it has fallen to the lot of Wordsworth to suffer more than most at the hands of interpreters. Here, at last, is a critic who can see in him "a poet somewhat bolder and more

passionate than might at first sight be supposed, but not too bold for true poetical taste; an unimpassioned writer, you might sometimes fancy, yet thinking the chief aim, in life and art alike, to be a certain deep emotion;" one whose "words are themselves thought and feeling;" "a master, an expert, in the art of impassioned contemplation." Reading such essays as these, it is difficult not to feel that if Lamb and Wordsworth, if Shakespeare, if Sir Thomas Browne, could but come to life again for the pleasure of reading them, that pleasure would be the sensation: "Here is someone who understands just what I meant to do, what was almost too deep in me for expression, and would have, I knew, to be divined; that something, scarcely expressed in any of my words, without which no word I ever wrote would have been written."

Turning from the criticisms of literature to the studies on painting, we see precisely the same qualities, but not, I think, precisely the same results. In a sentence of the essay on "The School of Giorgione," which is perhaps the most nicely-balanced of all his essays on painting, he defines, with great precision: "In its primary aspect, a great picture has no more definite message for us than an accidental play of sunlight and shadow for a moment, on the floor: is itself in truth a space of such fallen light, caught as the colours are caught in an Eastern carpet, but refined upon, and dealt with more subtly and exquisitely than by nature itself." But for the most part it was not in this spirit that he wrote of pictures. His criticism of pictures is indeed creative, in a fuller sense than his criticism of books; and, in the necessity of things, dealing with an art which, as he admitted, has, in its primary aspect, no more definite message for us than the sunlight on the floor, he not merely divined, but also added, out of the most sympathetic knowledge, certainly. It is one thing to interpret the meaning of a book; quite another to interpret the meaning of a picture. Take, for instance, the essay on Botticelli. That was the first sympathetic study of at that time a little-known painter which had appeared in English; and it contains some of Pater's most exquisite writing. All that he writes, of those Madonnas "who are neither for Jehovah nor for His enemies," of that sense in the painter of "the wistfulness of exiles," represents, certainly, the impression made upon his own mind by these pictures, and, as such, has an interpretative value, apart from its beauty as a piece of writing. But it is after all a speculation before a canvas, a literary fantasy; a possible interpretation, if you will, of one mood in the painter, a single side of his intention; it is not a criticism, inevitable as that criticism of Wordsworth's art, of the art of Botticelli.

This once understood, we must admit that Pater did more than anyone of our time to bring about a more intimate sympathy with some of the subtler

aspects of art ; that his influence did much to rescue us from the dangerous moralities, the uncritical enthusiasms and prejudices, of Mr. Ruskin ; that of no other art-critic it could be said that his taste was flawless. And in regard to his treatment of sculpture, we may say more ; for here we can speak without reservations. In those essays on "The Beginnings of Greek Sculpture," and the rest, he has made sculpture a living, intimate, thing ; and, with no addition of his fancy, but in a minute, learned, intuitive piecing together of little fact by little fact, has shown its growth, its relation to life, its meaning in art. I find much of the same quality in his studies in Greek myths : that coloured, yet so scrupulous "Study of Dionysus," the patient disentanglings of the myth of Demeter and Persephone. And, in what is the latest work, practically, that we have from his hand, the lectures on "Plato and Platonism," we see a like scrupulous and discriminating judgment brought to bear, as upon an artistic problem, upon the problems of Greek ethics, Greek philosophy.

"Philosophy itself indeed, as he conceives it," Pater tells us, speaking of Plato (he might be speaking of himself), "is but the systematic appreciation of a kind of music in the very nature of things." And philosophy, as he conceives it, is a living, dramatic thing, among personalities, and the strife of temperaments ; a doctrine being seen as a vivid fragment of some very human mind, not a dry matter of words and disembodied reason. "In the discussion even of abstract truth," he reminds us, "it is not so much what he thinks as the person who is thinking, that after all really tells." Thus, the student's duty, in reading Plato, "is not to take his side in a controversy, to adopt or refute Plato's opinions, to modify, or make apology for what may seem erratic or impossible in him ; still less, to furnish himself with arguments on behalf of some theory or conviction of his own. His duty is rather to follow intelligently, but with strict indifference, the mental process there, as he might witness a game of skill ; better still, as in reading 'Hamlet' or 'The Divine Comedy,' so in reading 'The Republic,' to watch, for its dramatic interest, the spectacle of a powerful, of a sovereign intellect, translating itself, amid a complex group of conditions which can never in the nature of things occur again, at once pliant and resistant to them, into a great literary monument." It is thus that Pater studies his subject, with an extraordinary patience and precision ; a patience with ideas, not, at first sight, so clear or so interesting as he induces them to become ; a precision of thinking, on his part, in which no licence is ever permitted to the fantastic side-issues of things. Here again we have criticism which, in its divination, its arrangement, its building up of

many materials into a living organism, is itself creation, becomes imaginative work itself.

We may seem to be far now, but are not in reality so far as it may seem, from those "delicacies of fine literature," with which I began by showing Pater to be so greatly concerned. And, in considering the development by which a writer who had begun with the "Studies in the Renaissance," ended with "Plato and Platonism," we must remember, as Mr. Gosse has so acutely pointed out in his valuable study of Pater's personal characteristics, that, after all, it was philosophy which attracted him before either literature or art, and that his first published essay was an essay on Coleridge, in which Coleridge the metaphysician, and not Coleridge the poet, was the interesting person to him. In his return to an early, and one might think, in a certain sense, immature interest, it need not surprise us to find a development, which I cannot but consider as technically something of a return to a primitive lengthiness and involution, towards a style which came to lose many of the rarer qualities of its perfect achievement. I remember that when he once said to me that the "Imaginary Portraits" seemed to him the best written of his books, he qualified that very just appreciation by adding: "It seems to me the most *natural*!" I think he was even then beginning to forget that it was not natural to him to be natural. There are in the world many kinds of beauty, and of these what is called natural beauty is but one. Pater's temperament was at once shy and complex, languid and ascetic, sensuous and spiritual. He did not permit life to come to him without a certain ceremony; he was on his guard against the abrupt indiscretion of events; and if his whole life was a service of art, he arranged his life so that, as far as possible, it might be served by that very dedication. With this conscious ordering of things, it became a last sophistication to aim at an effect in style which should bring the touch of unpremeditation, which we seem to find in nature, into a faultlessly combined arrangement of art. The lectures on Plato, really spoken, show traces of their actual delivery in certain new, vocal effects, which had begun already to interest him as matters of style; and which we may find, more finely, here and there in "Gaston de Latour." Perhaps all this was but a pausing-place in a progress. That it would not have been the final stage, we may be sure. But it is idle to speculate what further development awaited, at its own leisure, so incalculable a life.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

## Four Drawings by Aubrey Beardsley

to illustrate Wagner's "Rhinegold."

Frontispiece to "The Comedy of the Rhinegold."

Flosshilde.

Alberich.

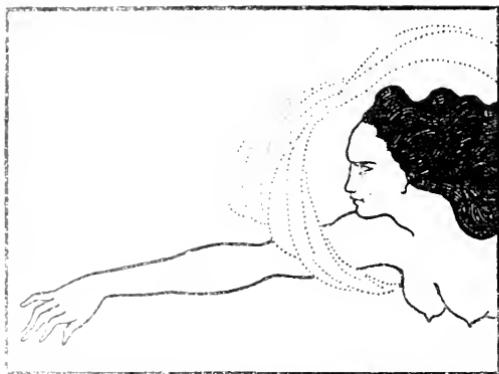
Erda.



THE  
COMEDY  
OF

THE  
RHINEGOLD







ALBERICH







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## THE CHILDHOOD OF LUCY NEWCOME



HE house which Lucy Newcome remembered as her home, the only home she ever had, was a small house, hardly more than a cottage, with a little, neat garden in front of it, and a large, untidy garden at the back. There was a low wooden palisade cutting it off from the road, which, in that remote suburb of the great town, had almost the appearance of a road in the country. The house had two windows, one on each side of the door, and above that three more windows, and attics above that. The windows on each side of the door were the windows of the two sitting-rooms ; the kitchen, with its stone floor, its shining rows of brass things around the walls, its great dresser, was at the back. It was through the kitchen that you found your way into the big garden, where the grass was always long and weedy and ill-kept, and so all the pleasanter for lying on ; and where there were a few alder-trees, a pear-tree on which the pears never seemed to thrive, for it was quite close to Lucy's bedroom window, a flower-bed along the wall, and a great, old sun-dial, which Lucy used to ponder over when the shadows came and stretched out their long fingers across it. The garden, when she thinks of it now, comes to her often as she saw it one warm Sunday evening, walking to and fro there beside her mother, who was saying how good it was to be well again, or better : this was not long before she died ; and Lucy had said to herself, what a dear little mother I have, and how young, and small, and pretty she looks in that lilac bodice with the bright belt round the waist ! Lucy had been as tall as her mother when she was ten, and at twelve she could look down on her quite protectingly.

Her father she but rarely saw ; but it was her father whom she worshipped, whom she was taught to worship. The whole house, she, her mother, and Linda, the servant, who was more friend than servant (for she took no wages, and when she wanted anything, asked for it), all existed for the sake of that wonderful, impracticable father of hers ; it was for him they starved, it

was to him they looked for the great future which they believed in so implicitly, but scarcely knew in what shape to look for. She knew that he had come of gentlefolk, in another county, that he had been meant for the Church, and, after some vague misfortune at Cambridge, had married her mother, who was but seventeen, and of a class beneath him, against the will of his relations, who had cast him off, just as, at twenty-one, he had come into a meagre allowance from the will of his grandfather. He had been the last of eleven children, born when his mother was fifty years of age, and he had inherited the listless temperament of a dwindling stock. He had never been able to do anything seriously, or even to make up his mind quite what great thing he was going to do. First he had found a small clerkship, then he had dropped casually upon the post which he was to hold almost to the time of his death, as secretary to some Assurance Society, whose money it was his business to collect. He did the work mechanically; at first, competently enough; but his heart was in other things. Lucy was never sure whether it was the great picture he was engaged upon, or the great book, that was to make all the difference in their fortunes. She never doubted his power to do anything he liked; and it was one of her privileges sometimes to be allowed to sit in his room (the sitting-room on the left of the door, where it was always warmer and more comfortable than anywhere else in the house), watching him at his paints or his manuscripts, with great serious eyes that sometimes seemed to disquiet him a little: and then she would be told to run away and not worry mother.

The little mother, too, she saw less of than children mostly see of their mothers; for her mother was never quite well, and she would so often be told: "You must be quiet now, and not go into your mother's room, for she has one of her headaches," that she gradually accustomed herself to do without anybody's company, and then she would sit all alone, or with her doll, who was called Arabella, to whom she would chatter for hours together, in a low and familiar voice, making all manner of confidences to her, and telling her all manner of stories. Sometimes she would talk to Linda instead, sitting on the corner of the kitchen fender; but Linda was not so good a listener, and she had a way of going into the scullery, and turning on a noisy stream of water, just at what ought to have been the most absorbing moment of the narrative.

Lucy was a curious child, one of those children of whom nurses are accustomed to say that they will not make old bones. She was always a little pale, and she would walk in her sleep; and would spend whole hours almost without moving, looking vaguely and fixedly into the air: children ought not

to dream like that ! She did not know herself, very often, what she was dreaming about ; it seemed to her natural to sit for hours doing nothing.

Often, however, she knew quite well what she was dreaming about ; and first of all she was dreaming about herself. Really, she would explain if you asked her, she did not belong to her parents at all ; she belonged to the fairies ; she was a princess ; there was another, a great mother, who would come some day and claim her. And this consciousness of being really a princess was one of the joys of her imagination. She had composed all the circumstances of her state, many times over, indeed, and always in a different way. It was the heightening she gave to what her mother had taught her : that she was of a better stock than the other children who lived in the other small houses all round, and must not play with them, or accept them as equals. That was to be her consolation if she had to do without many of the things she wanted, and to be shabbily dressed (out of old things of her mother's, turned and cut and pieced together), while perhaps some of those other children, who were not her equals, had new dresses.

And then she would make up stories about the people she knew, the ladies to whom she paid a very shifting devotion, very sincere while it lasted. One of her odd fancies was to go into the graveyard which surrounded the church, and to play about in the grass there, or, more often, gather flowers and leaves, and carry them to a low tomb, and sit there, weaving them into garlands. These garlands she used to offer to the ladies whose faces she liked, as they passed in and out of the church. The strange little girl who sat among the graves, weaving garlands, and who would run up to them so shyly, and with so serious a smile, offering them her flowers, seemed to these ladies rather a disquieting little person, as if she, like her flowers, had a churchyard air about her.

Blonde, tall, slim, delicately-complexioned, with blue eyes and a wavering, somewhat sensuous mouth, the child took after her father ; and he used to say of her sometimes, half whimsically, that she was bound to be like him altogether, bound to go to the bad. The big, brilliant man, who had made so winning a failure of life, so popular always, and the centre of a little ring of intellectual people, used sometimes to let her stay in the room of an evening, while he and his friends drank their ale and smoked pipes and talked their atheistical philosophy. These friends of her father used to pet her, because she was pretty ; and it was one of them who paid her the first compliment she ever had, comparing her face to a face in a picture. She had never heard of the picture, but she was immensely flattered ; for she did not think a painter

would ever paint any one who was not very pretty. She listened to their conversation, much of which she could not understand, as if she understood every word of it; and she wondered very much at some of the things they said. Her mother was a Catholic, and, though religion was rarely referred to, had taught her some little prayers: and it puzzled her that all this could be true, and yet that clever people should have doubts of it. She had always learnt that cleverness (book-learning, or any disinterested journeying of the intellect) was the one important thing in the world. Her father was clever: that was why everything must bow to him. There must be something in it, then, if these clever people, if her father himself, doubted of God, of heaven and hell, of the good ordering of this world. And she announced one day to the pious servant, who had told her that God sees everything, that when she was older she meant to get the better of God, by building a room all walls and no windows, within which she would be good or bad as she pleased, without his seeing her.

Lucy was never sent to school, like most children: that was partly because they were very poor, but more because her father had always intended to teach her himself, on a new and liberal scheme of education, which seemed to him better than the education you get in schools. And sometimes, for as much as a few weeks together, he would set her lessons day by day, and be excessively severe with her, not permitting her to make a single slip in anything he had given her to learn. He would even punish her sometimes, if she still failed to learn some lesson perfectly; and that seemed to her a mortal indignity; so that one day she rushed out into the garden, and climbed up into a tree, and then called out, tremulously but triumphantly: "If you promise not to punish me, I'll come down; but if you don't, I'll throw myself down!"

She always disliked learning lessons, and those fits of scrupulousness on his part were her great dread. They did not occur often; and between whiles he was very lenient, ready to get out of the trouble of teaching her on the slightest excuse: only too glad if she did not bother him by coming to say her lessons. Both were quite happy then; she to be allowed to sit in his room with her lesson-book on her knees, dreaming; he not to be hindered in the new sketch he was making, or the notes he was preparing for that great book of the future, perhaps out of one of those old, calf-covered books which he used to bring back from secondhand shops in the town, and which Lucy used to admire for their ancient raggedness, as they stood in shelves round the room, brown and broken-backed.

And then if she had not her geography to learn by heart ; those lists of capes and rivers and the population of countries, which she could indeed learn by heart, but which represented nothing to her of the actual world itself ; she had of course all the more time for her own reading. When she had outgrown that old fancy about the fairies, and about being a princess, she cared nothing for stories of adventure ; but little for the material wonders of the "Arabian Nights ;" somewhat more for the "Pilgrim's Progress," in which she always lingered over that passage of the good people through the bright follies of Vanity Fair ; but most of all for certain quiet stories of lovers, in which there was no improbable incident, and no too fantastical extravagance of passion ; but a quite probable fidelity, plenty of troubles, and of course a wedding at the end. One book, "Young Mrs. Jardine," she was never tired of reading ; it was partly the name of the heroine, Silence Jardine, that fascinated her. Then there was a little book of poetical selections ; she never could remember the name of it, afterwards ; and there were the songs of Thomas Moore, and, above all, there was Mrs. Hemans. Those gentle and lady-like poems "of the affections," with their nice sentiments, the faded ribbons of their secondhand romance, seemed to the child like a beautiful glimpse into the real, tender, not too passionate world, where men and women loved magnanimously, and had heroic sufferings, and died, perhaps, but for a great love, or a great cause, and always nobly. She thought that the ways of the world blossomed naturally into Casabiancas and Gertrudes and Imeldas who were faithful to death, and came into their inheritance of love or glory beyond the grave. She used to wonder if she, too, like Costanza, had a "pale Madonna brow ;" and she wished nothing more fervently than to be like those saintly and affectionate creatures, always so beautiful, and so often (what did it matter?) unfortunate, who took poison from the lips of their lovers, and served God in prison, and came back afterwards, spirits, out of the angelical rapture of heaven, to be as some rare music, or subtle perfume, in the souls of those who had loved them. Many of these poems were about death, and it seemed natural to her, at that time, to think much about death, which she conceived as a quite peaceful thing, coming to you invisibly out of the sky, and which she never associated with the pale faces and more difficult breathing of those about her. She had never known her mother to be quite well ; and when, on her twelfth birthday, her mother called her into her room, where she lay in bed now so often, and talked to her more solemnly than she had ever talked before, saying that if she became very ill, too ill to get up at all, Lucy was to look after her father as carefully as she herself had looked

after him, always to look after him, and never let him want for anything, for anything ; even then it did not seem to the child that this meant more than a little more illness ; and it was so natural for people to be ill.

And so, after all, the end came almost suddenly ; and the first great event of her childhood took her by surprise. The gentle, suffering woman had been failing for many months, and when, one afternoon in early March, the doctor ordered her to take to her bed at once, life seemed to ebb out of her daily, with an almost visible haste to be gone. Whenever she was allowed to come in, Lucy would curl herself up on the foot of the bed, never taking her eyes off the face of the dying woman, who was for the most part unconscious, muttering unintelligible words sometimes, in a hoarse voice broken by coughs, and breathing, all the time, in great, heavy breaths, which made a rattle in her throat. When she was in the next room, Lucy could hear this monotonous sound going on, almost as plainly as in the room itself. It was this sound that frightened her, more than anything ; for, when she was sitting on the bed, watching the face lying among the pillows (drawn, and glazed with a curious flush, as it was) it seemed, after all, only as if her mother was very, very ill, and as if she might get better, for the lips were still red, and sucked in readily all the spoonfuls of calvesfoot jelly, and brandy and water, which were really just keeping her alive from hour to hour. On Friday night, in the middle of the night, as Lucy was sleeping quietly, she felt, in her dream, as it seemed to her, two lips touch her cheek, and, starting awake, saw her father standing by the bedside. He told her to get up, put on some of her things, and come quietly into the next room. She crept in, huddled up in a shawl, very pale and trembling, and it seemed to her that her mother must be a little better, for she drew her breath more slowly and not quite so loudly. One arm was lying outside the clothes, and every now and then this arm would raise itself up, and the hand would reach out, blindly, until the nurse, or her father, took it and laid it back gently in its place. They told her to kiss her mother, and she kissed her, crying very much, but her mother did not kiss her, or open her eyes ; and as she touched her hair, which was coming out from under her cap, she felt that it was all damp, but the lips were quite dry and warm. Then they told her to go back to bed, but she clung to the foot of the bed, and refused to go, and the nurse said, "I think she may stay." The tears were running down both her cheeks, but she did not move, or take her eyes off the face on the pillow. It was very white now, and once or twice the mouth opened, with a slight gasp ; once the face twitched, and half turned on the pillow ; she had to wait before the next breath came ; then it paused again ;

then, with an effort, there was another breath ; then a long pause, a very slow breath, and no more. She was led round to kiss her mother again on the forehead, which was quite warm ; but she knew that her mother was dead, and she sobbed wildly, inconsolably, as they led her back to her own room, where, after they had left her, and she could hear them moving quietly about the house, she lay in bed trying to think, trying not to think, wondering what it was that had really happened, and if things would all be different now.

And with her mother's death it seemed as if her own dream-life had come suddenly to an end, and a new, more desolate, more practical life had begun, out of which she could not look any great distance. After the black darkness of those first few days : the coming of the undertakers, the hammering down of the coffin, the slow drive to the graveside, the wreath of white flowers which she shed, white flower by white flower, upon the shining case of wood lying at the bottom of a great pit, in which her mother was to be covered up to stay there for ever ; after those first days of merely dull misery, broken by a few wild outbursts of tears, she accepted this new life into which she had come, as she accepted the black clothes which Linda, the servant, now more a friend than ever, had had made for her. Her father could no longer bear to sleep in the room in which his wife had died, so Lucy gave up her own room to him, and moved into the room that had been her mother's ; and it seemed to bring her closer to her mother to sleep there. She thought of her mother very often, and very sadly, but the remembrance of those almost last words to her, those solemn words on her twelfth birthday, that she was to look after her father as her mother had looked after him, and never let him want for anything, helped her to meet every day bravely, because every day brought some definite thing for her to do. She felt years and years older, and quietly ready for whatever was now likely to happen.

For a little while she saw more of her father, for they had their mid-day meal together now, and she used to come and sit at the table when he was having his nine o'clock meat supper, with which he had always indulged himself, even when there was very little in the house for the others. He still took it, and his claret with it, which the doctor had ordered him to take ; but he took it with scantier and scantier appetite ; talking less over his wine, and falling into a strange brooding listlessness. During his wife's illness he had let his affairs drift ; and the society of which he was the secretary had overlooked it, as far as they could, on account of his trouble. But now he attended to his duties less than ever ; and he was reminded, a little sharply, that things could not go on like this much longer. He took no heed of the

warning, though the duns were beginning to gather about him. When there was a ring at the door, Lucy used to squeeze up against the window to see who it was ; and if it was one of those troublesome people whom she soon got to know by sight, she would go to the door herself, and tell them that they could not see her father, and explain to them, in her grave, childish way, that it was no use coming to her father for money, because he had no money just then, but he would have some at quarter-day; and they might call again then. Sometimes the men tried to push past her into the hall, but she would never let them ; her father was not in, or he was very unwell, and no one could see him ; and she spoke so calmly and so decidedly that they always finished by going away. If they swore at her, or said horrid things about her father, she did not mind much. It did not surprise her that such dreadful people used dreadful language.

In telling the duns that her father was very unwell, she was not always inventing. For a long time there had been something vague the matter with him, and ever since her mother's death he had sickened visibly, and nothing would rouse him from his pale and cheerless decrepitude. He would lie in bed till four, and then come downstairs and sit by the fireplace, smoking his pipe in silence, doing nothing, neither reading, nor writing, nor sketching. All his interests in life seemed to have gone out together ; his very hopes had been taken from him, and without those fantastic hopes he was but the shadow of himself. It scarcely roused him when the directors of his society wrote to him that they would require his services no longer. When they sent a man to unscrew the brass plate on the door, on which there were the name of the society and the amount of its capital, he went outside and stood in the garden while it was being done. Then he gave the man a shilling for his trouble.

Soon after that, he refused to eat or get up, and a great terror came over Lucy lest he, too, should die ; and now there was no money in the house, and the duns still knocked at the door. She begged him to let her write to his relatives, but he refused flatly, saying that they would not receive her mother, and he would never see them, or take a penny of their money as long as he lived. One day a cab drove up to the door, and a hard-featured woman got out of it. Lucy, looking out of the bedroom window, recognized her aunt, Miss Marsden, her mother's eldest sister, whom she had only seen at the funeral, and to whose grim face and rigid figure she had already taken a dislike. It appeared that Linda, unknown to them, had written to tell her into what desperate straits they had fallen ; and her severe sense of duty had brought her to their help.

And the aunt was certainly good to them in her stern, unkindly way. The first thing she did was to send for a doctor, who shook his head very gravely when he had examined the patient; and spoke of foreign travel, and other impossible, expensive remedies. That was the first time that Lucy ever began to long for money, or to realize exactly what money meant. It might mean life or death, she saw now.

Her father now lay mostly in bed, very weak and quiet, and mostly in silence; and whether his eyes were closed or open, he seemed to be thinking, always thinking. He liked Lucy to come and sit by him; but if she chattered much he would stop her, after a while, and say that he was tired, and she must be quiet. And then sometimes he would talk to her, in his vague, disconnected way, about her mother, and of how they had met, and had found hard times together a great happiness; and he would look at her with an almost impersonal scrutiny, and say: "I think you will live happily, not with the happiness that we had, for you will never love as we loved, but you will find it easy to like people, and many people will find it easy to like you; and if you have troubles they will weigh on you lightly, for you will live always in the day that is, without too much memory of the day that was, or too much thought of the day that will be to-morrow." And once he said: "I hardly know why it is I feel so little anxiety about your future. I seem somehow to know that you will always find people to look after you. I don't know why they should, I don't know why they should." And then he added, after a pause, looking at her a little sadly: "You will never love nor be loved passionately, but you have a face that will seem to many, the first time they see you, like the face of an old and dear friend."

Sometimes, when he felt a little better, the sick man would come downstairs, and at times he would walk about in the garden, stooping under his great-coat and leaning upon his stick. One very bright day in early February he seemed better than he had been since his illness had come upon him, and as he stood at the window looking at the white road shining under the pale sun, he said suddenly: "I feel quite well to-day, I shall go for a little walk." His eyes were bright, there was a slight flush on his cheek, and he seemed to move a little more easily than usual. "Lucy," he said, "I think I should like some claret with my supper to-night, like old times. You must go into the town, and get me some: I suppose there is none in the house." Lucy took the money gladly, for she thought: he is beginning to be better. "Get it from Allen's," he called after her, as she went to put on her hat and jacket; "it won't take so very much longer to go there and back, and it will be better

there." When she came downstairs, her aunt was helping him to put on his coat. "Don't wait for me," he said, smiling, and tapping her cheek with his thin, chilly fingers; "I shall have to walk slowly." She went out, and turning, as she came to the bend in the road, saw him come out of the gate, leaning on his stick, and begin to walk slowly along in the middle of the road. He did not look up, and she hurried on.

It was the last time she ever saw him. The house, when she returned to it, after her journey into town, had an air of ominous quiet, and she saw with surprise that her father's hat and coat were lying in a heap across the chair in the hall, instead of hanging neatly upon the hat-pegs. As she closed the door behind her, she heard the bedroom-door opened, and her aunt came quickly downstairs with a strange look on her face. She began to tremble, she knew not why, and mechanically she put the bottle of wine on the floor by the side of the chair; and her aunt, though she would always have everything put in its proper place, did not seem to notice it; but took her into the sitting-room, and said: "There has been an accident; no, you must not go upstairs;" and she said to herself, seeming to hear her own words at the back of her brain, where there was a dull ache that was like the coming-to of one who has been stunned: "He is dead, he is dead." She felt that her aunt was shaking her, and wondered why she shook her, and why everything looked so dim, and her aunt's face seemed to be fading away from her, and she caught at her; and then she heard her aunt say (she could hear her quite well now), "I thought you were going to faint: I'll have no fainting, if you please; I must go up to him again." So he was not dead, after all; and she listened, with a relief which was almost joy, while her aunt told her rapidly what had happened: how the mail-cart had turned a corner at full speed, just as he was walking along the road, more tired than he had thought, and he had not had the strength to pull himself out of the way in time, and had been knocked down, and the wheel had just missed him, but he had been terribly shaken, and one of the horse's hoofs had struck him on the face. They hoped it was nothing serious; he seemed to feel little pain; but he had said: "Don't let Lucy come in; she mustn't see me like this."

Lucy had been so used to obey her father, his commands had always been so capricious, that she obeyed now without a murmur. She understood him; the fastidiousness which was part of his affection, and which made him refuse to be seen, by those he loved, under a disfigurement which time would probably heal, was one of the things for which she loved him, for it was part of her pride in him.

The doctor had come and gone ; he had been very serious, she had seen his grave face, and had overheard one or two of his words to her aunt ; she had heard him say : "Of course, it is a question of time." Night came on, and she sat in the unlighted room alone, and looking into the fire, in which the last dreams of her childhood seemed to flicker in little wavering tongues of flame, which throbbed, and went out, one after another, in smoke or ashes. She cried a little, quietly, and did not wipe away the tears ; but sat on, looking into the fire, and thinking. She was crying when her aunt came downstairs, and told her that she must go to bed : he was resting quietly, and they hoped he would be better in the morning.

She slept heavily, without dreams ; and the hour seemed to her late when she awoke in the morning. It was Linda, not her aunt, who came into the room, and took her in her arms, and cried over her, and did not need to tell her that she had no father. He had died suddenly in his sleep, and just before he turned over on his side for that last rest, he had said to her (she thought, drowsily) : "I am very tired ; if anything happens, cover my face." When Lucy crept into the room, on tip-toe, his face was covered. It was a white, shrouded thing that lay there, not her father. The terror of the dead seized hold upon her, and she shrieked, and Linda caught her up in her arms, and carried her back to her room, and soothed her, as if she had been a little, wailing child.

At the funeral she saw, for the first time, her father's relatives, the rich relatives who had cast him off ; and she hated them for being there, for speaking to her kindly, for offering to look after her. She was rude to them, and she wished to be rude. "My father would never touch your money," she said, "and I am sure he wouldn't like me to, and I don't want it. I don't want to have anything to do with you." She clung to the severe aunt who had been good to her father ; and she tried to smile on her other uncle and aunt, and on her cousin, who was not many years older than she was : he had seemed to her so kind, and so ready to be her friend. "I will go with my aunt," she said. The rich relatives acquiesced, not unwillingly. They did not linger in the desolate house, where this unreasonable child, as they thought her, stood away from them on the other side of the room. She seemed to herself to be doing the right thing, and what her father would have wished ; and she saw them go with relief, not giving a thought to the future, only knowing that she had buried her childhood, on that day of the funeral, in the grave with her father.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

## Two Drawings by Aubrey Beardsley.

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy.

Carl Maria von Weber.









## HÉRODIADE

(From the French of Stéphane Mallarmé.)

HÉRODIADE.



O mine own self I am a wilderness.  
You know it, amethyst gardens numberless  
Enfolded in the flaming, subtle deep,  
Strange gold, that through the red earth's heavy sleep  
Has cherished ancient brightness like a dream,  
Stones whence mine eyes, pure jewels, have their gleam  
Of icy and melodious radiance, you,  
Metals, which into my young tresses drew  
A fatal splendour and their manifold grace !  
Thou, woman, born into these evil days  
Disastrous to the cavern sibylline,  
Who speakest, prophesying not of one divine,  
But of a mortal, if from that close sheath,  
My robes, rustle the wild enchanted breath  
In the white quiver of my nakedness,  
If the warm air of summer, O prophetess,  
(And woman's body obeys that ancient claim)  
Behold me in my shivering starry shame,  
I die !

The horror of my virginity  
Delights me, and I would envelope me  
In the terror of my tresses, that, by night,  
Inviolate reptile, I might feel the white  
And glimmering radiance of thy frozen fire,  
Thou that art chaste and diest of desire,  
White night of ice and of the cruel snow !

Eternal sister, thy lone sister, lo  
My dreams uplifted before thee ! now, apart

So rare a crystal is my dreaming heart  
 I live in a monotonous land alone,  
 And all about me lives but in mine own  
 Image, the idolatrous mirror of my pride,  
 Mirroring this Hérodiade diamond-eyed.  
 I am indeed alone, O charm and curse !

NURSE.

O lady, would you die then ?

HÉRODIADE.

No, poor nurse,  
 Be calm, and leave me ; prithee, pardon me,  
 But, ere thou go, close to the casement : see  
 How the seraphical blue in the dim glass smiles,  
 But I abhor the blue of the sky !

Yet, miles  
 On miles of rocking waves ! Know'st not a land  
 Where, in the pestilient sky, men see the hand  
 Of Venus, and her shadow in dark leaves ?  
 Thither I go.

Light thou the wax that grieves  
 In the swift flame, and sheds an alien tear  
 Over the vain gold : wilt not say in mere  
 Childishness ?

NURSE.

Now ?

HÉRODIADE.

Farewell.

You lie, O flower  
 Of these chill lips !

I wait the unknown hour,  
 Or, deaf to your crying and that hour supreme,  
 Utter the lamentation of the dream  
 Of childhood seeing fall apart in sighs  
 The icy chaplet of its reveries.

ARTHUR SYMONS.



## Count Valmont

From "Les Liaisons Dangereuses."

By

Aubrey Beardsley.

LES  
LIAISONS DANGEREUSES.



BY  
CHODERLOS  
DE LACLOS



## THE ISLES OF ARAN



OR two hours and a half the fishing-boat had been running before the wind, as a greyhound runs, in long leaps ; and when I set foot on shore at Ballyvaughan, and found myself in the little, neat hotel, and waited for tea in the room with the worn piano, the album of manuscript verses, and the many photographs of the young girl who had written them, first as she stands holding a violin, and then, after she has taken vows, in the white habit of the Dominican order ; I seemed to have stepped out of some strange, half magical, almost real dream, through which I had been consciously moving on the other side of that gray, disturbed sea, upon those gray and peaceful islands in the Atlantic. And all that evening, as we drove for hours along the Clare coast, and inland into Galway, under a sunset of gold fire and white spray, until we reached the battlemented towers of Tillyra Castle, I had the same curious sensation of having been dreaming : and I could but vaguely remember the dream, in which I was still, however, absorbed. We passed, I believe, a fine slope of gray mountains, a ruined abbey, many castle ruins ; we talked of Parnell, of the county families, of mysticism, the analogy of that old Biblical distinction of body, soul, and spirit with the symbolical realities of the lamp, the wick, and the flame ; and all the time I was obsessed by the vague, persistent remembrance of those vanishing islands, which wavered somewhere in the depths of my consciousness. When I awoke next morning the dream had resolved itself into definite shape, and I remembered every detail of those last three days, during which I had been so far from civilization, so much further out of the world than I had ever been before.

It was on the morning of Wednesday, the 5th of August, 1896, that a party of four, of whom I alone was not an Irishman, got into Tom Joyce's hooker at Cashla Bay, on the coast of Galway, and set sail for the largest of the three islands of Aran, Inishmore by name, that is, Large Island. The hooker, a half-decked, cutter-rigged fishing-boat of seventeen tons, had come over for us from Aran, and we set out with a light breeze, which presently

dropped, and left us almost becalmed, under a very hot sun, for nearly an hour, where we were passed by a white butterfly that was making straight for the open sea. We were nearly four hours in crossing, and we had time to read all that needed reading of "Grania," Miss Emily Lawless's novel, which is supposed to be the classic of the islands; and to study our maps, and to catch one mackerel. But I found most to my mind this passage from Roderic O'Flaherty's "Chorographical Description of West or H-Iar Connaught," which in its quaint, minute seventeenth-century prose, told me more about what I was going to see than everything else that I read then or after on the subject of these islands. "The soile," he tells us, "is almost paved over with stones, soe as, in some places, nothing is to be seen but large stones with wide openings between them, where cattle break their legs. Scarce any other stones there but limestones, and marble fit for tombstones, chymney mantle trees, and high crosses. Among these stones is very sweet pasture, so that beefe, veal, mutton are better and earlyer in season here, then elsewhere; and of late there is plenty of cheese, and tillage mucking, and corn is the same with the sea side tract. In some places the plow goes. On the shore grows samphire in plenty, ring-root or sea-holy, and sea-cabbage. Here are Cornish choughs, with red legs and bills. Here are ayries of hawkes, and birds which never fly but over the sea; and, therefore, are used to be eaten on fasting days: to catch which, people goe down, with ropes tyed about them, into the caves of cliffts by night, and with a candle light kill abundance of them. Here are severall wells and pooles, yet in extraordinary dry weather, people must turn their cattell out of the islands, and the corn failes. They have noe fuell but cow-dung dried with the sun, unless they bring turf in from the western continent. They have *Cloghans*, a kind of building of stones layd one upon another, which are brought to a roof without any manner of mortar to cement them, some of which cabins will hold forty men on their floor; so antient that nobody knows how long ago any of them was made. Scarcity of wood and store of fit stones, without peradventure found out the first invention." Reading of such things as these, and of how St. Albeus, Bishop of Imly, had said, "Great is that island, and it is the land of saints; for no man knows how many saints are buried there, but God alone;" and of an old saying: "Athenry was, Galway is, Aran shall be the best of the three;" we grew, after a while, impatient of delay. A good breeze sprang up at last, and as I stood in the bow, leaning against the mast, I felt the one quite perfectly satisfying sensation of movement: to race through steady water before a stiff sail, on which the reefing cords are tapping, in rhythm to those nine

notes of the sailors' chorus in "Tristan," which always ring in my ears when I am on the sea, for they have in them all the exultation of all life that moves upon the waters.

The butterfly, I hope, had reached land before us ; but only a few seabirds came out to welcome us as we drew near Inishmore, the Large Island, which is nine miles long, and a mile and a half broad. I gazed at the long line of the island, growing more distinct every moment ; first a gray outline, flat at the sea's edge, and rising up beyond in irregular, rocky hills, terrace above terrace ; then, against this gray outline, white houses began to detach themselves, the sharp line of the pier cutting into the curve of the harbour ; and then, at last, the figures of men and women moving across the land. Nothing is more mysterious, more disquieting, than one's first glimpse of an island ; and all I had heard of these islands, of their peace in the heart of the storm, was not a little mysterious and disquieting. I knew that they contained the oldest ruins, and that their life of the present was the most primitive life, of any part of Ireland ; I knew that they were rarely visited by the tourist, almost never by any but the local tourist ; that they were difficult to reach, sometimes more difficult to leave ; for the uncertainty of weather in that uncertain region of the Atlantic had been known to detain some of the rare travellers there for days, was it not for weeks ? Here one was absolutely at the mercy of the elements, which might at any moment become unfriendly, which, indeed, one seemed to have but apprehended in a pause of their eternal enmity. And we seemed also to be venturing among an unknown people, who, even if they spoke our own language, were further away from us, more foreign, than people who spoke an unknown language, and lived beyond other seas.

As we walked along the pier towards the three whitewashed cottages which form the Atlantic Hotel, at which we were to stay, a strange being sprang towards us, with a curiously beast-like stealthiness and animation ; it was a crazy man, bare-footed and blear-eyed, who held out his hand, and sang out at us in a high, chanting voice, and in what sounded rather a tone of command than of entreaty : " Give me a penny, sir ! Give me a penny, sir !" We dropped something into his hat, and he went away over the rocks, laughing loudly to himself, and repeating some words that he had heard us say. We passed a few fishermen and some bare-footed children, who looked at us curiously, but without moving, and were met at the door of the middle cottage by a little, fat, old woman with a round body and a round face, wearing a white cap tied over her ears. The Atlantic Hotel is a very primitive hotel ;

it had last been slept in by some priests from the mainland, who had come on their holiday, with bicycles ; and, before that, by a German philologist, who was learning Irish. The kitchen, which is also the old landlady's bedroom, presents a medley of pots and pans and petticoats, as you pass its open door and climb the little staircase, diverging oddly on either side after the first five or six steps, and leading on the right to a large dining-room, where the table lounges on an inadequate number of legs, and the chairs bow over when you lean back on them. I have slept more luxuriously, but not more soundly, than in the little, musty bedroom on the other side of the stairs, with its half-made bed, its bare and unswept floor, its tiny window, of which only the lower half could be opened, and this, when open, had to be supported by a wooden catch from outside. Going to sleep in that little, uncomfortable room, was a delight in itself ; for the starry water outside, which one could see through that narrow slit of window, seemed to flow softly about one in waves of delicate sleep.



When we had had a hasty meal, and had got a little used to our hotel, and had realized, as well as we could, where we were, at the lower end of the village of Kilronan, which stretches up the hill to the north-west, on either side of the main road, we set out in the opposite direction, finding many guides by the way, who increased in number as we went on, through the smaller village of Kileaney, up to the south-eastern hill, on which are a holy well, its thorn-tree hung with votive ribbons, and the ruins of several churches, among them the church of St. Enda, the patron saint of the island. At first we were able to walk along a very tolerable road, then we branched off upon a little strip of gray sand, piled in mounds as high as if it had been drifted snow, and from that, turning a little inland, we came upon the road again, which began to get stonier as we neared the village. Our principal guide, an elderly man with long thick curls of flaxen hair, and a seaman's beard, shaved away from the chin, talked fairly good English, with a strong accent, and he told us of the poverty of the people, the heavy rents they have to pay for soil on which no grass grows, and the difficult living they make out of their fishing, and their little tillage, and the cattle which they take over in boats to the fairs at Galway, throwing them into the sea when they get near land, and leaving them to swim ashore. He was dressed, as are almost all the peasants of Aran, in clothes woven and made on the island : loose, rough, woollen things, of drab, or dark blue, or gray, sometimes charming in colour ; he had a flannel shirt, a kind of waistcoat with sleeves, very loose and shapeless trousers, worn without braces ; an old and discoloured slouch hat on his head, and on his feet the usual *pampooties*, slippers of undressed hide, drawn together and stitched into

shape, with pointed toes, and a cord across the instep. The village to which we had come was a cluster of whitewashed cabins, a little better built than those I had seen in Galway, with the brown thatch fastened down with ropes, drawn cross-wise over the roof, and tied to wooden pegs driven into the wall, for protection against the storms blowing in from the Atlantic. They had the usual two doors, facing each other at front and back, the windier of the two being kept closed in rough weather ; and the doors were divided in half by the usual hatch. As we passed, a dark head would appear at the upper half of the door, and a dull glow of red would rise out of the shadow. The women of Aran almost all dress in red, the petticoat very heavily woven, the crossed shawl or bodice of a thinner texture of wool. Those whom we met on the roads wore thicker shawls over their heads, and they would sometimes draw the shawls closer about them, as women in the East draw their veils closer about their faces. As they came out to their doors to see us pass, I noticed in their manner a certain mingling of curiosity and shyness ; an interest which was never quite eager. Some of the men came out, and quietly followed us as we were led along a twisting way between the cabins ; and the children, boys and girls, in a varying band of from twenty to thirty, ran about our heels, stopping whenever we stopped, and staring at us with calm wonder. They were very inquisitive, but, unlike English villagers in remote places, perfectly polite ; and neither resented our coming among them, nor jeered at us for being foreign to their fashions.

The people of Aran (they are about 3,000 in all), as I then saw them for the first time, and as I saw them during the few days of my visit, seemed to me a simple, dignified, self-sufficient, sturdily primitive people, to whom Browning's phrase of "gentle islanders" might well be applied. They could be fierce, on occasion, as I knew : for I remembered the story of their refusal to pay the county cess, and how, when the cess-collector had come over to take his dues by force, they had assembled on the sea-shore with sticks and stones, and would not allow him even to land. But they had, for the most part, mild faces, of the long Irish type, often regular in feature, but with loose and drooping mouths and discoloured teeth. Most had blue eyes, the men, oftener than the women, having fair hair. They held themselves erect, and walked nimbly, with a peculiar step, due to the rocky ways they have generally to walk on ; few of them, I noticed, had large hands or feet ; and all, without exception, were thin, as indeed the Irish peasant almost invariably is. The women, too, for the most part, were thin, and had the same long faces, often regular, with straight eyebrows and steady eyes, not readily changing ex-

pression ; they hold themselves well, a little like men, whom, indeed, they somewhat resemble in figure. As I saw them, leaning motionless against their doors, walking with their deliberateness of step along the roads, with eyes in which there was no wonder, none of the fever of the senses : placid animals, on whom emotion has never worked, in any vivid or passionate way ; I seemed to see all the pathetic contentment of those narrow lives, in which day follows day with the monotony of wave lapping on wave. I observed one young girl of twelve or thirteen, who had something of the ardency of beauty, and a few shy, impressive faces, the hair drawn back smoothly from the middle parting, appearing suddenly behind doors or over walls ; almost all, even the very old women, had nobility of gesture and attitude ; but in the more personal expression of faces there was for the most part but a certain quietude, seeming to reflect the gray hush, the bleak grayness, of this land of endless stone and endless sea.

When we had got through the village, and begun to climb the hill, we were still followed, and we were followed for all the rest of the way, by about fifteen youngsters, all, except one, bare-footed, and two, though boys, wearing petticoats, as the Irish peasant children not unfrequently do, for economy, when they are young enough not to resent it. Our guide, the elderly man with the flaxen curls, led us first to the fort set up by the soldiers of Cromwell, who, coming over to keep down the Catholic rebels, ended by turning Catholic, and marrying and settling among the native people ; then to Teglach Enda, a ruined church of very early masonry, made of large blocks set together with but little cement : the church of St. Enda, who came to Aran in about the year 480, and fifty-eight years later laid his bones in the cemetery which was to hold the graves of not less than a hundred and twenty saints. On our way inland to Teampull Benen, the remains of an early oratory, surrounded by cloghauns, or stone dwellings made of heaped stones, which, centuries ago, had been the cells of monks, we came upon the large puffing-hole, a great gap in the earth, going down by steps of rocks to the sea, which in stormy weather dashes foam to the height of its sixty feet, reminding me of the sounding hollows on the coast of Cornwall. The road here, as on almost the whole of the island, was through stone-walled fields of stone. Grass, or any soil, was but a rare interval between a broken and distracted outstretch of gray rock, lying in large flat slabs, in boulders of every size and shape, and in innumerable stones, wedged in the ground, or lying loose upon it, round, pointed, rough, and polished ; an unending grayness, cut into squares by the walls of carefully-heaped stones, which we climbed with great insecurity, for the stones were kept

in place by no more than the more or less skilful accident of their adjustment, and would turn under our feet or over in our hands as we climbed them. Occasionally a little space of pasture had been cleared, or a little artificial soil laid down, and a cow browsed on the short grass. Ferns, and occasionally maiden-hair, grew in the fissures splintered between the rocks ; and I saw mallow, stone-crop, the pale blue wind-flower, the white campion, many nettles, ivy, and a few bushes. In this part of the island there were no trees, which were to be found chiefly on the north-western side, in a few small clusters about some of the better houses, and almost wholly of alder and willow. As we came to the sheer edge of the sea, and saw the Atlantic, and knew that there was nothing but the Atlantic between this last shivering remnant of Europe and the far-off continent of America, it was with no feeling of surprise that we heard from the old man who led us, that, no later than two years ago, an old woman of those parts had seen, somewhere on this side of the horizon, the blessed island of Tir-nan-Ogue, the island of immortal youth, which is held by the Irish peasants to lie somewhere in that mysterious region of the sea.

We loitered on the cliffs for some time, leaning over them, and looking into the magic mirror that glittered there like a crystal, and with all the soft depth of a crystal in it, hesitating on the veiled threshold of visions. Since I have seen Aran and Sligo, I have never wondered that the Irish peasant still sees fairies about his path, and that the boundaries of what we call the real, and of what is for us the unseen, are vague to him. The sea on those coasts is not like the sea as I know it on any other coast ; it has in it more of the twilight. And the sky seems to come down more softly, with more stealthy step, more illusive wings ; and the land to come forward with a more hesitating and gradual approach ; and land, and sea, and sky to mingle more absolutely than on any other coast. I have never realized less the slipping of sand through the hour-glass ; I have never seemed to see with so remote an impartiality, as in the presence of brief and yet eternal things, the troubling and insignificant accidents of life. I have never believed less in the reality of the visible world, in the importance of all we are most serious about. One seems to wash off the dust of cities, the dust of beliefs, the dust of incredulities.

It was nearly seven o'clock when we got back to Kilronan, and after dinner we sat for awhile talking, and looking out through the little windows at the night. But I could not stay indoors in this new, marvellous place ; and, persuading one of my friends to come with me, I walked up through Kilronan, which I found to be a far more solid and populous village than the one we had seen ; and coming out on the high ground beyond the houses, we saw the end

of a pale green sunset. Getting back to our hotel, we found the others still talking ; but I could not stay indoors, and after a while went out by myself to the end of the pier in the darkness, and lay there looking into the water, and into the fishing-boats lying close up against the land, where there were red lights moving, and the shadows of men, and the sound of deep-throated Irish.

I remember no dreams that night, but I was told that I had talked in my sleep ; and I was willing to believe it. In the morning, not too early, we set out on an outside car (that rocking and most comfortable vehicle, which I prefer to everything but a gondola) for the Seven Churches and Dun Aengus, along the only beaten road in the island. The weather, as we started, was gray and misty, threatening rain : and we could but just see the base-line of the Clare mountains, across the gray and discoloured waters of the bay. At the Seven Churches we were joined by a peasant, who diligently showed us the ruined walls of Teampull Brecan, with its slab inscribed, in Gaelic, with the words, "Pray for the two canons;" the stone of the "VII Romani;" St. Brecan's headstone, carved with Gaelic letters ; the carved cross and the head-stone of St. Brecan's bed. More peasants joined us, and some children, who fixed on us their usual placid and tolerant gaze, in which curiosity contended with an indolent air of contentment. In all these people I noticed the same discreet manners that had already pleased me ; and once, as we were sitting on a tombstone, in the interior of one of the churches, eating the sandwiches that we had brought for luncheon, a man, who had entered the doorway, drew back instantly, seeing us taking a meal.

The Seven Churches are rooted in long grass, spreading in billowy mounds, intertwined here and there with brambles ; but when we set out for the circular fort of Dun Onagh, which lies on the other side of the road, at no great distance up the hill, we were once more in the land of rocks ; and it was through a boreen, or lane, entirely paved with loose and rattling stones, that we made our way up the ascent. At the top of the hill we found ourselves outside such a building as I had never seen before : an ancient fort, 90 feet in diameter, and on the exterior 16 feet high, made of stones placed one upon another, without mortar, in the form of two walls, set together in layers, the inner wall lower than the outer, so as to form a species of gallery, to which stone steps led at intervals. No sooner had we got inside than the rain began to fall in torrents, and it was through a blinding downpour that we hurried back to the car, scarcely stopping to notice a Druid altar that stood not far out of our way. As we drove along, the rain ceased suddenly ; the wet cloud that had been steaming over the faint and chill sea, as if desolated with winter,

vanished in sunshine, caught up into a glory ; and the water, transfigured by so instant a magic, was at once changed from a gray wilderness of shivering mist into a warm, and flashing, and intense blueness which gathered ardency of colour, until the whole bay burned with blue fire. The clouds had been swept behind us, and on the other side of the water, for the whole length of the horizon, the beautiful, softly curving Connemara mountains stood out against the sky as if lit by some interior illumination, blue and pearl-gray and gray-rose. Along the shore-line a trail of faint cloud drifted from kelp-fire to kelp-fire, like altar-smoke drifting into altar-smoke ; and that mysterious mist floated into the lower hollows of the hills, softening their outlines and colours with a vague and fluttering and luminous veil of brightness.

It was about four in the afternoon when we came to the village of Kilmurvey, upon the sea-shore, and, leaving our car, began to climb the hill leading to Dun *Ængus*. Passing two outer ramparts, now much broken, one of them seeming to end suddenly in the midst of a chevaux de frise of pillar-like stones thrust endways into the earth, we entered the central fort by a lintelled doorway, set in the side of a stone wall of the same Cyclopean architecture as Dun Onacht, 18 feet high on the outside, and with two adhering inner walls, each lower in height, 12 feet 9 inches in thickness. This fort is 150 feet north and south, and 140 feet east and west ; and on the east side the circular wall ends suddenly on the very edge of a cliff going down 300 feet to the sea. It is supposed that the circle was once complete, and that the wall and the solid ground itself, which is here of bare rock, were slowly eaten away by the gnawing of centuries of waves, which have been at their task since some hundreds of years before the birth of Christ, when we know not what king, ruling over the races called "the servile," entrenched himself on that impregnable height. The Atlantic lies endlessly out towards the sunrise, beating, on the south, upon the brown and towering rock of the cliffs of Moher, rising up nearly a sheer thousand of feet. The whole gray and desolate island, flowering into barren stone, stretches out on the other side, where the circle of the water washes from Galway Bay into the Atlantic. Looking out over all that emptiness of sea, one imagines the long-oared galleys of the ravaging kings who had lived there, some hundreds of years before the birth of Christ ; and the emptiness of the fortress filled with long-haired warriors, coming back from the galleys with captured slaves, and cattle, and the spoil of citadels. We know from the Bardic writers that a civilization, similar to that of the Homeric poems, lived on in Ireland almost to the time of the coming of St. Patrick ; and it was something also of the sensation of Homer—the walls

of Troy, the heroes, and that "face that launched a thousand ships"—which came to me as we stood upon these unconquerable walls, to which a generation of men had been as a moth's flight, and a hundred years as a generation of men.

Coming back from Dun *AEngus*, one of our party insisted on walking; and we had not been long indoors when he came in with a singular person whom he had picked up on the way, a professional story-teller, who had for three weeks been teaching Irish to the German philologist who had preceded us on the island. He was half blind, and of wild appearance; a small and hairy man, all gesture, and as if set on springs, who spoke somewhat broken English in a roar. He lamented that we could understand no Irish, but, even in English, he had many things to tell, most of which he gave as but "talk," making it very clear that we were not to suppose him to vouch for them. His own family, he told us, was said to be descended from the roons, or seals; but that, certainly, was "talk;" and a witch had, only nine months back, been driven out of the island by the priest; and there were many who said they had seen fairies, but for his part he had never seen them. But with this he began to swear on the name of God and the saints, rising from his chair, and lifting up his hands, that what he was going to tell us was the truth; and then he told how a man had once come into his house, and admired his young child, who was lying there in his bed, and had not said "God bless you!" (without which to admire is to envy, and to bring under the power of the fairies), and that night, and for many following nights, he had wakened and heard a sound of fighting, and one night had lit a candle, but to no avail, and another night had gathered up the blanket and tried to fling it over the head of whoever might be there, but had caught no one; only in the morning, going to a box in which fish were kept, he had found blood in the box; and at this he rose again, and again swore on the name of God and the saints that he was telling us only the truth; and true it was that the child had died; and as for the man who had ill-wished him, "I could point him out any day," he said fiercely. And then, with many other stories of the doings of fairies, and priests (for he was very religious), and of the "Dane" who had come to the island to learn Irish ("and he knew all the languages, the Proosy, and the Roosy, and the Span, and the Grig"), he told us how Satan, being led by pride to equal himself with God, looked into the glass in which God only should look; and when Satan looked into the glass, "Hell was made in a minute."

Next morning we were to leave early, and at nine o'clock we were rowed out to the hooker, which lifted sail in a good breeze, and upon a somewhat

pitching sea, for the second island, Inishmaan, that is, the Middle Island, which is three miles long, and a mile and a half broad. We came within easy distance of the shore, after about half an hour's quick sailing, and a curragh came out to us, rowed by two islanders; but, finding the sea very rough in Gregory Sound, we took them on board, and, towing the boat after us, went about to the Foul Sound, on the southern side of the island, where the sea was much calmer. Here we got into the curragh, sitting motionless, for fear a slight movement on the part of any of us should upset it. The curragh is simply the coracle of the ancient Britons, made of wooden laths covered with canvas, and tarred on the outside, bent into the shape of a round-bottomed boat with a raised and pointed prow, and so light, that, when on shore, two men can carry it reversed on their heads, like an immense hat or umbrella. As the curragh touched the shore, some of the islanders, who had assembled at the edge of the sea, came into the water to meet us, and took hold of the boat, and lifted the prow of it upon land, and said, " You are welcome, you are welcome!" One of them came with us, a nimble peasant of about forty, who led the way up the terraced side of the hill, on which there was a little grass, near the sea-shore, and then scarce anything but slabs and boulders of stone, to a little ruined oratory, almost filled with an alder-tree, the only tree I saw on the island. All around it were grave-stones, half-defaced by the weather, but carved with curious armorial bearings, as it seemed, representing the sun and moon and stars about a cross formed of the Christian monogram. Among the graves were lying huge beams, that had been flung up the hillside from some wrecked vessel, in one of the storms that beat upon the island. Going on a little further, we came to the ancient stone fort of Dun Moher, an inclosure slightly larger than Dun Onacht, but smaller than Dun Aengus; and coming down on the other side, by some stone steps, we made our way, along a very rocky boreen, towards the village that twisted upon a brown zig-zag around the slope of the hill.

In the village we were joined by some more men and children; and a number of women, wearing the same red clothes that we had seen on the larger island, and looking at us with perhaps scarcely so shy a curiosity (for they were almost too unused to strangers to have adopted a manner of shyness), came out to their doors, and looked up at us out of the darkness of many interiors, from where they sat on the ground knitting or carding wool. We passed the chapel, a very modern-looking building, made out of an ancient church; and turned in for a moment to the cottage where the priest sleeps when he comes over from Inishmore on Saturday night, to say early mass on

Sunday morning, before going on to Inisheer for the second mass. We saw his little white room, very quaint and neat ; and the woman of the house, speaking only Irish, motioned to us to sit down, and could hardly be prevented from laying out plates and glasses for us upon the table. As we got a little through the more populous part of the village, we saw ahead of us, down a broad lane, a very handsome girl, holding the end of a long ribbon, decorated with a green bough, across the road. Other girls, and some older women, were standing by, and, when we came up, the handsome girl, with the low forehead and the sombre blue eyes, cried out, laughingly, in her scanty English, "Cash, cash ! " We paid toll, as the custom is, and got her blessing ; and went on our way, leaving the path, and climbing many stone walls, until we came to the great fort of Dun Conor on the hill, the largest of the ancient forts of Aran.

Dun Conor is 227 feet north and south, and 115 feet east and west, with walls in three sections, 20 feet high on the outside, and 18 feet 7 inches thick. We climbed to the top and walked around the wall, where the wind blowing in from the sea beat so hard upon us that we could scarcely keep our footing. From this height we could see all over the island lying out beneath us, gray, and broken into squares by the walled fields ; the brown thatch of the village, the smoke coming up from the chimneys, here and there a red shawl or skirt, the gray sand by the sea, and the gray sea all round. As we stood on the wall many peasants came slowly about us, climbing up on all sides, and some stood together just inside the entrance, and two or three girls sat down on the other side of the arena, knitting. Presently an old man, scarcely leaning on the stick which he carried in his hand, came towards us, and began slowly to climb the steps. "It is my father," said one of the men ; "he is the oldest man on the island ; he was born in eighteen hundred and twelve." The old man climbed slowly up to where we stood ; a mild old man, with a pale face, carefully shaved, and a firm mouth, who spoke the best English that we had heard there. "If any gentleman has committed a crime," said the oldest man on the island, "we'll hide him. There was a man killed his father, and he came over here, and we hid him for two months, and he got away safe to America."

As we came down from the fort, the old man came with us, and I and another, walking ahead, lingered for some time with the old man by a stone stile. "Have you ever seen the fairies ?" said my friend, and a quaint smile flickered over the old man's face, and with many Ohs ! and grave gestures he told us that he had never seen them, but that he had heard them crying in the fort by night ; and one night, as he was going along with his dog, just at the spot where we were then standing, the dog had suddenly rushed at something

or someone, and had rushed round and round him, but he could see nothing, though it was bright moonlight, and so light that he could have seen a rat ; and he had followed across several fields, and again the dog had rushed at the thing, and had seemed to be beaten off, and had come back covered with sweat, and panting, but he could see nothing. And there was a man once, he knew the man, and could point him out, who had been out in his boat (and he motioned with his stick to a certain spot on the water), and a sea-fairy had seized hold of his boat, and tried to come into it ; but he had gone quickly on shore, and the thing, which looked like a man, had turned back into the sea. And there had been a man once on the island who used to talk with the fairies ; and you could hear him going along the roads by night, swearing, and talking with the fairies. "And have you ever heard," said my friend, "of the seals, the roons, turning into men ?" "And indeed," said the oldest man on the island, smiling, "I'm a roon, for I'm one of the family they say comes from the roons." "And have you ever heard," said my friend, "of men going back into the sea, and turning roons again ?" "I never heard that," said the oldest man on the island, reflectively, seeming to ponder over the probability of the occurrence ; "no," he repeated, after a pause, "I never heard that."

We came back to the village by the road we had come, and passed again the handsome girl who had taken toll ; she was sitting by the roadside, knitting, and looked at us sidelong, as we passed, with an almost imperceptible smile in her eyes. We wandered for some time a little vaguely, the amiability of the islanders leading them to bring us in search of various ruins which we imagined to exist, and which they did not like to tell us were not in existence. I found the people on this island even more charming, because a little simpler, more untouched by civilization, than those on the larger island. They were of necessity a little lonelier, for if few people come to Inishmore, how many have ever spent a night on Inishmaan ? Inishmore has its hotel, but there is no hotel on Inishmaan ; there is indeed one public-house, but there is not even a policeman, so sober, so law-abiding, are these islanders. It is true that I succeeded, with some difficulty, and under cover of some mystery, in securing, what I had long wished to taste, a bottle of poteen, or illicit whisky. But the brewing of poteen is, after all, almost romantic in its way, with that queer, sophistical romance of the contraband. That was not the romance I associated with this most peaceful of islands, as we walked along the sand on the sea-shore, passing the kelp-burners, who were collecting long brown trails of sea-weed. More than anything I had ever seen, this sea-shore gave me the sensation of the mystery and the calm of all the islands one has ever

dreamed of, all the fortunate islands that have ever been saved out of the disturbing sea ; this delicate pearl-gray sand, the deeper gray of the stones, the more luminous gray of the water, and so consoling an air as of immortal twilight, and the peace of its dreams.

I had been in no haste to leave Inishmore, but I was still more loth to leave Inishmaan ; and I think that it was with reluctance on the part of all of us that we made our way to the curragh, which was waiting for us in the water. The islanders waved their caps, and called many good blessings after us, as we were rowed back to the hooker, which again lifted sail, and set out for the third and smallest island, Inisheer, that is, the South Island.

We set out confidently, but when we had got out of shelter of the shore, the hooker began to rise and fall with some violence ; and by the time we had come within landing distance of Inisheer, the waves were dashing upon us with so great an energy that it was impossible to drop anchor, and our skipper advised us not to try to get to land. A curragh set out from shore, and came some way towards us, riding the waves. It might have been possible, I doubt not, to drop by good luck from the rolling side of the hooker into the pitching bottom of the curragh, and without capsizing the curragh ; but the chances were against it. Tom Joyce, holding on to the ropes of the main-sail, and the most seaman-like of us, in the stern, shouted at each other above the sound of the wind. We were anxious to make for Ballyline, the port nearest to Listonvarna, on the coast of Clare ; but this Joyce declared to be impossible, in such a sea and with such a wind ; and advised that we should make for Ballyvaughan, round Black Head Point, where we should find a safe harbour. It was now about a quarter past one, and we set out for Ballyvaughan with the wind fair behind us. The hooker rode well, and the waves but rarely came over the windward side, as she lay over towards her sail, taking leap after leap through the white-edged furrows of the gray water. For two hours and a half we skirted the Clare coast, which came to me, and disappeared from me, as the gunwale dipped; or rose on the leeward side. The islands were blotted out behind us long before we had turned the sheer corner of Black Head, the ultimate edge of Ireland ; and at last we came round the headland into quieter water, and so, after a short time, into the little harbour of Ballyvaughan, where we set foot on land again, and drove for hours along the Clare coast and inland into Galway, under that sunset of gold fire and white spray, back to Tillyra Castle, where I felt the ground once more solid under my feet.

ARTHUR SYMONS.



# “Et in Arcadia Ego”

By

Aubrey Beardsley.



AB



## A LITERARY CAUSERIE

BY WAY OF EPILOGUE

T was in the autumn of last year, that, at the request of Mr. Smithers, I undertook to form and edit a new magazine. As this magazine was to contain not only literature but illustration, I immediately went to Mr. Beardsley, whom I looked upon as the most individual and expressive draughtsman of our time, and secured his cordial co-operation. I then got together some of the writers, especially the younger writers, whose work seemed to me most personal and accomplished; deliberately choosing them from as many "schools" as possible. Out of the immense quantity of unsolicited material which came to me, very little was of any value; a few manuscripts and drawings, however, I was able to make use of. I wish here to return thanks, most gratefully, to all those writers and artists who have helped me, with such invariable kindness, and with such invaluable assistance.

Many things that I had hoped to do I have not done; I have done a few things that I did not intend to do. For these failures I blame partly myself, partly circumstances. It is not given to anyone in this world to achieve anything entirely to his satisfaction; or only to those who aim low. I aimed high.

Yes, I admit it, all those intentions which were expressed in my first editorial note, and which the newspapers made so merry over, were precisely my intentions; and I have come as close to them as I could. It is a little difficult now to remember the horrified outcry—the outcry for no reason in the world but the human necessity of making a noise—with which we were first greeted. I look at those old press notices sometimes, in my publisher's scrap-book, and then at the kindly and temperate notices which the same papers are giving us now; and I find the comparison very amusing. For we have not changed in the least; we have simply gone on our own way; and now that everyone is telling us that we have "come to stay," that we are a "welcome addition," etc., we are obliged to retire from existence, on account

of the too meagre support of our friends. Our first mistake was in giving so much for so little money; our second, in abandoning a quarterly for a monthly issue. The action of Messrs. Smith and Son in refusing to place "The Savoy" on their bookstalls, on account of the reproduction of a drawing by Blake, was another misfortune. And then, worst of all, we assumed that there were very many people in the world who really cared for art, and really for art's sake.

The more I consider it, the more I realize that this is not the case. • Comparatively very few people care for art at all, and most of these care for it because they mistake it for something else. A street-singer, with the remains of a beautiful voice, has just been assuring me that "if you care for art you don't get rich." No, it is for their faults that any really artistic productions become popular: art cannot appeal to the multitude. It is wise when it does not attempt to; when it goes contentedly along a narrow path, knowing, and caring only to know, in what direction it is moving.

Well, we were unwise in hoping, for a moment, that the happy accident of popularity was going to befall us. It was never in my original scheme to allow for such an accident. I return to the discretion of first thoughts; after an experiment, certainly, which has been full of instruction, full also of entertainment, to ourselves. And so, in saying the last words in connection with "The Savoy," which now ends its year's existence, I have the pleasure to announce that in our next venture we are going to make no attempt to be popular. We shall make our appearance twice only in the year; our volumes will be larger in size, better produced, and they will cost more. In this way we shall be able to appeal to that limited public which cares for the things we care for; which cares for art, really for art's sake. We shall hope for no big success; we shall be confident of enough support to enable us to go on doing what seems to us worth doing. And, relieved as we shall be from the hurry of monthly publication, we shall have the leisure to do what seems to us worth doing, more nearly as it seems to us it should be done.

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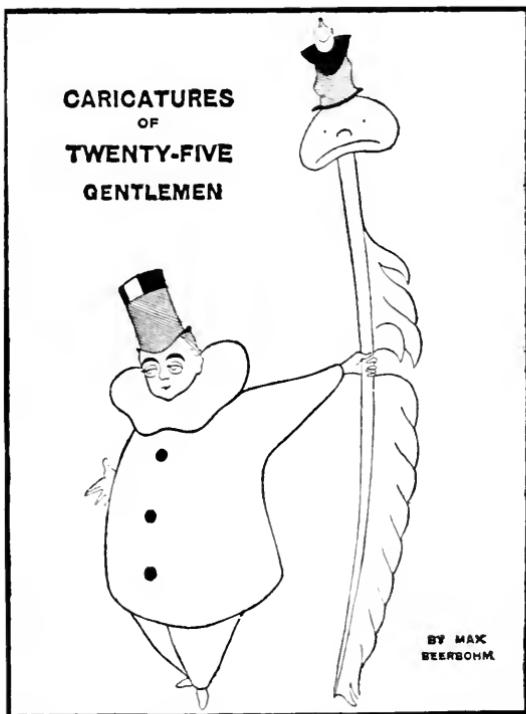


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