

is, after all, not so very far below the surface. But it is also worth while to remember that there are few so degraded who are not sometimes swayed by influences that have no kinship with the physical passions. Mr. London, when he errs, does so on the side of the flesh; there are moments, even in his most powerful work, when one is prompted to say, "That is a false note; human nature is nobler than that!" It is only when he is writing frankly of man, the human animal, the primitive Klondike Indian, the prize-fighter in the lust of battle, the dangerous victim of a fixed idea, that he is really at his best. *Moon-Face*, the tale that gives its name to his new volume of stories, is an admirable example of the last-named class of subjects, a man swayed by an unreasoning hatred until murder, wanton, callous murder, becomes an obsession. John Claverhouse is the name of the hated man; he is described as a cheery, optimistic, moon-faced man, "whose great 'Ha! Ha!' and 'Ho! Ho!' rose up to the sky and challenged the sun." The other man hates him because he is happy, because he is moon-faced, because, in short, he is John Claverhouse, and not some one radically different. And so, under the working of this obsession the other man plans a means of killing him, so strange, so diabolically crafty, that no one can ever trace it to him, no one will even have suspicions—except the victim himself, and he only in the last agonising moments of his life. There are just two stories which inevitably come to mind in connection with *Moon-Face*, Poe's *Cask of Amontillado* is one, with which it suggests comparison for its general spirit of insane hatred; and the other is one of Maupassant's stories, the name of which does not for the moment come to mind, but which forms a close parallel in method—the story in which a feeble peasant woman trains a giant hound to perform for her the vengeance which her own hands are too frail to carry out.

There is a cold-bloodedness about Jack London which would make it impossible for him to write such a story as the one just under consideration. In his men and women the physical life lords it insolently over the spiritual and moral life. It is well for a novelist to keep in mind that even in the most cultured men and women the primitive human animal