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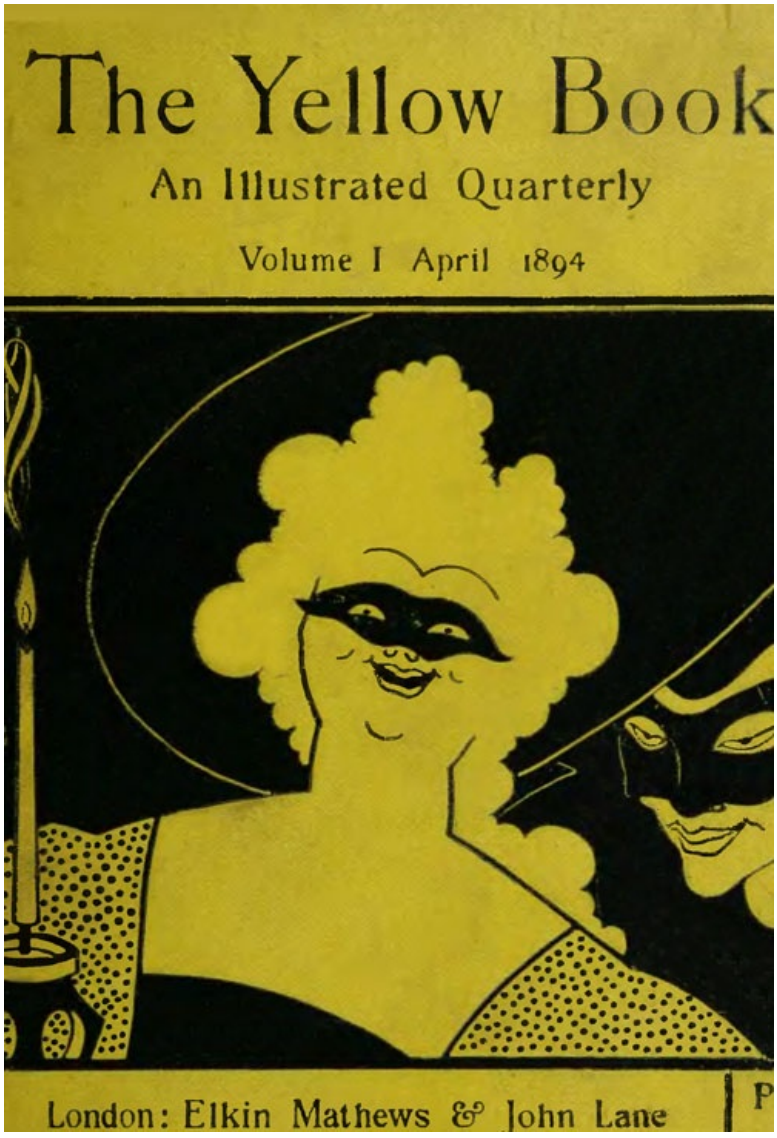

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The Death of the Lion

By Henry James

I

I HAD simply, I suppose, a change of heart, and it must have begun when I received my manuscript back from Mr. Pinhorn. Mr. Pinhorn was my “chief,” as he was called in the office: he had accepted the high mission of bringing the paper up. This was a weekly periodical, and had been supposed to be almost past redemption when he took hold of it. It was Mr. Deedy who had let it down so dreadfully—he was never mentioned in the office now save in connection with that misdemeanour. Young as I was I had been in a manner taken over from Mr. Deedy, who had been owner as well as editor; forming part of a promiscuous lot, mainly plant and office-furniture, which poor Mrs. Deedy, in her bereavement and depression, parted with at a rough valuation. I could account for my continuity only on the supposition that I had been cheap. I rather resented the practice of fathering all flatness on my late protector, who was in his unhonoured grave; but as I had my way to make I found matter enough for complacency in being on a “staff.” At the same time I was aware that I was exposed to suspicion as a product of the old lowering system. This made me feel that I was doubly bound to have ideas, and had doubtless been at the bottom of my proposing to Mr. Pinhorn that I should lay my lean hands on Neil Paraday. I remember that he looked at me first as if he had never heard of this celebrity, who indeed at that moment was by no means in the middle of the heavens; and even when I had knowingly explained he expressed but little confidence in the demand for any such matter. When I had reminded him that the great principle on which we were supposed to work was just to create the demand we required, he considered a moment and then rejoined: “I see; you want to write him up.”

“Call it that if you like.”

“And what's your inducement?”

“Bless my soul—my admiration!”

Mr. Pinhorn pursed up his mouth. “Is there much to be done with him?”

“Whatever there is, we should have it all to ourselves, for he hasn't been touched.”

This argument was effective, and Mr. Pinhorn responded: “Very well, touch him.” Then he added: “But where can you do it?”

“Under the fifth rib!” I laughed.

Mr. Pinhorn stared. “Where's that?”

“You want me to go down and see him?” I inquired, when I had enjoyed his visible search for this obscure suburb.

“I don't ‘want’ anything—the proposal's your own. But you must remember that that's the way we do things *now*,” said Mr. Pinhorn, with another dig at Mr. Deedy.

Unregenerate as I was, I could read the queer implications of this speech. The present owners superior virtue as well as his deeper craft spoke in his reference to the late editor as one of that baser sort who deal in false representations. Mr. Deedy would as soon have sent me to call on Neil Paraday as he would have published a “holiday-number;” but such scruples presented themselves as mere ignoble thrift to his successor, whose own sincerity took the form of ringing door-bells and whose definition of genius was the art of finding people at home. It was as if Mr. Deedy had published reports without his young men's having, as Mr. Pinhorn would have said, really been there. I was unregenerate, as I have hinted, and I was not concerned to straighten out the journalistic morals of my chief, feeling them indeed to be an abyss over the edge of which it was better not to peer. Really to be there this time moreover was a vision that made the idea of writing something subtle about Neil Paraday only the more inspiring. I would be as considerate as even Mr. Deedy could have wished, and yet I should be as present as only Mr. Pinhorn could conceive. My allusion to the sequestered manner in which Mr. Paraday lived (which had formed part of my explanation, though I knew of it only by hearsay) was, I could divine, very much what had made Mr. Pinhorn bite. It struck him as inconsistent with the success of his paper that any one should be so sequestered as that. Moreover, was not an immediate exposure of everything just what the public wanted? Mr. Pinhorn effectually called me to order by reminding me of the promptness with which I had met Miss Braby at Liverpool, on her return from her fiasco in the States. Hadn't we published, while its freshness and flavour were unimpaired, Miss Braby's own version of that great international episode? I felt somewhat uneasy at this coupling of the actress and the author, and I confess that after having enlisted Mr. Pinhorn's sympathies I procrastinated a little. I had succeeded better than I wished, and I had, as it happened, work nearer at hand. A few days later I called on Lord Crouchley and carried off in triumph the most unintelligible statement that had yet appeared of his lordship's reasons for his change of front. I thus set in motion in the daily papers columns of virtuous verbiage. The following week I ran down to Brighton for a chat, as Mr. Pinhorn called it, with Mrs. Bounder, who gave me, on the subject of her divorce, many curious particulars that had not been articulated in court. If ever an article flowed from the primal fount it was that article on Mrs. Bounder. By this time, however, I became

aware that Neil Paraday's new book was on the point of appearing, and that its approach had been the ground of my original appeal to Mr. Pinhorn, who was now annoyed with me for having lost so many days. He bundled me off—we would at least not lose another. I have always thought his sudden alertness a remarkable example of the journalistic instinct. Nothing had occurred, since I first spoke to him, to create a visible urgency, and no enlightenment could possibly have reached him. It was a pure case of professional *flair*—he had smelt the coming glory as an animal smells its distant prey.

II

I may as well say at once that this little record pretends in no degree to be a picture either of my introduction to Mr. Paraday or of certain proximate steps and stages. The scheme of my narrative allows no space for these things and in any case a prohibitory sentiment would be attached to my recollection of so rare an hour. These meagre notes are essentially private, and if they see the light the insidious forces that, as my story itself shows, make at present for publicity will simply have overmastered my precautions. The curtain fell lately enough on the lamentable drama. My memory of the day I alighted at Mr. Paraday's door is a fresh memory of kindness, hospitality, compassion, and of the wonderful illuminating talk in which the welcome was conveyed. Some voice of the air had taught me the right moment, the moment of his life at which an act of unexpected young allegiance might most come home. He had recently recovered from a long, grave illness. I had gone to the neighbouring inn for the night, but I spent the evening in his company, and he insisted the next day on my sleeping under his roof. I had not an indefinite leave: Mr. Pinhorn supposed us to put our victims through on the gallop. It was later, in the office, that the step was elaborated and regulated. I fortified myself however, as my training had taught me to do, by the conviction that nothing could be more advantageous for my article than to be written in the very atmosphere. I said nothing to Mr. Paraday about it, but in the morning, after my removal from the inn, while he was occupied in his study, as he had notified me that he should need to be, I committed to paper the quintessence of my impressions. Then thinking to commend myself to Mr. Pinhorn by my celerity, I walked out and posted my little packet before luncheon. Once my paper was written I was free to stay on, and if it was designed to divert attention from my frivolity in so doing I could reflect with satisfaction that I had never been so clever. I don't mean to deny of course that I was aware it was much too good for Mr. Pinhorn; but I was equally conscious that Mr. Pinhorn had the supreme shrewdness of recognising from time to time the cases in which an article was not too bad only because it was too good. There was nothing he loved so much as to print on the right occasion a thing he hated. I had begun my visit to Mr. Paraday on a Monday, and on the Wednesday his book came out. A copy of it arrived by the first post, and he let me go out into the garden with it immediately after breakfast. I read it from beginning to end that day, and in the evening he asked me to remain with him the rest of the week and over the Sunday.

That night my manuscript came back from Mr. Pinhorn, accompanied with a letter, of which the gist was the desire to know what I meant by sending him such stuff. That was the meaning of the question, if not exactly its form, and it made my mistake immense to me. Such as this mistake was I could now only look it in the face and accept it. I knew where I had failed, but it was exactly where I couldn't have succeeded. I had been sent down there to be personal, and in point of fact I hadn't been personal at all; what I had sent up to London was merely a little finicking, feverish study of my author's talent. Anything less relevant to Mr. Pinhorn's purpose couldn't well be imagined, and he was visibly angry at my having (at his expense, with a second-class ticket) approached the object of our arrangement only to be so deucedly distant. For myself, I knew but too well what had happened, and how a miracle—as pretty as some old miracle of legend—had been wrought on the spot to save me. There had been a big brush of wings, the flash of an opaline robe, and then, with a great cool stir of the air, the sense of an angel's having swooped down and caught me to his bosom. He held me only till the danger was over, and it all took place in a minute. With my manuscript back on my hands I understood the phenomenon better, and the reflections I made on it are what I meant, at the beginning of this anecdote, by my change of heart. Mr. Pinhorn's note was not only a rebuke decidedly stern, but an invitation immediately to send him (it was the case to say so) the genuine article, the revealing and reverberating sketch to the promise of which—and of which alone—I owed my squandered privilege. A week or two later I recast my peccant paper, and giving it a particular application to Mr. Paraday's new book, obtained for it the hospitality of another journal, where, I must admit, Mr. Pinhorn was so far justified that it attracted not the least attention.

III

I was frankly, at the end of three days, a very prejudiced critic, so that one morning when, in the garden, Neil Paraday had offered to read me something I quite held my breath as I listened. It was the written scheme of another book—something he had put aside long ago, before his illness, and lately taken out again to reconsider. He had been turning it round when I came down upon him, and it had grown magnificently under this second hand. Loose, liberal, confident, it might have passed for a great gossiping, eloquent letter—the overflow into talk of an artist's amorous plan. The subject I thought singularly rich, quite the strongest he had yet treated; and this familiar statement of it, full too of fine maturities, was really, in summarised splendour, a mine of gold, a precious, independent work. I remember rather profanely wondering whether the ultimate production could possibly be so happy. His reading of the epistle, at any rate, made me

feel as if I were, for the advantage of posterity, in close correspondence with him—were the distinguished person to whom it had been affectionately addressed. It was high distinction simply to be told such things. The idea he now communicated had all the freshness, the flushed fairness of the conception untouched and untried: it was Venus rising from the sea, before the airs had blown upon her. I had never been so throbbingly present at such an unveiling. But when he had tossed the last bright word after the others, as I had seen cashiers in banks, weighing mounds of coin, drop a final sovereign into the tray, I became conscious of a sudden prudent alarm.

“My dear master, how, after all, are you going to do it?” I asked. “It's infinitely noble, but what time it will take, what patience and independence, what assured, what perfect conditions it will demand! Oh for a lone isle in a tepid sea!”

“Isn't this practically a lone isle, and aren't you, as an encircling medium, tepid enough?” he replied; alluding with a laugh to the wonder of my young admiration and the narrow limits of his little provincial home. “Time isn't what I've lacked hitherto: the question hasn't been to find it, but to use it. Of course my illness made a great hole, but I daresay there would have been a hole at any rate. The earth we tread has more pockets than a billiard-table. The great thing is now to keep on my feet.”

“That's exactly what I mean.”

Neil Paraday looked at me with eyes—such pleasant eyes as he had—in which, as I now recall their expression, I seem to have seen a dim imagination of his fate. He was fifty years old, and his illness had been cruel, his convalescence slow. “It isn't as if I weren't all right.”

“Oh, if you weren't all right I wouldn't look at you!” I tenderly said.

We had both got up, quickened by the full sound of it all, and he had lighted a cigarette. I had taken a fresh one, and, with an intenser smile, by way of answer to my exclamation, he touched it with the flame of his match. “If I weren't better I shouldn't have thought of *that*!” He flourished his epistle in his hand.

“I don't want to be discouraging, but that's not true,” I returned. “I'm sure that during the months you lay here in pain you had visitations sublime. You thought of a thousand things. You think of more and more all the while. That's what makes you, if you will pardon my familiarity, so respectable. At a time when so many people are spent you come into your second wind. But, thank God, all the same, you're better! Thank God, too, you're not, as you were telling me yesterday, ‘successful.’ If *you* weren't a failure, what would be the use of trying? That's my one reserve on the subject of your recovery—that it makes you ‘score,’ as the newspapers say. It looks well in the newspapers, and almost anything that does that is horrible. ‘We are happy to announce that Mr. Paraday, the celebrated author, is again in the enjoyment of excellent health.’ Somehow I shouldn't like to see it.”

“You won't see it; I'm not in the least celebrated—my obscurity protects me. But couldn't you bear even to see I was dying or dead?” my companion asked.

“Dead—*passe encore*; there's nothing so safe. One never knows what a living artist may do—one has mourned so many. However, one must make the worst of it; you must be as dead as you can.”

“Don't I meet that condition in having just published a book?”

“Adequately, let us hope; for the book is verily a masterpiece.”

At this moment the parlour-maid appeared in the door that opened into the garden: Paraday lived at no great cost, and the frisk of petticoats, with a timorous “Sherry, sir?” was about his modest mahogany. He allowed half his income to his wife, from whom he had succeeded in separating without redundancy of legend. I had a general faith in his having behaved well, and I had once, in London, taken Mrs. Paraday down to dinner. He now turned to speak to the maid, who offered him, on a tray, some card or note, while agitated, excited, I wandered to the end of the garden. The idea of his security became supremely dear to me, and I asked myself if I were the same young man who had come down a few days before to scatter him to the four winds. When I retraced my steps he had gone into the house and the woman (the second London post had come in) had placed my letters and a newspaper on a bench. I sat down there to the letters, which were a brief business, and then, without heeding the address, took the paper from its envelope. It was the journal of highest renown, *The Empire* of that morning. It regularly came to Paraday, but I remembered that neither of us had yet looked at the copy already delivered. This one had a great mark on the “editorial” page, and, uncrumpling the wrapper, I saw it to be directed to my host and stamped with the name of his publishers. I instantly divined that *The Empire* had spoken of him, and I have not forgotten the odd little shock of the circumstance. It checked all eagerness and made me drop the paper a moment. As I sat there, conscious of a palpitation, I think I had a vision of what was to be. I had also a vision of the letter I would presently address to Mr. Pinhorn, breaking as it were with Mr. Pinhorn. Of course, however, the next minute the voice of *The Empire* was in my ears.

The article was not, I thanked Heaven, a review; it was a “leader,” the last of three, presenting Neil Paraday to the human race. His new book, the fifth from his hand, had been but a day or two out, and *The Empire*, already aware of it, fired, as if on the birth of a prince, a salute of a whole column. The guns had been booming these three hours in the house without our suspecting them. The big blundering newspaper had discovered him, and now he was proclaimed and anointed and

crowned. His place was assigned him as publicly as if a fat usher with a wand had pointed to the topmost chair; he was to pass up and still up, higher and higher, between the watching faces and the envious sounds—away up to the daïs and the throne. The article was a date; he had taken rank at a bound—waked up a national glory. A national glory was needed, and it was an immense convenience he was there. What all this meant rolled over me, and I fear I grew a little faint—it meant so much more than I could say “yea” to on the spot. In a flash, somehow, all was different; the tremendous wave I speak of had swept something away. It had knocked down, I suppose, my little customary altar, my twinkling tapers and my flowers, and had reared itself into the likeness of a temple vast and bare. When Neil Paraday should come out of the house he would come out a contemporary. That was what had happened—the poor man was to be squeezed into his horrible age. I felt as if he had been overtaken on the crest of the hill and brought back to the city. A little more and he would have dipped down to posterity and escaped.

IV

When he came out it was exactly as if he had been in custody, for beside him walked a stout man with a big black beard, who, save that he wore spectacles, might have been a policeman, and in whom at a second glance I recognised the highest contemporary enterprise.

“This is Mr. Morrow,” said Paraday, looking, I thought, rather white; “he wants to publish heaven knows what about me.”

I winced as I remembered that this was exactly what I myself had wanted. “Already?” I exclaimed, with a sort of sense that my friend had fled to me for protection.

Mr. Morrow glared, agreeably, through his glasses: they suggested the electric headlights of some monstrous modern ship, and I felt as if Paraday and I were tossing terrified under his bows. I saw that his momentum was irresistible. “I was confident that I should be the first in the field,” he declared. “A great interest is naturally felt in Mr. Paraday's surroundings.”

“I hadn't the least idea of it,” said Paraday, as if he had been told he had been snoring.

“I find he has not read the article in *The Empire*,” Mr. Morrow remarked to me. “That's so very interesting—it's something to start with,” he smiled. He had begun to pull off his gloves, which were violently new, and to look encouragingly round the little garden. As a “surrounding” I felt that I myself had already been taken in; I was a little fish in the stomach of a bigger one. “I represent,” our visitor continued, “a syndicate of influential journals, no less than thirty-seven, whose public—whose publics, I may say—are in peculiar sympathy with Mr. Paraday's line of thought. They would greatly appreciate any expression of his views on the subject of the art he so brilliantly practises. Besides my connection with the syndicate just mentioned, I hold a particular commission from *The Tatler*, whose most prominent department, ‘Smatter and Chatter’—I daresay you've often enjoyed it—attracts such attention. I was honoured only last week, as a representative of *The Tatler*, with the confidence of Guy Walsingham, the author of ‘Obsessions.’ She expressed herself thoroughly pleased with my sketch of her method; she went so far as to say that I had made her genius more comprehensible even to herself.”

Neil Paraday had dropped upon the garden-bench and sat there, at once detached and confused; he looked hard at a bare spot in the lawn, as if with an anxiety that had suddenly made him grave. His movement had been interpreted by his visitor as an invitation to sink sympathetically into a wicker chair that stood hard by, and as Mr. Morrow so settled himself I felt that he had taken official possession and that there was no undoing it. One had heard of unfortunate people's having “a man in the house,” and this was just what we had. There was a silence of a moment, during which we seemed to acknowledge in the only way that was possible the presence of universal fate; the sunny stillness took no pity, and my thought, as I was sure Paraday's was doing, performed within the minute a great distant revolution. I saw just how emphatic I should make my rejoinder to Mr. Pinhorn, and that having come, like Mr. Morrow, to betray, I must remain as long as possible to save. Not because I had brought my mind back, but because our visitor's last words were in my ear, I presently inquired with gloomy irrelevance if Guy Walsingham were a woman.

“Oh yes, a mere pseudonym; but convenient, you know, for a lady who goes in for the larger latitude. ‘Obsessions, by Miss So-and-So,’ would look a little odd, but men are more naturally indelicate. Have you peeped into ‘Obsessions’?” Mr. Morrow continued sociably to our companion.

Paraday, still absent, remote, made no answer, as if he had not heard the question: a manifestation that appeared to suit the cheerful Mr. Morrow as well as any other. Imperturbably bland, he was a man of resources—he only needed to be on the spot. He had pocketed the whole poor place while Paraday and I were woolgathering, and I could imagine that he had already got his “heads.” His system, at any rate, was justified by the inevitability with which I replied, to save my friend the trouble: “Dear, no; he hasn't read it. He doesn't read such things!” I unwarily added.

“Things that are *too* far over the fence, eh?” I was indeed a godsend to Mr. Morrow. It was the psychological moment; it determined the appearance of his notebook, which, however, he at first kept slightly behind him, as the dentist, approaching his victim, keeps his horrible forceps. “Mr. Paraday holds with the good old proprieties—I see!” And, thinking of the thirty-seven influential journals, I found myself, as I found poor Paraday, helplessly gazing at the promulgation of this

ineptitude. “There's no point on which distinguished views are so acceptable as on this question —raised perhaps more strikingly than ever by Guy Walsingham—of the permissibility of the larger latitude. I have an appointment, precisely in connection with it, next week, with Dora Forbes, the author of ‘The Other Way Round,’ which everybody is talking about. Has Mr. Paraday glanced at ‘The Other Way Round’?” Mr. Morrow now frankly appealed to me. I took upon myself to repudiate the supposition, while our companion, still silent, got up nervously and walked away. His visitor paid no heed to his withdrawal; he only opened out the notebook with a more motherly pat. “Dora Forbes, I gather, takes the ground, the same as Guy Walsingham's, that the larger latitude has simply got to come. He holds that it has got to be squarely faced. Of course his sex makes him a less prejudiced witness. But an authoritative word from Mr. Paraday—from the point of view of *his* sex, you know—would go right round the globe. He takes the line that we *haven't* got to face it?”

I was bewildered; it sounded somehow as if there were three sexes. My interlocutor's pencil was poised, my private responsibility great. I simply sat staring, however, and only found presence of mind to say: “Is this Miss Forbes a gentleman?”

Mr. Morrow hesitated an instant, smiling: “It wouldn't be ‘Miss’—there's a wife!”

“I mean is she a man?”

“The wife?”—Mr. Morrow, for a moment, was as confused as myself. But when I explained that I alluded to Dora Forbes in person he informed me, with visible amusement at my being so out of it, that this was the “pen-name” of an indubitable male—he had a big red moustache. “He only assumes a feminine personality because the ladies are such popular favourites. A great deal of interest is felt in this assumption, and there's every prospect of its being widely imitated.” Our host at this moment joined us again, and Mr. Morrow remarked invitingly that he should be happy to make a note of any observation the movement in question, the bid for success under a lady's name, might suggest to Mr. Paraday. But the poor man, without catching the allusion, excused himself, pleading that, though he was greatly honoured by his visitor's interest, he suddenly felt unwell and should have to take leave of him—have to go and lie down and keep quiet. His young friend might be trusted to answer for him, but he hoped Mr. Morrow didn't expect great things even of his young friend. His young friend, at this moment, looked at Neil Paraday with an anxious eye, greatly wondering if he were doomed to be ill again; but Paraday's own kind face met his question reassuringly, seemed to say in a glance intelligible enough: “Oh, I'm not ill, but I'm scared: get him out of the house as quietly as possible.” Getting newspaper-men out of the house was odd business for an emissary of Mr. Pinhorn, and I was so exhilarated by the idea of it that I called after him as he left us:

“Read the article in *The Empire*, and you'll soon be all right!”

V

“Delicious my having come down to tell him of it!” Mr. Morrow ejaculated. “My cab was at the door twenty minutes after *The Empire* had been laid upon my breakfast-table. Now what have you got for me?” he continued, dropping again into his chair, from which, however, the next moment he quickly rose. “I was shown into the drawing-room, but there must be more to see—his study, his literary sanctum, the little things he has about, or other domestic objects or features. He wouldn't be lying down on his study-table? There's a great interest always felt in the scene of an author's labours. Sometimes we're favoured with very delightful peeps. Dora Forbes showed me all his table-drawers, and almost jammed my hand into one into which I made a dash! I don't ask that of you, but if we could talk things over right there where he sits I feel as if I should get the keynote.”

I had no wish whatever to be rude to Mr. Morrow, I was much too initiated not to prefer the safety of other ways; but I had a quick inspiration and I entertained an insurmountable, an almost superstitious objection to his crossing the threshold of my friend's little lonely, shabby, consecrated workshop. “No, no—we sha'n't get at his life that way,” I said. “The way to get at his life is to—But wait a moment!” I broke off and went quickly into the house; then, in three minutes, I reappeared before Mr. Morrow with the two volumes of Paraday's new book. “His life's here,” I went on, “and I'm so full of this admirable thing that I can't talk of anything else. The artist's life's his work, and this is the place to observe him. What he has to tell us he tells us with *this* perfection. My dear sir, the best interviewer's the best reader.”

Mr. Morrow good-humouredly protested. “Do you mean to say that no other source of information should be opened to us?”

“None other till this particular one—by far the most copious—has been quite exhausted. Have you exhausted it, my dear sir? Had you exhausted it when you came down here? It seems to me in our time almost wholly neglected, and something should surely be done to restore its ruined credit. It's the course to which the artist himself at every step, and with such pathetic confidence, refers us. This last book of Mr. Paraday's is full of revelations.”

“Revelations?” panted Mr. Morrow, whom I had forced again into his chair.

“The only kind that count. It tells you with a perfection that seems to me quite final all the author thinks, for instance, about the advent of the 'larger latitude.'”

“Where does it do that?” asked Mr. Morrow, who had picked up the second volume and was insincerely thumbing it.

“Everywhere—in the whole treatment of his case. Extract the opinion, disengage the answer—those are the real acts of homage.”

Mr. Morrow, after a minute, tossed the book away. “Ah, but you mustn't take me for a reviewer.”

“Heaven forbid I should take you for anything so dreadful! You came down to perform a little act of sympathy, and so, I may confide to you, did I. Let us perform our little act together. These pages overflow with the testimony we want: let us read them and taste them and interpret them. You will of course have perceived for yourself that one scarcely does read Neil Paraday till one reads him aloud; he gives out to the ear an extraordinary quality, and it's only when you expose it confidently to that test that you really get near his style. Take up your book again and let me listen, while you pay it out, to that wonderful fifteenth chapter. If you feel that you can't do it justice, compose yourself to attention while I produce for you—I think I can!—this scarcely less admirable ninth.”

Mr. Morrow gave me a straight glance which was as hard as a blow between the eyes; he had turned rather red and a question had formed itself in his mind which reached my sense as distinctly as if he had uttered it: “What sort of a damned fool are *you*?” Then he got up, gathering together his hat and gloves, buttoning his coat, projecting hungrily all over the place the big transparency of his mask. It seemed to flare over Fleet Street and somehow made the actual spot distressingly humble: there was so little for it to feed on unless he counted the blisters of our stucco or saw his way to do something with the roses. Even the poor roses were common kinds. Presently his eyes fell upon the manuscript from which Paraday had been reading to me and which still lay on the bench. As my own followed them I saw that it looked promising, looked pregnant, as if it gently throbbed with the life the reader had given it. Mr. Morrow indulged in a nod toward it and a vague thrust of his umbrella. “What's that?”

“Oh, it's a plan—a secret.”

“A secret!” There was an instant's silence, and then Mr. Morrow made another movement. I may have been mistaken, but it affected me as the translated impulse of the desire to lay hands on the manuscript, and this led me to indulge in a quick anticipatory grab which may very well have seemed ungraceful, or even impertinent, and which at any rate left Mr. Paraday's two admirers very erect, glaring at each other while one of them held a bundle of papers well behind him. An instant later Mr. Morrow quitted me abruptly, as if he had really carried something away. To reassure myself, watching his broad back recede, I only grasped my manuscript the tighter. He went to the back-door of the house, the one he had come out from, but on trying the handle he appeared to find it fastened. So he passed round into the front garden, and, by listening intently enough, I could presently hear the outer gate close behind him with a bang. I thought again of the thirty-seven influential journals and wondered what would be his revenge. I hasten to add that he was magnanimous: which was just the most dreadful thing he could have been. *The Tatler* published a charming, chatty, familiar account of Mr. Paraday's “Home-life,” and on the wings of the thirty-seven influential journals it went, to use Mr. Morrow's own expression, right round the globe.

VI

A week later, early in May, my glorified friend came up to town, where, it may be veraciously recorded, he was the king of the beasts of the year. No advancement was ever more rapid, no exaltation more complete, no bewilderment more teachable. His book sold but moderately, though the article in *The Empire* had done unwonted wonders for it; but he circulated in person in a manner that the libraries might well have envied. His formula had been found—he was a “revelation.” His momentary terror had been real, just as mine had been—the overclouding of his passionate desire to be left to finish his work. He was far from unsociable, but he had the finest conception of being let alone that I have ever met. For the time, however, he took his profit where it seemed most to crowd upon him, having in his pocket the portable sophistries about the nature of the artist's task. Observation too was a kind of work and experience a kind of success; London dinners were all material and London ladies were fruitful toil. “No one has the faintest conception of what I'm trying for,” he said to me, “and not many have read three pages that I've written; but they're all enthusiastic, enchanted, devoted.” He found himself in truth equally amused and fatigued; but the fatigue had the merit of being a new sort, and the phantasmagoric town was perhaps after all less of a battlefield than the haunted study. He once told me that he had had no personal life to speak of since his fortieth year, but had had more than was good for him before. London closed the parenthesis and exhibited him in relations; one of the most inevitable of these being that in which he found himself to Mrs. Weeks Wimbush, wife of the boundless brewer and proprietress of the universal menagerie. In this establishment, as everybody knows, on occasions when the crush is great, the animals rub shoulders freely with the spectators and the lions sit down for whole evenings with the lambs.

It had been ominously clear to me from the first that in Neil Paraday this lady, who, as all the world agreed, was tremendous fun, considered that she had secured a prime attraction, a creature of almost heraldic oddity. Nothing could exceed her enthusiasm over her capture, and nothing could exceed the confused apprehensions it excited in me. I had an instinctive fear of her which I tried without effect to conceal from her victim, but which I let her perceive with perfect

impunity. Paraday heeded it, but she never did, for her conscience was that of a romping child. She was a blind, violent force, to which I could attach no more idea of responsibility than to the hum of a spinning-top. It was difficult to say what she conduced to but to circulation. She was constructed of steel and leather, and all I asked of her for our tractable friend was not to do him to death. He had consented for a time to be of indiarubber, but my thoughts were fixed on the day he should resume his shape or at least get back into his box. It was evidently all right, but I should be glad when it was well over. I was simply nervous—the impression was ineffaceable of the hour when, after Mr. Morrow's departure, I had found him on the sofa in his study. That pretext of indisposition had not in the least been meant as a snub to the envoy of *The Tatler*—he had gone to lie down in very truth. He had felt a pang of his old pain, the result of the agitation wrought in him by this forcing open of a new period. His old programme, his old ideal even had to be changed. Say what one would, success was a complication and recognition had to be reciprocal. The monastic life, the pious illumination of the missal in the convent cell were things of the gathered past. It didn't engender despair, but it at least required adjustment. Before I left him on that occasion we had passed a bargain, my part of which was that I should make it my business to take care of him. Let whoever would represent the interest in his presence (I had a mystical prevision of Mrs. Weeks Wimbush), I should represent the interest in his work—in other words, in his absence. These two interests were in their essence opposed; and I doubt, as youth is fleeting, if I shall ever again know the intensity of joy with which I felt that in so good a cause I was willing to make myself odious.

One day, in Sloane Street, I found myself questioning Paraday's landlord, who had come to the door in answer to my knock. Two vehicles, a barouche and a smart hansom, were drawn up before the house.

“In the drawing-room, sir? Mrs. Weeks Wimbush.”

“And in the dining-room?”

“A young lady, sir—waiting: I think a foreigner.”

It was three o'clock, and on days when Paraday didn't lunch out he attached a value to these subjugated hours. On which days, however, didn't the dear man lunch out? Mrs. Wimbush, at such a crisis, would have rushed round immediately after her own repast. I went into the dining-room first, postponing the pleasure of seeing how, upstairs, the lady of the barouche would, on my arrival, point the moral of my sweet solicitude. No one took such an interest as herself in his doing only what was good for him, and she was always on the spot to see that he did it. She made appointments with him to discuss the best means of economising his time and protecting his privacy. She further made his health her special business, and had so much sympathy with my own zeal for it that she was the author of pleasing fictions on the subject of what my devotion had led me to give up. I gave up nothing (I don't count Mr. Pinhorn) because I had nothing, and all I had as yet achieved was to find myself also in the menagerie. I had dashed in to save my friend, but I had only got domesticated and wedged; so that I could do nothing for him but exchange with him over people's heads looks of intense but futile intelligence.

VII

The young lady in the dining-room had a brave face, black hair, blue eyes, and in her lap a big volume. “I've come for his autograph,” she said, when I had explained to her that I was under bonds to see people for him when he was occupied. “I've been waiting half an hour, but I'm prepared to wait all day.” I don't know whether it was this that told me she was American, for the propensity to wait all day is not in general characteristic of her race. I was enlightened probably not so much by the spirit of the utterance as by some quality of its sound. At any rate I saw she had an individual patience and a lovely frock, together with an expression that played among her pretty features as a breeze among flowers. Putting her book upon the table, she showed me a massive album, showily bound and full of autographs of price. The collection of faded notes, of still more faded “thoughts,” of quotations, platitudes, signatures, represented a formidable purpose.

“Most people apply to Mr. Paraday by letter, you know,” I said.

“Yes, but he doesn't answer. I've written three times.”

“Very true,” I reflected; “the sort of letter you mean goes straight into the fire.”

“How do you know the sort I mean?” my interlocutress asked. She had blushed and smiled and in a moment she added: “I don't believe he gets many like them!”

“I'm sure they're beautiful, but he burns without reading.” I didn't add that I had told him he ought to.

“Isn't he then in danger of burning things of importance?”

“He would be, if distinguished men hadn't an infallible nose for a petition.”

She looked at me a moment—her face was sweet and gay. “Do *you* burn without reading, too?” she asked; in answer to which I assured her that if she would trust me with her repository I would see that Mr. Paraday should write his name in it.

She considered a little. “That's very well, but it wouldn't make me see him.”

“Do you want very much to see him?” It seemed ungracious to catechise so charming a creature, but somehow I had never yet taken my duty to the great author so seriously.

“Enough to have come from America for the purpose.”

I stared. “All alone?”

“I don't see that that's exactly your business; but if it will make me more appealing I will confess that I am quite by myself. I had to come alone or not at all.”

She was interesting; I could imagine that she had lost parents, natural protectors—could conceive even that she had inherited money. I was in a phase of my own fortunes when keeping hansoms at doors seemed to me pure swagger. As a trick of this frank and delicate girl, however, it became romantic—a part of the general romance of her freedom, her errand, her innocence. The confidence of young Americans was notorious, and I speedily arrived at a conviction that no impulse could have been more generous than the impulse that had operated here. I foresaw at that moment that it would make her my peculiar charge, just as circumstances had made Neil Paraday. She would be another person to look after, and one's honour would be concerned in guiding her straight. These things became clearer to me later; at the instant I had scepticism enough to observe to her, as I turned the pages of her volume, that her net had, all the same, caught many a big fish. She appeared to have had fruitful access to the great ones of the earth; there were people moreover whose signatures she had presumably secured without a personal interview. She couldn't have waylaid George Washington and Friedrich Schiller and Hannah More. She met this argument, to my surprise, by throwing up the album without a pang. It wasn't even her own; she was responsible for none of its treasures. It belonged to a girl-friend in America, a young lady in a western city. This young lady had insisted on her bringing it, to pick up more autographs: she thought they might like to see, in Europe, in what company they would be. The “girl-friend,” the western city, the immortal names, the curious errand, the idyllic faith, all made a story as strange to me, and as beguiling, as some tale in the Arabian Nights. Thus it was that my informant had encumbered herself with the ponderous tome; but she hastened to assure me that this was the first time she had brought it out. For her visit to Mr. Paraday it had simply been a pretext. She didn't really care a straw that he should write his name; what she did want was to look straight into his face.

I demurred a little. “And why do you require to do that?”

“Because I just love him!” Before I could recover from the agitating effect of this crystal ring my companion had continued: “Hasn't there ever been any face that you've wanted to look into?”

How could I tell her so soon how much I appreciated the opportunity of looking into hers? I could only assent in general to the proposition that there were certainly for everyone such faces; and I felt that the crisis demanded all my lucidity, all my wisdom. “Oh, yes, I'm a student of physiognomy. Do you mean,” I pursued, “that you've a passion for Mr. Paraday's books?”

“They've been everything to me—I know them by heart. They've completely taken hold of me. There's no author about whom I feel as I do about Neil Paraday.”

“Permit me to remark then,” I presently rejoined, “that you're one of the right sort.”

“One of the enthusiasts? Of course I am!”

“Oh, there are enthusiasts who are quite of the wrong. I mean you're one of those to whom an appeal can be made.”

“An appeal?” Her face lighted as if with the chance of some great sacrifice.

If she was ready for one it was only waiting for her, and in a moment I mentioned it. “Give up this rigid purpose of seeing him. Go away without it. That will be far better.”

She looked mystified; then she turned visibly pale. “Why, hasn't he any personal charm?” The girl was terrible and laughable in her bright directness.

“Ah, that dreadful word ‘personal’!” I exclaimed; “we're dying of it, and you women bring it out with murderous effect. When you encounter a genius as fine as this idol of ours, let him off the dreary duty of being a personality as well. Know him only by what's best in him, and spare him for the same sweet sake.”

My young lady continued to look at me in confusion and mistrust, and the result of her reflection on what I had just said was to make her suddenly break out: “Look here, sir—what's the matter with him?”

“The matter with him is that, if he doesn't look out, people will eat a great hole in his life.”

She considered a moment. “He hasn't any disfigurement?”

“Nothing to speak of!”

“Do you mean that social engagements interfere with his occupations?”

“That but feebly expresses it.”

“So that he can't give himself up to his beautiful imagination?”

“He's badgered, bothered, overwhelmed, on the pretext of being applauded. People expect him to give them his time, his golden time, who wouldn't themselves give five shillings for one of his books.”

“Five? I'd give five thousand!”

“Give your sympathy—give your forbearance. Two-thirds of those who approach him only do it to advertise themselves.”

“Why, it's too bad!” the girl exclaimed, with the face of an angel.

I followed up my advantage. “There's a lady with him now who's a terrible complication, and who yet hasn't read, I am sure, ten pages that he ever wrote.”

My visitor's wide eyes grew tenderer. “Then how does she talk——?”

“Without ceasing. I only mention her as a single case. Do you want to know how to show a superlative consideration? Simply avoid him.”

“Avoid him?” she softly wailed.

“Don't force him to have to take account of you; admire him in silence, cultivate him at a distance and secretly appropriate his message. Do you want to know,” I continued, warming to my idea, “how to perform an act of homage really sublime?” Then as she hung on my words: “Succeed in never seeing him!”

“Never?” she pathetically gasped.

“The more you get into his writings the less you'll want to; and you'll be immensely sustained by the thought of the good you're doing him.”

She looked at me without resentment or spite, and at the truth I had put before her with candour, credulity and pity. I was afterwards happy to remember that she must have recognised in my face the liveliness of my interest in herself. “I think I see what you mean.”

“Oh, I express it badly; but I should be delighted if you would let me come to see you—to explain it better.”

She made no response to this, and her thoughtful eyes fell on the big album, on which she presently laid her hands as if to take it away. “I did use to say out West that they might write a little less for autographs (to all the great poets, you know) and study the thoughts and style a little more.”

“What do they care for the thoughts and style? They didn't even understand you. I'm not sure,” I added, “that I do myself, and I daresay that you by no means make me out.” She had got up to go, and though I wanted her to succeed in not seeing Neil Paraday I wanted her also, inconsequently, to remain in the house. I was at any rate far from desiring to hustle her off. As Mrs. Weeks Wimbush, upstairs, was still saving our friend in her own way, I asked my young lady to let me briefly relate, in illustration of my point, the little incident of my having gone down into the country for a profane purpose and been converted on the spot to holiness. Sinking again into her chair to listen, she showed a deep interest in the anecdote. Then, thinking it over gravely, she exclaimed with her odd intonation:

“Yes, but you do see him!” I had to admit that this was the case; and I was not so prepared with an effective attenuation as I could have wished. She eased the situation off, however, by the charming quaintness with which she finally said: “Well, I wouldn't want him to be lonely!” This time she rose in earnest, but I persuaded her to let me keep the album to show to Mr. Paraday. I assured her I would bring it back to her myself. “Well, you'll find my address somewhere in it, on a paper!” she sighed resignedly, as she took leave.

VIII

I blush to confess it, but I invited Mr. Paraday that very day to transcribe into the album one of his most characteristic passages. I told him how I had got rid of the strange girl who had brought it—her ominous name was Miss Hurter and she lived at an hotel; quite agreeing with him moreover as to the wisdom of getting rid with equal promptitude of the book itself. This was why I carried it to Albemarle Street no later than on the morrow. I failed to find her at home, but she wrote to me and I went again: she wanted so much to hear more about Neil Paraday. I returned repeatedly, I may briefly declare, to supply her with this information. She had been immensely taken, the more she thought of it, with that idea of mine about the act of homage: it had ended by filling her with a generous rapture. She positively desired to do something sublime for him, though indeed I could see that, as this particular flight was difficult, she appreciated the fact that my visits kept her up. I had it on my conscience to keep her up; I neglected nothing that would contribute to it, and her conception of our cherished author's independence became at last as fine as his own conception. “Read him, read him,” I constantly repeated; while, seeking him in his works, she represented herself as convinced that, according to my assurance, this was the system that had, as she expressed it, weaned her. We read him together when I could find time, and the generous creature's sacrifice was fed by our conversation. There were twenty selfish women,

about whom I told her, who stirred her with a beautiful rage. Immediately after my first visit her sister, Mrs. Milsom, came over from Paris, and the two ladies began to present, as they called it, their letters. I thanked our stars that none had been presented to Mr. Paraday. They received invitations and dined out, and some of these occasions enabled Fanny Hurter to perform, for consistency's sake, touching feats of submission. Nothing indeed would now have induced her even to look at the object of her admiration. Once, hearing his name announced at a party, she instantly left the room by another door and then straightway quitted the house. At another time, when I was at the opera with them (Mrs. Milsom had invited me to their box) I attempted to point Mr. Paraday out to her in the stalls. On this she asked her sister to change places with her, and, while that lady devoured the great man through a powerful glass, presented, all the rest of the evening, her inspired back to the house. To torment her tenderly I pressed the glass upon her, telling her how wonderfully near it brought our friend's handsome head. By way of answer she simply looked at me in grave silence; on which I saw that tears had gathered in her eyes. These tears, I may remark, produced an effect on me of which the end is not yet. There was a moment when I felt it my duty to mention them to Neil Paraday; but I was deterred by the reflection that there were questions more relevant to his happiness.

These questions indeed, by the end of the season, were reduced to a single one—the question of reconstituting, so far as might be possible, the conditions under which he had produced his best work. Such conditions could never all come back, for there was a new one that took up too much place; but some perhaps were not beyond recall. I wanted above all things to see him sit down to the subject of which, on my making his acquaintance, he had read me that admirable sketch. Something told me there was no security but in his doing so before the new factor, as we used to say at Mr. Pinhorn's, should render the problem incalculable. It only half reassured me that the sketch itself was so copious and so eloquent that even at the worst there would be the making of a small but complete book, a tiny volume which, for the faithful, might well become an object of adoration. There would even not be wanting critics to declare, I foresaw, that the plan was a thing to be more thankful for than the structure to have been reared on it. My impatience for the structure, none the less, grew and grew with the interruptions. He had, on coming up to town, begun to sit for his portrait to a young painter, Mr. Rumble, whose little game, as we used to say at Mr. Pinhorn's, was to be the first to perch on the shoulders of renown. Mr. Rumble's studio was a circus in which the man of the hour, and still more the woman, leaped through the hoops of his showy frames almost as electrically as they burst into telegrams and “specials.” He pranced into the exhibitions on their back; he was the reporter on canvas, the Vandyke up to date, and there was one roaring year in which Mrs. Bounder and Miss Braby, Guy Walsingham and Dora Forbes proclaimed in chorus from the same pictured walls that no one had yet got ahead of him.

Paraday had been promptly caught and saddled, accepting with characteristic good-humour his confidential hint that to figure in his show was not so much a consequence as a cause of immortality. From Mrs. Wimbush to the last “representative” who called to ascertain his twelve favourite dishes, it was the same ingenuous assumption that he would rejoice in the repercussion. There were moments when I fancied I might have had more patience with them if they had not been so fatally benevolent. I hated, at all events, Mr. Rumble's picture, and had my bottled resentment ready when, later on, I found my distracted friend had been stuffed by Mrs. Wimbush into the mouth of another cannon. A young artist in whom she was intensely interested, and who had no connection with Mr. Rumble, was to show how far he could shoot him. Poor Paraday, in return, was naturally to write something somewhere about the young artist. She played her victims against each other with admirable ingenuity, and her establishment was a huge machine in which the tiniest and the biggest wheels went round to the same treadle. I had a scene with her in which I tried to express that the function of such a man was to exercise his genius—not to serve as a hoarding for pictorial posters. The people I was perhaps angriest with were the editors of magazines who had introduced what they called new features, so aware were they that the newest feature of all would be to make him grind their axes by contributing his views on vital topics and taking part in the periodical prattle about the future of fiction. I made sure that before I should have done with him there would scarcely be a current form of words left me to be sick of; but meanwhile I could make surer still of my animosity to bustling ladies for whom he drew the water that irrigated their social flower-beds.

I had a battle with Mrs. Wimbush over the artist she protected, and another over the question of a certain week, at the end of July, that Mr. Paraday appeared to have contracted to spend with her in the country. I protested against this visit; I intimated that he was too unwell for hospitality without a *nuance*, for caresses without imagination; I begged he might rather take the time in some restorative way. A sultry air of promises, of reminders hung over his August, and he would greatly profit by the interval of rest. He had not told me he was ill again—that he had had a warning; but I had not heeded this, and I found his reticence his worst symptom. The only thing he said to me was that he believed a comfortable attack of something or other would set him up: it would put out of the question everything but the exemptions he prized. I am afraid I shall have presented him as a martyr in a very small cause if I fail to explain that he surrendered himself much more liberally than I surrendered him. He filled his lungs, for the most part, with the comedy of his queer fate: the tragedy was in the spectacles through which I chose to look. He was conscious of inconvenience, and above all of a great renouncement; but how could he have heard a mere dirge in the bells of his accession? The sagacity and the jealousy were mine, and his the impressions and the anecdotes. Of course, as regards Mrs. Wimbush, I was worsted in my encounters, for was not the state of his health the very reason for his coming to her at Prestidge? Wasn't it precisely at Prestidge that he was to be coddled, and wasn't the dear Princess coming to help her to coddle him? The dear Princess, now on a visit to England, was of a famous foreign

house, and, in her gilded cage, with her retinue of keepers and feeders, was the most expensive specimen in the good lady's collection. I don't think her august presence had had to do with Paraday's consenting to go, but it is not impossible that he had operated as a bait to the illustrious stranger. The party had been made up for him, Mrs. Wimbush averred, and everyone was counting on it, the dear Princess most of all. If he was well enough he was to read them something absolutely fresh, and it was on that particular prospect the Princess had set her heart. She was so fond of genius, in *any* walk of life, and she was so used to it, and understood it so well; she was the greatest of Mr. Paraday's admirers, she devoured everything he wrote. And then he read like an angel. Mrs. Wimbush reminded me that he had again and again given her, Mrs. Wimbush, the privilege of listening to him.

I looked at her a moment. “What has he read to you?” I crudely inquired.

For a moment too she met my eyes, and for the fraction of a moment she hesitated and coloured. “Oh, all sorts of things!”

I wondered whether this were a perfect fib or only an imperfect recollection, and she quite understood my unuttered comment on her perception of such things. But if she could forget Neil Paraday's beauties she could of course forget my rudeness, and three days later she invited me, by telegraph, to join the party at Prestidge. This time she might indeed have had a story about what I had given up to be near the master. I addressed from that fine residence several communications to a young lady in London, a young lady whom, I confess, I quitted with reluctance and whom the reminder of what she herself could give up was required to make me quit at all. It adds to the gratitude I owe her on other grounds that she kindly allows me to transcribe from my letters a few of the passages in which that hateful sojourn is candidly commemorated.

IX

“I suppose I ought to enjoy the joke,” I wrote, "of what's going on here, but somehow it doesn't amuse me. Pessimism on the contrary possesses me and cynicism solicits. I positively feel my own flesh sore from the brass nails in Neil Paraday's social harness. The house is full of people who like him, as they mention, awfully, and with whom his talent for talking nonsense has prodigious success. I delight in his nonsense myself; why is it therefore that I grudge these happy folk their artless satisfaction? Mystery of the human heart—abyss of the critical spirit! Mrs. Wimbush thinks she can answer that question, and as my want of gaiety has at last worn out her patience she has given me a glimpse of her shrewd guess. I am made restless by the selfishness of the insincere friend—I want to monopolise Paraday in order that he may push me on. To be intimate with him is a feather in my cap; it gives me an importance that I couldn't naturally pretend to, and I seek to deprive him of social refreshment because I fear that meeting more disinterested people may enlighten him as to my real spirit. All the disinterested people here are his particular admirers and have been carefully selected as such. There is supposed to be a copy of his last book in the house, and in the hall I come upon ladies, in attitudes, bending gracefully over the first volume. I discreetly avert my eyes, and when I next look round the precarious joy has been superseded by the book of life. There is a sociable circle or a confidential couple, and the relinquished volume lies open on its face, as if it had been dropped under extreme coercion. Somebody else presently finds it and transfers it, with its air of momentary desolation, to another piece of furniture. Every one is asking every one about it all day, and everyone is telling everyone where they put it last. I'm sure it's rather smudgy about the twentieth page. I have a strong impression too that the second volume is lost—has been packed in the bag of some departing guest; and yet everybody has the impression that somebody else has read to the end. You see therefore that the beautiful book plays a great part in our conversation. Why should I take the occasion of such distinguished honours to say that I begin to see deeper into Gustave Flaubert's doleful refrain about the hatred of literature? I refer you again to the perverse constitution of man.

"The Princess is a massive lady with the organisation of an athlete and the confusion of tongues of a *valet de place*. She contrives to commit herself extraordinarily little in a great many languages, and is entertained and conversed with in detachments and relays, like an institution which goes on from generation to generation or a big building contracted for under a forfeit. She can't have a personal taste, any more than, when her husband succeeds, she can have a personal crown, and her opinion on any matter is rusty and heavy and plain—made, in the night of ages, to last and be transmitted. I feel as if I ought to pay some one a fee for my glimpse of it. She has been told everything in the world and has never perceived anything, and the echoes of her education respond awfully to the rash footfall—I mean the casual remark—in the cold Valhalla of her memory. Mrs. Wimbush delights in her wit and says there is nothing so charming as to hear Mr. Paraday draw it out. He is perpetually detailed for this job, and he tells me it has a peculiarly exhausting effect. Every one is beginning—at the end of two days—to sidle obsequiously away from her, and Mrs. Wimbush pushes him again and again into the breach. None of the uses I have yet seen him put to irritate me quite so much. He looks very fagged, and has at last confessed to me that his condition makes him uneasy—has even promised me that he will go straight home instead of returning to his final engagements in town. Last night I had some talk with him about going to-day, cutting his visit short; so sure am I that he will be better as soon as he is shut up in his lighthouse. He told me that this is what he would like to do; reminding me, however, that the first lesson of his greatness has been precisely that he can't do what he likes. Mrs. Wimbush would never forgive him if he should leave her before the Princess has received the last hand.

When I say that a violent rupture with our hostess would be the best thing in the world for him he gives me to understand that if his reason assents to the proposition his courage hangs wofully back. He makes no secret of being mortally afraid of her, and when I ask what harm she can do him that she hasn't already done he simply repeats: 'I'm afraid, I'm afraid! Don't inquire too closely,' he said last night; 'only believe that I feel a sort of terror. It's strange, when she's so kind! At any rate, I would as soon overturn that piece of priceless Sèvres as tell her that I must go before my date.' It sounds dreadfully weak, but he has some reason, and he pays for his imagination, which puts him (I should hate it) in the place of others and makes him feel, even against himself, their feelings, their appetites, their motives. He's so beastly intelligent. Besides, the famous reading is still to come off, and it has been postponed a day, to allow Guy Walsingham to arrive. It appears that this eminent lady is staying at a house a few miles off, which means of course that Mrs. Wimbush has forcibly annexed her. She's to come over in a day or two—Mrs. Wimbush wants her to hear Mr. Paraday.

"To-day's wet and cold, and several of the company, at the invitation of the Duke, have driven over to luncheon at Bigwood. I saw poor Paraday wedge himself, by command, into the little supplementary seat of a brougham in which the Princess and our hostess were already ensconced. If the front glass isn't open on his dear old back perhaps he'll survive. Bigwood, I believe, is very grand and frigid, all marble and precedence, and I wish him well out of the adventure. I can't tell you how much more and more *your* attitude to him, in the midst of all this, shines out by contrast. I never willingly talk to these people about him, but see what a comfort I find it to scribble to you! I appreciate it; it keeps me warm; there are no fires in the house. Mrs. Wimbush goes by the calendar, the temperature goes by the weather, the weather goes by God knows what, and the Princess is easily heated. I have nothing but my acrimony to warm me, and have been out under an umbrella to restore my circulation. Coming in an hour ago, I found Lady Augusta Minch rummaging about the hall. When I asked her what she was looking for she said she had mislaid something that Mr. Paraday had lent her. I ascertained in a moment that the article in question is a manuscript, and I have a foreboding that it's the noble morsel he read me six weeks ago. When I expressed my surprise that he should have passed about anything so precious (I happen to know it's his only copy—in the most beautiful hand in all the world) Lady Augusta confessed to me that she had not had it from himself, but from Mrs. Wimbush, who had wished to give her a glimpse of it as a salve for her not being able to stay and hear it read.

"'Is that the piece he's to read,' I asked, 'when Guy Walsingham arrives?'

"'It's not for Guy Walsingham they're waiting now, it's for Dora Forbes,' Lady Augusta said. 'She's coming, I believe, early to-morrow. Meanwhile Mrs. Wimbush has found out about *him* and is actively wiring to him. She says he also must hear him.'

"'You bewilder me a little,' I replied; 'in the age we live in one gets lost among the genders and the pronouns. The clear thing is that Mrs. Wimbush doesn't guard such a treasure as jealously as she might.'

"'Poor dear, she has the Princess to guard! Mr. Paraday lent her the manuscript to look over.'

"'Did she speak as if it were the morning paper?'

"Lady Augusta stared—my irony was lost upon her. 'She didn't have time, so she gave me a chance first; because unfortunately I go to-morrow to Bigwood.'

"'And your chance has only proved a chance to lose it?'

"'I haven't lost it. I remember now—it was very stupid of me to have forgotten. I told my maid to give it to Lord Dorimont—or at least to his man.'

"'And Lord Dorimont went away directly after luncheon.'

"'Of course he gave it back to my maid—or else his man did,' said Lady Augusta. 'I daresay it's all right.'

"The conscience of these people is like a summer sea. They haven't time to 'look over' a priceless composition; they've only time to kick it about the house. I suggested that the 'man,' fired with a noble emulation, had perhaps kept the work for his own perusal; and her ladyship wanted to know whether, if the thing didn't turn up again in time for the session appointed by our hostess, the author wouldn't have something else to read that would do just as well. Their questions are too delightful! I declared to Lady Augusta briefly that nothing in the world can ever do as well as the thing that does best; and at this she looked a little confused and scared. But I added that if the manuscript had gone astray our little circle would have the less of an effort of attention to make. The piece in question was very long—it would keep them three hours.

"'Three hours! Oh, the Princess will get up!' said Lady Augusta.

"'I thought she was Mr. Paraday's greatest admirer.'

"'I daresay she is—she's so awfully clever. But what's the use of being a Princess——'

"'If you can't dissemble your love?' I asked, as Lady Augusta was vague. She said, at any rate, that she would question her maid; and I am hoping that when I go down to dinner I shall find the manuscript has been recovered."

X

“It has not been recovered,” I wrote early the next day, “and I am moreover much troubled about our friend. He came back from Bigwood with a chill and, being allowed to have a fire in his room, lay down a while before dinner. I tried to send him to bed and indeed thought I had put him in the way of it; but after I had gone to dress Mrs. Wimbush came up to see him, with the inevitable result that when I returned I found him under arms and flushed and feverish, though decorated with the rare flower she had brought him for his button-hole. He came down to dinner, but Lady Augusta Minch was very shy of him. To-day he's in great pain, and the advent of those ladies—I mean of Guy Walsingham and Dora Forbes—doesn't at all console me. It does Mrs. Wimbush, however, for she has consented to his remaining in bed, so that he may be all right to-morrow for the *séance*. Guy Walsingham is already on the scene, and the doctor, for Paraday, also arrived early. I haven't yet seen the author of 'Obsessions,' but of course I've had a moment by myself with the doctor. I tried to get him to say that our invalid must go straight home—I mean to-morrow or next day; but he quite refuses to talk about the future. Absolute quiet and warmth and the regular administration of an important remedy are the points he mainly insists on. He returns this afternoon, and I'm to go back to see the patient at one o'clock, when he next takes his medicine. It consoles me a little that he certainly won't be able to read—an exertion he was already more than unfit for. Lady Augusta went off after breakfast, assuring me that her first care would be to follow up the lost manuscript. I can see she thinks me a shocking busybody and doesn't understand my alarm, but she will do what she can, for she's a good-natured woman. ‘So are they all honourable men.’ That was precisely what made her give the thing to Lord Dorimont and made Lord Dorimont bag it. What use *he* has for it God only knows. I have the worst forebodings, but somehow I'm strangely without passion—desperately calm. As I consider the unconscious, the well-meaning ravages of our appreciative circle I bow my head in submission to some great natural, some universal accident; I'm rendered almost indifferent, in fact quite gay (ha-ha!) by the sense of immitigable fate. Lady Augusta promises me to trace the precious object and let me have it, through the post, by the time Paraday is well enough to play his part with it. The last evidence is that her maid did give it to his lordship's valet. One would think it was some thrilling number of *The Family Budget*. Mrs. Wimbush, who is aware of the accident, is much less agitated by it than she would doubtless be were she not for the hour inevitably engrossed with Guy Walsingham.”

Later in the day I informed my correspondent, for whom indeed I kept a sort of diary of the situation, that I had made the acquaintance of this celebrity and that she was a pretty little girl who wore her hair in what used to be called a crop. She looked so juvenile and so innocent that if, as Mr. Morrow had announced, she was resigned to the larger latitude, her fortitude must have come to her early. I spent most of the day hovering about Neil Paraday's room, but it was communicated to me from below that Guy Walsingham, at Prestidge, was a success. Towards evening I became conscious somehow that her resignation was contagious and by the time the company separated for the night I was sure that the larger latitude had been generally accepted. I thought of Dora Forbes and felt that he had no time to lose. Before dinner I received a telegram from Lady Augusta Minch. “Lord Dorimont thinks he must have left bundle in train—inquire.” How could I inquire—if I was to take the word as a command? I was too worried and now too alarmed about Neil Paraday. The doctor came back, and it was an immense satisfaction to me to feel that he was wise and interested. He was proud of being called to so distinguished a patient, but he admitted to me that night that my friend was gravely ill. It was really a relapse, a recrudescence of his old malady. There could be no question of moving him: we must at any rate see first, on the spot, what turn his condition would take. Meanwhile, on the morrow, he was to have a nurse. On the morrow the dear man was easier and my spirits rose to such cheerfulness that I could almost laugh over Lady Augusta's second telegram: “Lord Dorimont's servant been to station—nothing found. Push inquiries.” I did laugh, I am sure, as I remembered this was the mystic scroll I had scarcely allowed poor Mr. Morrow to point his umbrella at. Fool that I had been: the thirty-seven influential journals wouldn't have destroyed it, they would only have printed it. Of course I said nothing to Paraday.

When the nurse arrived she turned me out of the room, on which I went downstairs. I should premise that at breakfast the news that our brilliant friend was doing well excited universal complacency, and the Princess graciously remarked that he was only to be commiserated for missing the society of Miss Collop. Mrs. Wimbush, whose social gift never shone brighter than in the dry decorum with which she accepted this blemish on her perfection, mentioned to me that Guy Walsingham had made a very favourable impression on her Imperial Highness. Indeed I think everyone did so and that, like the money-market or the national honour, her Imperial Highness was constitutionally sensitive. There was a certain gladness, a perceptible bustle in the air, however, which I thought slightly anomalous in a house where a great author lay critically ill. “*Le roy est mort—vive le roy*”: I was reminded that another great author had already stepped into his shoes. When I came down again after the nurse had taken possession I found a strange gentleman hanging about the hall and pacing to and fro by the closed door of the drawing-room. This personage was florid and bald, he had a big red moustache and wore showy knickerbockers —characteristics all that fitted into my conception of the identity of Dora Forbes. In a moment I saw what had happened: the author of *The Other Way Round* had just alighted at the portals of Prestidge, but had suffered a scruple to restrain him from penetrating further. I recognised his scruple when, pausing to listen at his gesture of caution, I heard a shrill voice lifted in a prolonged monotonous quaver. The famous reading had begun, only it was the author of “Obsessions” who now furnished the sacrifice. The new visitor whispered to me that he judged

something was going on that he oughtn't to interrupt.

“Miss Collop arrived last night,” I smiled, “and the Princess has a thirst for the *inédit*.”

Dora Forbes lifted his bushy brows. “Miss Collop?”

“Guy Walsingham, your distinguished *confrère*—or shall I say your formidable rival?”

“Oh!” growled Dora Forbes. Then he added: “Shall I spoil it if I go in?”

“I should think nothing could spoil it!” I ambiguously laughed.

Dora Forbes evidently felt the dilemma; he gave an irritated crook to his moustache. “*Shall* I go in?” he presently asked.

We looked at each other hard a moment; then I expressed something bitter that was in me, expressed it in an infernal “Yes!” After this I got out into the air, but not so quickly as not to hear, as the door of the drawing-room opened, the disconcerted drop of Miss Collop's public manner: she must have been in the midst of the larger latitude. Producing with extreme rapidity, Guy Walsingham has just published a work in which amiable people who are not initiated have been pained to see the genius of a sister-novelist held up to unmistakable ridicule; so fresh an exhibition does it seem to them of the dreadful way men have always treated women. Dora Forbes, it is true, at the present hour, is immensely pushed by Mrs. Wimbush, and has sat for his portrait to the young artists she protects, sat for it not only in oils but in monumental alabaster.

What happened at Prestidge later in the day is of course contemporary history. If the interruption I had whimsically sanctioned was almost a scandal, what is to be said of that general dispersal of the company which, under the doctor's rule, began to take place in the evening? His rule was soothing to behold, small comfort as I was to have at the end. He decreed in the interest of his patient an absolutely soundless house and a consequent break-up of the party. Little country practitioner as he was, he literally packed off the Princess. She departed as promptly as if a revolution had broken out, and Guy Walsingham emigrated with her. I was kindly permitted to remain, and this was not denied even to Mrs. Wimbush. The privilege was withheld indeed from Dora Forbes; so Mrs. Wimbush kept her latest capture temporarily concealed. This was so little, however, her usual way of dealing with her eminent friends that a couple of days of it exhausted her patience, and she went up to town with him in great publicity. The sudden turn for the worse her afflicted guest had, after a brief improvement, taken on the third night raised an obstacle to her seeing him before her retreat; a fortunate circumstance doubtless, for she was fundamentally disappointed in him. This was not the kind of performance for which she had invited him to Prestidge, or invited the Princess. Let me hasten to add that none of the generous acts which have characterised her patronage of intellectual and other merit have done so much for her reputation as her lending Neil Paraday the most beautiful of her numerous homes to die in. He took advantage to the utmost of the singular favour. Day by day I saw him sink, and I roamed alone about the empty terraces and gardens. His wife never came near him, but I scarcely noticed it: as I paced there with rage in my heart I was too full of another wrong. In the event of his death it would fall to me perhaps to bring out in some charming form, with notes, with the tenderest editorial care, that precious heritage of his written project. But where *was* that precious heritage, and were both the author and the book to have been snatched from us? Lady Augusta wrote me that she had done all she could and that poor Lord Dorimont, who had really been worried to death, was extremely sorry. I couldn't have the matter out with Mrs. Wimbush, for I didn't want to be taunted by her with desiring to aggrandise myself by a public connection with Mr. Paraday's sweepings. She had signified her willingness to meet the expense of all advertising, as indeed she was always ready to do. The last night of the horrible series, the night before he died, I put my ear closer to his pillow.

“That thing I read you that morning, you know.”

“In your garden—that dreadful day? Yes!”

“Won't it do as it is?”

“It would have been a glorious book.”

“It *is* a glorious book,” Neil Paraday murmured. “Print it as it stands—beautifully.”

“Beautifully!” I passionately promised.

It may be imagined whether, now that he has gone, the promise seems to me less sacred. I am convinced that if such pages had appeared in his lifetime the Abbey would hold him to-day. I have kept the advertising in my own hands, but the manuscript has not been recovered. It's impossible, and at any rate intolerable, to suppose it can have been wantonly destroyed. Perhaps some chance blundering hand, some brutal ignorance has lighted kitchen-fires with it. Every stupid and hideous accident haunts my meditations. My undiscourageable search for the lost treasure would make a long chapter. Fortunately I have a devoted associate in the person of a young lady who has every day a fresh indignation and a fresh idea and who maintains with intensity that the prize will still turn up. Sometimes I believe her, but I have quite ceased to believe myself. The only thing for us, at all events, is to go on seeking and hoping together; and we should be closely united by this firm tie even were we not at present by another.

L'Education Sentimentale

By Aubrey Beardsley

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Tree-Worship

By Richard Le Gallienne

Vast and mysterious brother, ere was yet of me
So much as men may poise upon a needle's end,
Still shook with laughter all this monstrous might of thee,
And still with haughty crest it called the morning friend.

Thy latticed column jetted up the bright blue air,
Tall as a mast it was, and stronger than a tower;
Three hundred winters had beheld thee mighty there,
Before my little life had lived one little hour.

With rocky foot stern-set like iron in the land,
With leafy rustling crest the morning sows with pearls,
Huge as a minster, half in heaven men saw thee stand,
Thy rugged girth the waists of fifty Eastern girls.

Knotted and warted, slabbed and armoured like the hide
Of tropic elephant; unstormable and steep
As some grim fortress with a princess-pearl inside,
Where savage guardian faces beard the bastioned keep:

So hard a rind, old tree, shielding so soft a heart,
A woman's heart of tender little nestling leaves;
Nor rind so hard but that a touch so soft can part,
And spring's first baby-bud an easy passage cleaves.

I picture thee within with dainty satin sides,
Where all the long day through the sleeping dryad dreams,
But when the moon bends low and taps thee thrice she glides,
Knowing the fairy knock, to bask within her beams.

And all the long night through, for him with eyes and ears,
She sways within thine arms and sings a fairy tune,
Till, startled with the dawn, she softly disappears,
And sleeps and dreams again until the rising moon.

But with the peep of day great bands of heavenly birds
Fill all thy branchy chambers with a thousand flutes,
And with the torrid noon stroll up the weary herds,
To seek thy friendly shade and doze about thy roots;

Till with the setting sun they turn them once more home:
And, ere the moon dawns, for a brief enchanted space,
Weary with million miles, the sore-spent star-beams come,
And moths and bats hold witches' sabbath in the place.

And then I picture thee some bloodstained Holyrood,
Dread haunted palace of the bat and owl, whence steal,
Shrouded all day, lost murdered spirits of the wood,
And fright young happy nests with homeless hoot and squeal.

Some Rizzio nightingale that plained adulterous love
Beneath the boudoir-bough of some fast-married bird,
Some dove that cooed to some one else's lawful dove,
And felt the dagger-beak pierce while his lady heard.

Then, maybe, dangling from thy gloomy gallows boughs,
A human corpse swings, mournful, rattling bones and chains—
His eighteenth century flesh hath fattened nineteenth century cows—
Ghastly Æolian harp fingered of winds and rains.

Poor Rizpah comes to reap each newly-fallen bone
That once thrilled soft, a little limb, within her womb;
And mark yon alchemist, with zodiac-spangled zone,
Wrenching the mandrake root that fattens in the gloom.

So rounds thy day, from maiden morn to haunted night,
From larks and sunlit dreams to owl and gibbering ghost;
A catacomb of dark, a sponge of living light,
To the wide sea of air a green and welcome coast.

I seek a god, old tree: accept my worship, thou!
All other gods have failed me always in my need.

I hang my votive song beneath thy temple bough,
Unto thy strength I cry—Old monster, be my creed!

Give me to clasp this earth with feeding roots like thine,
To mount yon heaven with such star-aspiring head,
Fill full with sap and buds this shrunken life of mine,
And from my boughs O might such stalwart sons be shed!

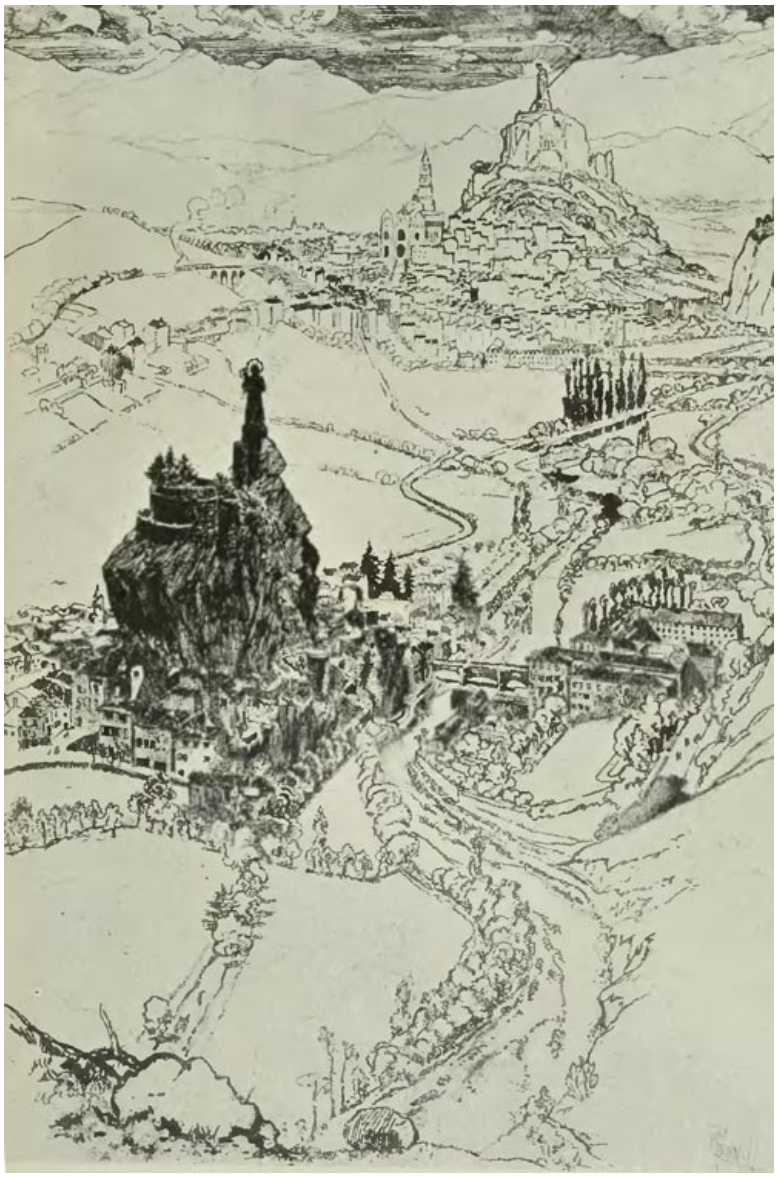
With loving cheek pressed close against thy horny breast,
I hear the roar of sap mounting within thy veins;
Tingling with buds, thy great hands open towards the west,
To catch the sweetheart wind that brings the sister rains.

O winds that blow from out the fruitful mouth of God,
O rains that softly fall from his all-loving eyes,
You that bring buds to trees and daisies to the sod,
O God's best Angel of the Spring, in me arise.

Le Puy en Velay

By Joseph Pennell

Reproduced by the Swan Electric Engraving Company



A Defence of Cosmetics

By Max Beerbohm

Nay, but it is useless to protest. Artifice must queen it once more in the town, and so, if there be any whose hearts chafe at her return, let them not say, “We have come into evil times,” and be all for resistance, reformation or angry cavilling. For did the king's sceptre send the sea retrograde, or the wand of the sorcerer avail to turn the sun from its old course? And what man or what number of men ever stayed that reiterated process by which the cities of this world grow, are very strong, fail and grow again? Indeed, indeed, there is charm in every period, and only fools and flutterpates do not seek reverently for what is charming in their own day. No martyrdom, however fine, nor satire, however splendidly bitter, has changed by a little tittle the known tendency of things. It is the times that can perfect us, not we the times, and so let all of us wisely acquiesce. Like the little wired marionettes, let us acquiesce in the dance.

For behold! The Victorian era comes to its end and the day of sancta simplicitas is quite ended. The old signs are here and the portents to warn the seer of life that we are ripe for a new epoch of artifice. Are not men rattling the dice-box and ladies dipping their fingers in the rouge-pots? At Rome, in the keenest time of her degringolade, when there was gambling even in the holy temples, great ladies (does not Lucian tell us?) did not scruple to squander all they had upon unguents from Arabia. Nero's mistress and unhappy wife, Poppæa, of shameful memory, had in her travelling retinue fifteen—or, as some say, fifty—she-asses, for the sake of their milk, that was thought an incomparable guard against cosmetics with poison in them. Last century, too, when life was lived by candle-light, and ethics was but etiquette, and even art a question of punctilio, women, we know, gave the best hours of the day to the crafty farding of their faces and the towering of their coiffures. And men, throwing passion into the wine-bowl to sink or swim, turned out thought to browse upon the green cloth. Cannot we even now in our fancy see them, those silent exquisites round the long table at Brooks', masked, all of them, “lest the countenance should betray feeling,” in quinze masks, through whose eyelets they sat peeping, peeping, while macao brought them riches or ruin? We can see them, those silent rascals, sitting there with their cards and their rouleaux and their wooden money-bowls, long after the dawn had crept up St. James' and pressed its haggard face against the window of the little club. Yes, we can raise their ghosts—and, more, we can see manywhere a devotion to hazard fully as meek as theirs. In England there has been a wonderful revival of cards. Roulette may rival dead faro in the tale of her devotees. Her wheel is spinning busily in every house and ere long it may be that tender parents will be writing to complain of the compulsory baccarat in our public schools.

In fact, we are all gamblers once more, but our gambling is on a finer scale than ever it was. We fly from the card-room to the heath, and from the heath to the City, and from the City to the coast of the Mediterranean. And just as no one seriously encourages the clergy in its frantic efforts to lay the spirit of chance, that has thus resurged among us, so no longer are many faces set against that other great sign of a more complicated life, the love for cosmetics. No longer is a lady of fashion blamed if, to escape the outrageous persecution of time, she fly for sanctuary to the toilet-table; and if a damosel, prying in her mirror, be sure that with brush and pigment she can trick herself into more charm, we are not angry. Indeed, why should we ever have been? Surely it is laudable, this wish to make fair the ugly and overtop fairness, and no wonder that within the last five years the trade of the makers of cosmetics has increased immoderately—twentyfold, so one of these makers has said to me. We need but walk down any modish street and peer into the little broughams that flit past, or (in Thackeray's phrase) under the bonnet of any woman we meet, to see over how wide a kingdom rouge reigns. We men, who, from Juvenal down to that discourteous painter of whom Lord Chesterfield tells us, have especially shown a dislike of cosmetics, are quite yielding; and there are, I fancy, many such husbands as he who, suddenly realising that his wife was painted, bad her sternly, “Go up and take it all off,” and, on her reappearance, bad her with increasing sternness, “Go up and put it all on again.”

But now that the use of pigments is becoming general, and most women are not so young as they are painted, it may be asked curiously how the prejudice ever came into being. Indeed, it is hard to trace folly, for that it is inconsequent, to its start; and perhaps it savours too much of reason to suggest that the prejudice was due to the tristful confusion man has made of soul and surface. Through trusting so keenly to the detection of the one by keeping watch upon the other, and by force of the thousand errors following, he has come to think of surface even as the reverse of soul. He supposes that every clown beneath his paint and lip-salve is moribund and knows it, (though in verity, I am told, clowns are as cheerful a class of men as any other), that the fairer the fruit's rind and the more delectable its bloom, the closer are packed the ashes within it. The very jargon of the hunting-field connects cunning with a mask. And so perhaps came man's anger at the embellishment of women—that lovely mask of enamel with its shadows of pink and tiny pencilled veins, what must lurk behind it? Of what treacherous mysteries may it not be the screen? Does not the heathen lacquer her dark face, and the harlot paint her cheeks, because sorrow has made them pale?

After all, the old prejudice is a-dying. We need not pry into the secret of its birth. Rather is this a time of jolliness and glad indulgence. For the era of rouge is upon us, and as only in an elaborate era can man by the tangled accrescency of his own pleasures and emotions reach that refinement which is his highest excellence, and by making himself, so to say, independent of Nature, come

nearest to God, so only in an elaborate era is woman perfect. Artifice is the strength of the world, and in that same mask of paint and powder, shadowed with vermeil tinct and most trimly pencilled, is woman's strength.

For see! We need not look so far back to see woman under the direct influence of Nature. Early in this century, our grandmothers, sickening of the odour of faded exotics and spilt wine, came out into the daylight once more and let the breezes blow around their faces and enter, sharp and welcome, into their lungs. Artifice they drove forth, and they set Martin Tupper upon a throne of mahogany to rule over them. A very reign of terror set in. All things were sacrificed to the fetish Nature. Old ladies may still be heard to tell how, when they were girls, affectation was not; and, if we verify their assertion in the light of such literary authorities as Dickens, we find that it is absolutely true. Women appear to have been in those days utterly natural in their conduct—flighty, gushing, blushing, fainting, giggling and shaking their curls. They knew no reserve in the first days of the Victorian era. No thought was held too trivial, no emotion too silly, to express. To Nature everything was sacrificed. Great heavens! And in those barren days what influence was exerted by women? By men they seem not to have been feared nor loved, but regarded rather as “dear little creatures” or “wonderful little beings,” and in their relation to life as foolish and ineffectual as the landscapes they did in water-colour. Yet, if the women of those years were of no great account, they had a certain charm and they at least had not begun to trespass upon men's ground; if they touched not thought, which is theirs by right, at any rate they refrained from action, which is ours. Far more serious was it when, in the natural trend of time, they became enamoured of rinking and archery and galloping along the Brighton Parade. Swiftly they have sped on since then from horror to horror. The invasion of the tennis-courts and of the golf-links, the seizure of the tricycle and of the type-writer, were but steps preliminary in that campaign which is to end with the final victorious occupation of St. Stephen's. But stay! The horrific pioneers of womanhood who gad hither and thither and, confounding wisdom with the device on her shield, shriek for the unbecoming, are doomed. Though they spin their tricycle-treadles so amazingly fast, they are too late. Though they scream victory, none follow them. Artifice, that fair exile, has returned.

Yes, though the pioneers know it not, they are doomed already. For of the curiosities of history not the least strange is the manner in which two social movements may be seen to overlap, long after the second has, in truth, given its deathblow to the first. And, in like manner as one has seen the limbs of a murdered thing in lively movement, so we need not doubt that, though the voices of those who cry out for reform be very terribly shrill, they will soon be hushed. Dear Artifice is with us. It needed but that we should wait.

Surely, without any of my pleading, women will welcome their great and amiable protectrix, as by instinct. For (have I not said?) it is upon her that all their strength, their life almost, depends. Artifice's first command to them is that they should repose. With bodily activity their powder will fly, their enamel crack. They are butterflies who must not flit, if they love their bloom. Now, setting aside the point of view of passion, from which very many obvious things might be said, (and probably have been by the minor poets), it is, from the intellectual point of view, quite necessary that a woman should repose. Hers is the resupinate sex. On her couch she is a goddess, but so soon as ever she put her foot to the ground—lo, she is the veriest little sillypop and quite done for. She cannot rival us in action, but she is our mistress in the things of the mind. Let her not by second-rate athletics, nor indeed by any exercise soever of the limbs, spoil the pretty procedure of her reason. Let her be content to remain the guide, the subtle suggester of what *we* must do, the strategist whose soldiers we are, the little architect whose workmen.

“After all,” as a pretty girl once said to me, “women are a sex by themselves, so to speak,” and the sharper the line between their worldly functions and ours, the better. This greater swiftness and less erring subtlety of mind, their forte and privilege, justifies the painted mask that Artifice bids them wear. Behind it their minds can play without let. They gain the strength of reserve. They become important, as in the days of the Roman Empire were the Emperor's mistresses, as was the Pompadour at Versailles, as was our Elizabeth. Yet do not their faces become lined with thought; beautiful and without meaning are their faces.

And, truly, of all the good things that will happen with the full renascence of cosmetics, one of the best is that surface will finally be severed from soul. That damnable confusion will be solved by the extinguishing of a prejudice which, as I suggest, itself created. Too long has the face been degraded from its rank as a thing of beauty to a mere vulgar index of character or emotion. We had come to troubling ourselves, not with its charm of colour and line, but with such questions as whether the lips were sensuous, the eyes full of sadness, the nose indicative of determination. I have no quarrel with physiognomy. For my own part, I believe in it. But it has tended to degrade the face æsthetically, in such wise as the study of cheirosophy has tended to degrade the hand. And the use of cosmetics, the masking of the face, will change this. We shall gaze at a woman merely because she is beautiful, not stare into her face anxiously, as into the face of a barometer.

How fatal it has been, in how many ways, this confusion of soul and surface! Wise were the Greeks in making plain masks for their mummers to play in, and dunces we not to have done the same! Only the other day, an actress was saying that what she was most proud of in her art—next, of course, to having appeared in some provincial pantomime at the age of three—was the deftness with which she contrived, in parts demanding a rapid succession of emotions, to dab her cheeks quite quickly with rouge from the palm of her right hand, or powder from the palm of her left. Gracious goodness! why do not we have masks upon the stage? Drama is the presentment of the soul in action. The mirror of the soul is the voice. Let the young critics, who seek a cheap

reputation for austerity, by cavilling at “incidental music,” set their faces rather against the attempt to justify inferior dramatic art by the subvention of a quite alien art like painting, of any art, indeed, whose sphere is only surface. Let those, again, who sneer, so rightly, at the “painted anecdotes of the Academy,” censure equally the writers who trespass on painter's ground. It is a proclaimed sin that a painter should concern himself with a good little girl's affection for a Scotch greyhound, or the keen enjoyment of their port by elderly gentlemen of the early 'forties. Yet, for a painter to prod the soul with his paint-brush is no worse than for a novelist to refuse to dip under the surface, and the fashion of avoiding a psychological study of grief by stating that the owner's hair turned white in a single night, or of shame by mentioning a sudden rush of scarlet to the cheeks, is as lamentable as may be. But! But with the universal use of cosmetics and the consequent secernment of soul and surface, which, at the risk of irritating a reader, I must again insist upon, all those old properties that went to bolster up the ordinary novel—the trembling lips, the flashing eyes, the determined curve of the chin, the nervous trick of biting the moustache—aye and the hectic spot of red on either cheek—will be made spiflicate, as the puppets were spiflicated by Don Quixote. Yes, even now Demos begins to discern. The same spirit that has revived rouge, smote his mouth as it grinned at the wondrous painter of mist and river, and now sends him sprawling for the pearls that Meredith dived for in the deep waters of romance.

Indeed the revival of cosmetics must needs be so splendid an influence, conjuring boons innumerable, that one inclines almost to mutter against that inexorable law by which Artifice must perish from time to time. That such branches of painting as the staining of glass or the illuminating of manuscripts should fall into disuse seems in comparison, so likely; these were esoteric arts; they died with the monastic spirit. But personal appearance is art's very basis. The painting of the face is the first kind of painting man can have known. To make beautiful things—is it not an impulse laid upon few? But to make oneself beautiful is an universal instinct. Strange that the resultant art could ever perish! So fascinating an art too! So various in its materials from stimmis, psimythium and fuligo to bismuth and arsenic, so simple in that its ground and its subject-matter are one, so marvellous in that its very subject-matter becomes lovely when an artist has selected it! For surely this is no idle nor fantastic saying. To deny that “making-up” is an art, on the pretext that the finished work of its exponents depends for beauty and excellence upon the ground chosen for the work, is absurd. At the touch of a true artist, the plainest face turns comely. As subject-matter the face is no more than suggestive, as ground, merely a loom round which the beatus artifex may spin the threads of any golden fabric:

"Quae nunc nomen habent operosi signa Maronis
Pondus iners quondam duraque massa fuit.
Multa viros nescire decet; pars maxima rerum
Offendat, si non interiora tegas,"

and, as Ovid would seem to suggest, by pigments any tone may be set aglow on a woman's cheek, from enamel the features take any form. Insomuch that surely the advocates of soup-kitchens and free-libraries and other devices for giving people what providence did not mean them to receive, should send out pamphlets in the praise of self-embellishment. For it will place Beauty within easy reach of many who could not otherwise hope to attain it.

But of course Artifice is rather exacting. In return for the repose she forces—so wisely!—upon her followers when the sun is high or the moon is blown across heaven, she demands that they should pay her long homage at the sun's rising. The initiate may not enter lightly upon her mysteries. For, if a bad complexion be inexcusable, to be ill-painted is unforgivable; and when the toilet is laden once more with the fulness of its elaboration, we shall hear no more of the proper occupation for women. And think, how sweet an energy, to sit at the mirror of coquetry! See the dear merits of the toilet as shown upon old vases, or upon the walls of Roman dwellings, or, rather still, read Böttiger's alluring, scholarly description of „Morgenscenen im Puttzimmer Einer Reichen Römerin.“ Read of Sabina's face as she comes through the curtain of her bed-chamber to the chamber of her toilet. The slave-girls have long been chafing their white feet upon the marble floor. They stand, those timid Greek girls, marshalled in little battalions. Each has her appointed task, and all kneel in welcome as Sabina stalks, ugly and frowning, to the toilet chair. Scaphion steps forth from among them, and, dipping a tiny sponge in a bowl of hot milk, passes it lightly, ever so lightly, over her mistress' face. The Poppæan pastes melt beneath it like snow. A cooling lotion is poured over her brow and is fanned with feathers. Phiale comes after, a clever girl, captured in some sea-skirmish in the Aegean. In her left hand she holds the ivory box wherein are the phucus and that white powder, psimythium; in her right a sheaf of slim brushes. With how sure a touch does she mingle the colours, and in what sweet proportion blushes and blanches her lady's upturned face. Phiale is the cleverest of all the slaves. Now Calamis dips her quill in a certain powder that floats, liquid and sable, in the hollow of her palm. Standing upon tip-toe and with lips parted, she traces the arch of the eyebrows. The slaves whisper loudly of their lady's beauty, and two of them hold up a mirror to her. Yes, the eyebrows are rightly arched. But why does Psecas abase herself? She is craving leave to powder Sabina's hair with a fine new powder. It is made of the grated rind of the cedar-tree, and a Gallic perfumer, whose stall is near the Circus, gave it to her for a kiss. No lady in Rome knows of it. And so, when four special slaves have piled up the head-dress, out of a perforated box this glistening powder is showered. Into every little brown ringlet it enters, till Sabina's hair seems like a pile of gold coins. Lest the breezes send it flying, the girls lay the powder with sprinkled attar. Soon Sabina will start for the Temple of Cybele.

Ah! Such are the lures of the toilet that none will for long hold aloof from them. Cosmetics are not going to be a mere prosaic remedy for age or plainness, but all ladies and all young girls will come to love them. Does not a certain blithe Marquise, whose *lettres intimes* from the Court of Louis Seize are less read than their wit would merit, tell us how she was scandalised to see "*même les toutes jeunes demoiselles émaillées comme ma tabatière*?" So it shall be with us. Surely the common prejudice against painting the lily can but be based on mere ground of economy. That which is already fair is complete, it may be urged—urged implausibly, for there are not so many lovely things in this world that we can afford not to know each one of them by heart. There is only one white lily, and who that has ever seen—as I have—a lily really well painted could grudge the artist so fair a ground for his skill? Scarcely do you believe through how many nice metamorphoses a lily may be passed by him. In like manner, we all know the young girl, with her simpleness, her goodness, her wayward ignorance. And a very charming ideal for England must she have been, and a very natural one, when a young girl sat even on the throne. But no nation can keep its ideal for ever and it needed none of Mr. Gilbert's delicate satire in "Utopia" to remind us that she had passed out of our ken with the rest of the early Victorian era. What writer of plays, as lately asked some pressman, who had been told off to attend many first nights and knew what he was talking about, ever dreams of making the young girl the centre of his theme? Rather he seeks inspiration from the tried and tired woman of the world, in all her intricate maturity, whilst, by way of comic relief, he sends the young girl flitting in and out with a tennis-racket, the poor εἴδωλον ἀμαυρόν of her former self. The season of the unsophisticated is gone by, and the young girl's final extinction beneath the rising tides of cosmetics will leave no gap in life and will rob art of nothing.

"Tush," I can hear some damned flutterpate exclaim, "girlishness and innocence are as strong and as permanent as womanhood itself! Why, a few months past, the whole town went mad over Miss Cissie Loftus! Was not hers a success of girlish innocence and the absence of rouge? If such things as these be outmoded, why was she so wildly popular?" Indeed, the triumph of that clever girl, whose début made London nice even in August, is but another witness to the truth of my contention. In a very sophisticated time, simplicity has a new dulcedo. Hers was a success of contrast. Accustomed to clever malaperts like Miss Lloyd or Miss Reeve, whose experienced pouts and smiles under the sun-bonnet are a standing burlesque of innocence and girlishness, Demos was really delighted, for once and away, to see the real presentment of these things upon his stage. Coming after all those sly serios, coming so young and mere with her pink frock and straightly combed hair, Miss Cissie Loftus had the charm which things of another period often do possess. Besides, just as we adored her for the abrupt nod with which she was wont at first to acknowledge the applause, so we were glad for her to come upon the stage with nothing to tinge the ivory of her cheeks. It seemed so strange, that neglect of convention. To be behind footlights and not rouged! Yes, hers was a success of contrast. She was like a daisy in the window at Solomons'. She was delightful. And yet, such is the force of convention, that when last I saw her, playing in some burlesque at the Gaiety, her fringe was curled and her pretty face rouged with the best of them. And, if further need be to show the absurdity of having called her performance "a triumph of naturalness over the jaded spirit of modernity," let us reflect that the little mimic was not a real old-fashioned girl after all. She had none of that restless naturalness that would seem to have characterised the girl of the early Victorian days. She had no pretty ways—no smiles nor blushes nor tremors. Possibly Demos could not have stood a presentment of girlishness unrestrained.

But with her grave insouciance, Miss Cissie Loftus had much of the reserve that is one of the factors of feminine perfection, and to most comes only, as I have said, with artifice. Her features played very, very slightly. And in truth, this may have been one of the reasons of her great success. For expression is but too often the ruin of a face; and, since we cannot as yet so order the circumstances of life that women shall never be betrayed into "an unbecoming emotion," when the brunette shall never have cause to blush, and the lady who looks well with parted lips be kept in a permanent state of surprise, the safest way by far is to create, by brush and pigments, artificial expressions for every face.

And this—say you?—will make monotony? You are mistaken, *toto cœlo* mistaken. When your mistress has wearied you with one expression, then it will need but a few touches of that pencil, a backward sweep of that brush, and lo, you will be revelling in another. For though, of course, the painting of the face is, in manner, most like the painting of canvas, in outcome it is rather akin to the art of music—lasting, like music's echo, not for very long. So that, no doubt, of the many little appurtenances of the Reformed Toilet Table, not the least vital will be a list of the emotions that become its owner, with recipes for simulating them. According to the colour she wills her hair to be for the time—black or yellow or, peradventure, burnished red—she will blush for you, sneer for you, laugh or languish for you. The good combinations of line and colour are nearly numberless, and by their means poor restless woman will be able to realise her moods in all their shades and lights and dappledoms, to live many lives and masquerade through many moments of joy. No monotony will be. And for us men matrimony will have lost its sting.

But be it remembered! Though we men will garner these oblique boons, it is into the hands of women that Artifice gives her pigments. I know, I know that many men in a certain sect of society have shown a marked tendency to the use of cosmetics. I speak not of the countless gentlemen who walk about town in the time of its desertion from August to October, artificially bronzed, as though they were fresh from the moors or from the Solent. This, I conceive, is done for purely social reasons and need not concern me here. Rather do I speak of those who make themselves up, seemingly with an æsthetic purpose. Doubtless—I wish to be quite just—there are many who

look the better for such embellishment; but, at the hazard of being thought old-fashioned and prejudiced, I cannot speak of the custom with anything but strong disapproval. If men are to lie among the rouge-pots, inevitably it will tend to promote that amalgamation of the sexes which is one of the chief planks in the decadent platform and to obtund that piquant contrast between him and her, which is one of the redeeming features of creation. Besides, really, men have not the excuse of facial monotony, that holds in the case of women. Have we not hair upon our chins and upper lips? And can we not, by diverting the trend of our moustache or by growing our beard in this way or that, avoid the boredom of looking the same for long? Let us beware. For if, in violation of unwritten sexual law, men take to trifling with the paints and brushes that are feminine heritage, it may be that our great ladies will don false imperials, and the little doner deck her pretty chin with a Newgate fringe! After all, I think we need not fear that many men will thus trespass. Most of them are in the City nowadays, and the great wear and tear of that place would put their use of rouge—that demands bodily repose from its dependents—quite outside the range of practical æsthetics.

But that in the world of women they will not neglect this art, so ripping in itself, in its result so wonderfully beneficent, I am sure indeed. Much, I have said, is already done for its full renascence. The spirit of the age has made straight the path of its professors. Fashion has made Jezebel surrender her monopoly of the rouge-pot. As yet, the great art of self-embellishment is for us but in its infancy. But if Englishwomen can bring it to the flower of an excellence so supreme as never yet has it known, then, though Old England may lose her martial and commercial supremacy, we patriots will have the satisfaction of knowing that she has been advanced at one bound to a place in the councils of æsthetic Europe. And, in sooth, is this hoping too high of my countrywomen? True that, as the art seems always to have appealed to the ladies of Athens, and it was not until the waning time of the Republic that Roman ladies learned to love the practice of it, so Paris, Athenian in this as in all other things, has been noted hitherto as a far more vivid centre of the art than London. But it was in Rome, under the Emperors, that unguentaria reached its zenith, and shall it not be in London, soon, that unguentaria shall outstrip its Roman perfection? Surely there must be among us artists as cunning in the use of brush and puff as any who lived at Versailles. Surely the splendid, impalpable advance of good taste, as shown in dress and in the decoration of houses, may justify my hope of the preëminence of Englishwomen in the cosmetic art. By their innate delicacy of touch they will accomplish much, and much, of course, by their swift feminine perception. Yet it were well that they should know something also of the theoretical side of the craft. Modern authorities upon the mysteries of the toilet are, it is true, rather few; but among the ancients many a writer would seem to have been fascinated by them. Archigenes, a man of science at the Court of Cleopatra, and Criton at the Court of the Emperor Trajan, both wrote treatises upon cosmetics—doubtless most scholarly treatises that would have given many a precious hint. It is a pity they are not extant. From Lucian or from Juvenal, with his bitter picture of a Roman *levée*, much may be learnt; from the staid pages of Xenophon and Aristophanes' dear farces. But best of all is that fine book of the Ars Amatoria that Ovid has set aside for the consideration of dyes, perfumes and pomades. Written by an artist who knew the allurements of the toilet and understood its philosophy, it remains without rival as a treatise upon Artifice. It is more than a poem, it is a manual; and if there be left in England any lady who cannot read Latin in the original, she will do well to procure a discreet translation. In the Bodleian Library there is treasured the only known copy of a very poignant and delightful rendering of this one book of Ovid's masterpiece. It was made by a certain Wye Waltonstall, who lived in the days of Elizabeth, and, seeing that he dedicated it to “the Vertuous Ladyes and Gentlewomen of Great Britain,” I am sure that the gallant writer, could he know of our great renascence of cosmetics, would wish his little work to be placed once more within their reach. “Inasmuch as to you, ladyes and gentlewomen,” so he writes in his queer little dedication, “my booke of pigments doth first addresse itself, that it may kisse your hands and afterward have the lines thereof in reading sweetened by the odour of your breath, while the dead letters formed into words by your divided lips may receive new life by your passionate expression, and the words marryed in that Ruby coloured temple may thus happily united, multiply your contentment.” It is rather sad to think that, at this crisis in the history of pigments, the Vertuous Ladyes and Gentlewomen cannot read the libellus of Wye Waltonstall, who did so dearly love pigments.

But since the days when these great critics wrote their treatises, with what gifts innumerable has Artifice been loaded by Science! Many little partitions must be added to the narthecium before it can comprehend all the new cosmetics that have been quietly devised since classical days, and will make the modern toilet chalks away more splendid in its possibilities. A pity that no one has devoted himself to the compiling of a new list; but doubtless all the newest devices are known to the admirable unguentarians of Bond Street, who will impart them to their clients. Our thanks, too, should be given to Science for ridding us of the old danger that was latent in the use of cosmetics. Nowadays they cannot, being purged of any poisonous element, do harm to the skin that they make beautiful. There need be no more sowing the seeds of destruction in the furrows of time, no martyrs to the cause like Georgina Gunning, that fair dame but infelix, who died, so they relate, from the effect of a poisonous rouge upon her lips. No, we need have no fears now. Artifice will claim not another victim from among her worshippers.

Loveliness shall sit at the toilet, watching her oval face in the oval mirror. Her smooth fingers shall flit among the paints and powder, to tip and mingle them, catch up a pencil, clasp a phial, and what not and what *not*, until the mask of vermeil tinct has been laid aptly, the enamel quite hardened. And, heavens, how she will charm us and ensorcel our eyes! Positively rouge will rob us for a time of all our reason; we shall go mad over masks. Was it not at Capua that they had a

whole street where nothing was sold but dyes and unguents? We must have such a street, and, to fill our new Seplasia, our Arcade of the Unguents, herbs and minerals and live creatures shall give of their substance. The white cliffs of Albion shall be ground to powder for loveliness, and perfumed by the ghost of many a little violet. The fluffy eider-ducks, that are swimming round the pond, shall lose their feathers, that the powder-puff may be moonlike as it passes over loveliness's lovely face. Even the camels shall become ministers of delight, giving their hair in many tufts to be stained by the paints in her colour-box, and across her cheek the swift hare's foot shall fly as of old. The sea shall offer her the phucus, its scarlet weed. We shall spill the blood of mulberries at her bidding. And, as in another period of great ecstasy, a dancing wanton, la belle Aubrey, was crowned upon a church's lighted altar, so Arsenic, that “green-tress'd goddess,” ashamed at length of skulking between the soup of the unpopular and the test-tubes of the Queen's analyst, shall be exalted to a place of highest honour upon loveliness's toilet-table.

All these things shall come to pass. Times of jolliness and glad indulgence! For Artifice, whom we drove forth, has returned among us, and, though her eyes are red with crying, she is smiling forgiveness. She is kind. Let us dance and be glad, and trip the cockawhoop! Artifice, sweetest exile, is come into her kingdom. Let us dance her a welcome!

Δαιμονιζόμενος

By Arthur Christopher Benson

You were clear as a sandy spring
    After a drought, when its waters run
Evenly, sparingly, filtering
    Into the eye of the sun.

Love you took with a placid smile,
    Pain you bore with a hopeful sigh,
Never a thought of gain or guile
    Slept in your wide blue eye.

Suddenly, once, at a trivial word,—
    Side by side together we stept,—
Rose a tempest that swayed and stirred;
    Over your soul it swept.

Dismal visitants, suddenly,
    Pulled the doors in your house of clay;
Out of the windows there stared at me
    Something horrible, grey.

The Old Oxford Music Hall

By Walter Sickert

Reproduced by the Swan Electric Engraving Company

Irremediable

By Ella D'Arcy

A young man strolled along a country road one August evening after a long delicious day—a day of that blessed idleness the man of leisure never knows: one must be a bank clerk forty-nine weeks out of the fifty-two before one can really appreciate the exquisite enjoyment of doing nothing for twelve hours at a stretch. Willoughby had spent the morning lounging about a sunny rickyard; then, when the heat grew unbearable, he had retreated to an orchard, where, lying on his back in the long cool grass, he had traced the pattern of the apple-leaves diapered above him upon the summer sky; now that the heat of the day was over he had come to roam whither sweet fancy led him, to lean over gates, view the prospect and meditate upon the pleasures of a well-spent day. Five such days had already passed over his head, fifteen more remained to him. Then farewell to freedom and clean country air! Back again to London and another year's toil.

He came to a gate on the right of the road. Behind it a foot-path meandered up over a glassy slope. The sheep nibbling on its summit cast long shadows down the hill almost to his feet. Road and field-path were equally new to him, but the latter offered greener attractions; he vaulted lightly over the gate and had so little idea he was taking thus the first step towards ruin that he began to whistle “White Wings” from pure joy of life.

The sheep stopped feeding and raised their heads to stare at him from pale-lashed eyes; first one and then another broke into a startled run, until there was a sudden woolly stampede of the entire flock. When Willoughby gained the ridge from which they had just scattered he came in sight of a woman sitting on a stile at the further end of the field. As he advanced towards her he saw that she was young and that she was not what is called “a lady”—of which he was glad: an earlier episode in his career having indissolubly associated in his mind ideas of feminine refinement with those of feminine treachery.

He thought it probable this girl would be willing to dispense with the formalities of an introduction and that he might venture with her on some pleasant foolish chat.

As she made no movement to let him pass he stood still, and, looking at her, began to smile.

She returned his gaze from unabashed dark eyes and then laughed, showing teeth white, sound, and smooth as split hazel-nuts.

“Do you wanter get over?” she remarked familiarly.

“I'm afraid I can't without disturbing you.”

“Dontcher think you're much better where you are?” said the girl, on which Willoughby hazarded:

“You mean to say looking at you? Well, perhaps I am!”

The girl at this laughed again, but nevertheless dropped herself down into the further field; then, leaning her arms upon the cross-bar, she informed the young man: “No, I don't wanter spoil your walk. You were goin' p'raps ter Beacon Point? It's very pretty that wye.”

“I was going nowhere in particular,” he replied: “just exploring, so to speak. I'm a stranger in these parts.”

“How funny! Imer stranger here too. I only come down larse Friday to stye with a Naunter mine in Horton. Are you stying in Horton?”

Willoughby told her he was not in Orton, but at Povey Cross Farm out in the other direction.

“Oh, Mrs. Payne's, ain't it? I've heard aunt speak ovver. She takes summer boarders, don't chee? I egspec you come from London, heh?”

“And I expect you come from London too?” said Willoughby, recognising the familiar accent.

“You're as sharp as a needle,” cried the girl with her unrestrained laugh; “so I do. I'm here for a hollerday 'cos I was so done up with the work and the hot weather. I don't look as though I'd bin ill, do I? But I was, though: for it was just stifflin' hot up in our workrooms all larse month, an' tailorin's awful hard work at the bester times.”

Willoughby felt a sudden accession of interest in her. Like many intelligent young men, he had dabbled a little in Socialism and at one time had wandered among the dispossessed; but since then, had caught up and held loosely the new doctrine—It is a good and fitting thing that woman also should earn her bread by the sweat of her brow. Always in reference to the woman who, fifteen months before, had treated him ill, he had said to himself that even the breaking of stones in the road should be considered a more feminine employment than the breaking of hearts.

He gave way therefore to a movement of friendliness for this working daughter of the people, and joined her on the other side of the stile in token of his approval. She, twisting round to face him, leaned now with her back against the bar, and the sunset fires lent a fleeting glory to her face. Perhaps she guessed how becoming the light was, for she took off her hat and let it touch to gold

the ends and fringes of her rough abundant hair. Thus and at this moment she made an agreeable picture, to which stood as background all the beautiful wooded Southshire view.

“You don't really mean to say you are a tailoress?” said Willoughby with a sort of eager compassion.

“I do, though! An' I've bin one ever since I was fourteen. Look at my fingers if you don't b'lieve me.”

She put out her right hand, and he took hold of it, as he was expected to do. The finger-ends were frayed and blackened by needle-pricks, but the hand itself was plump, moist, and not unshapely. She meanwhile examined Willoughby's fingers enclosing hers.

“It's easy ter see you've never done no work!” she said, half admiring, half envious. “I s'pose you're a tip-top swell, ain't you?”

“Oh, yes! I'm a tremendous swell indeed!” said Willoughby ironically. He thought of his hundred and thirty pounds' salary; and he mentioned his position in the British and Colonial Banking house, without shedding much illumination on her mind; for she insisted:

“Well, anyhow, you're a gentleman. I've often wished I was a lady. It must be so nice ter wear fine clo'es an' never have ter do any work all day long.”

Willoughby thought it innocent of the girl to say this; it reminded him of his own notion as a child—that kings and queens put on their crowns the first thing on rising in the morning. His cordiality rose another degree.

“If being a gentleman means having nothing to do,” said he, smiling, “I can certainly lay no claim to the title. Life isn't all beer and skittles with me, any more than it is with you. Which is the better reason for enjoying the present moment, don't you think? Suppose, now, like a kind little girl, you were to show me the way to Beacon Point, which you say is so pretty?”

She required no further persuasion. As he walked beside her through the upland fields where the dusk was beginning to fall, and the white evening moths to emerge from their daytime hiding-places, she asked him many personal questions, most of which he thought fit to parry. Taking no offence thereat, she told him, instead, much concerning herself and her family. Thus he learned her name was Esther Stables, that she and her people lived Whitechapel way; that her father was seldom sober, and her mother always ill; and that the aunt with whom she was staying kept the post-office and general shop in Orton village. He learned, too, that Esther was discontented with life in general; that, though she hated being at home, she found the country dreadfully dull; and that, consequently, she was extremely glad to have made his acquaintance. But what he chiefly realised when they parted was that he had spent a couple of pleasant hours talking nonsense with a girl who was natural, simple-minded, and entirely free from that repellently protective atmosphere with which a woman of the “classes” so carefully surrounds herself. He and Esther had “made friends” with the ease and rapidity of children before they have learned the dread meaning of “etiquette,” and they said good-night, not without some talk of meeting each other again.

Obliged to breakfast at a quarter to eight in town, Willoughby was always luxuriously late when in the country, where he took his meals also in leisurely fashion, often reading from a book propped up on the table before him. But the morning after his meeting with Esther Stables found him less disposed to read than usual. Her image obtruded itself upon the printed page, and at length grew so importunate he came to the conclusion the only way to lay it was to confront it with the girl herself.

Wanting some tobacco, he saw a good reason for going into Orton. Esther had told him he could get tobacco and everything else at her aunt's. He found the post-office to be one of the first houses in the widely spaced village-street. In front of the cottage was a small garden ablaze with old-fashioned flowers; and in a larger garden at one side were apple-trees, raspberry and currant bushes, and six thatched beehives on a bench. The bowed windows of the little shop were partly screened by sunblinds; nevertheless the lower panes still displayed a heterogeneous collection of goods—lemons, hanks of yarn, white linen buttons upon blue cards, sugar cones, churchwarden pipes, and tobacco jars. A letter-box opened its narrow mouth low down in one wall, and over the door swung the sign, “Stamps and money-order office,” in black letters on white enamelled iron.

The interior of the shop was cool and dark. A second glass-door at the back permitted Willoughby to see into a small sitting-room, and out again through a low and square-paned window to the sunny landscape beyond. Silhouetted against the light were the heads of two women: the rough young head of yesterday's Esther, the lean outline and bugled cap of Esther's aunt.

It was the latter who at the jingling of the door-bell rose from her work and came forward to serve the customer; but the girl, with much mute meaning in her eyes and a finger laid upon her smiling mouth, followed behind. Her aunt heard her footfall. “What do you want here, Esther?” she said with thin disapproval; “get back to your sewing.”

Esther gave the young man a signal seen only by him and slipped out into the side-garden, where he found her when his purchases were made. She leaned over the privet-hedge to intercept him as he passed.

“Aunt's an awful ole maid,” she remarked apologetically; “I b'lieve she'd never let me say a word

to enny one if she could help it.”

“So you got home all right last night?” Willoughby inquired; “what did your aunt say to you?”

“Oh, she arst me where I'd been, and I tolder a lotter lies!” Then, with woman's intuition, perceiving that this speech jarred, Esther made haste to add, “She's so dreadful hard on me! I dursn't tell her I'd been with a gentleman or she'd never have let me out alone again.”

“And at present I suppose you'll be found somewhere about that same stile every evening?” said Willoughby foolishly, for he really did not much care whether he met her again or not. Now he was actually in her company he was surprised at himself for having given her a whole morning's thought; yet the eagerness of her answer flattered him, too.

“To-night I can't come, worse luck! It's Thursday, and the shops here close of a Thursday at five. I'll havter keep aunt company. But to-morrer?—I can be there to-morrer. You'll come, say?”

“Esther!” cried a vexed voice, and the precise, right-minded aunt emerged through the row of raspberry-bushes; “whatever are you thinking about, delayin' the gentleman in this fashion?” She was full of rustic and official civility for “the gentleman,” but indignant with her niece. “I don't want none of your London manners down here,” Willoughby heard her say as she marched the girl off.

He himself was not sorry to be released from Esther's too friendly eyes, and he spent an agreeable evening over a book, and this time managed to forget her completely.

Though he remembered her first thing next morning, it was to smile wisely and determine he would not meet her again. Yet by dinner-time the day seemed long; why, after all, should he not meet her? By tea-time prudence triumphed anew—no, he would not go. Then he drank his tea hastily and set off for the stile.

Esther was waiting for him. Expectation had given an additional colour to her cheeks, and her red-brown hair showed here and there a beautiful glint of gold. He could not help admiring the vigorous way in which it waved and twisted, or the little curls which grew at the nape of her neck, tight and close as those of a young lamb's fleece. Her neck here was admirable, too, in its smooth creaminess; and when her eyes lighted up with such evident pleasure at his coming, how avoid the conviction she was a good and nice girl after all?

He proposed they should go down into the little copse on the right, where they would be less disturbed by the occasional passerby. Here, seated on a felled tree-trunk, Willoughby began that bantering silly meaningless form of conversation known among the “classes” as flirting. He had but the wish to make himself agreeable, and to while away the time. Esther, however, misunderstood him.

Willoughby's hand lay palm downwards on his knee, and she noticing a ring which he wore on his little finger, took hold of it.

“What a funny ring!” she said; “let's look?”

To disembarrass himself of her touch he pulled the ring off and gave it her to examine.

“What's that ugly dark green stone?” she asked.

“It's called a sardonyx.”

“What's it for?” she said, turning it about.

“It's a signet ring, to seal letters with.”

“An' there's a sorter king's head scratched on it, an' some writin' too, only I carn't make it out?”

“It isn't the head of a king, although it wears a crown,” Willoughby explained, “but the head and bust of a Saracen against whom my ancestor of many hundred years ago went to fight in the Holy Land. And the words cut round it are the motto of our house, ‘Vertue vaunceth,’ which means virtue prevails.”

Willoughby may have displayed some slight accession of dignity in giving this bit of family history, for Esther fell into uncontrolled laughter, at which he was much displeased. And when the girl made as though she would put the ring on her own finger, asking, “Shall I keep it?” he coloured up with sudden annoyance.

“It was only my fun!” said Esther hastily, and gave him the ring back, but his cordiality was gone. He felt no inclination to renew the idle-word pastime, said it was time to go back, and, swinging his cane vexedly, struck off the heads of the flowers and the weeds as he went. Esther walked by his side in complete silence, a phenomenon of which he presently became conscious. He felt rather ashamed of having shown temper.

“Well, here's your way home,” said he with an effort at friendliness. “Good-bye, we've had a nice evening anyhow. It was pleasant down there in the woods, eh?”

He was astonished to see her eyes soften with tears, and to hear the real emotion in her voice as she answered, “It was just heaven down there with you until you turned so funny-like. What had I done to make you cross? Say you forgive me, do!”

“Silly child!” said Willoughby, completely mollified, “I'm not the least angry. There! good-bye!” and like a fool he kissed her.

He anathematised his folly in the white light of next morning, and, remembering the kiss he had given her, repented it very sincerely. He had an uncomfortable suspicion she had not received it in the same spirit in which it had been bestowed, but, attaching more serious meaning to it, would build expectations thereon which must be left unfulfilled. It were best indeed not to meet her again; for he acknowledged to himself that, though he only half liked, and even slightly feared, her, there was a certain attraction about her—was it in her dark unflinching eyes or in her very red lips?—which might lead him into greater follies still.

Thus it came about that for two successive evenings Esther waited for him in vain, and on the third evening he said to himself with a grudging relief that by this time she had probably transferred her affections to some one else.

It was Saturday, the second Saturday since he left town. He spent the day about the farm, contemplated the pigs, inspected the feeding of the stock, and assisted at the afternoon milking. Then at evening, with a refilled pipe, he went for a long lean over the west gate, while he traced fantastic pictures and wove romances in the glories of the sunset clouds.

He watched the colours glow from gold to scarlet, change to crimson, sink at last to sad purple reefs and isles, when the sudden consciousness of some one being near him made him turn round. There stood Esther, and her eyes were full of eagerness and anger.

“Why have you never been to the stile again?” she asked him. “You promised to come faithful, and you never came. Why have you not kep your promise? Why?—why?” she persisted, stamping her foot because Willoughby remained silent.

What could he say! Tell her she had no business to follow him like this; or own, what was, unfortunately, the truth, he was just a little glad to see her?

“P'raps you don't care to see me?” she said. “Well, why did you kiss me, then?”

Why, indeed! thought Willoughby, marvelling at his own idiotcy, and yet—such is the inconsistency of man—not wholly without the desire to kiss her again. And while he looked at her she suddenly flung herself down on the hedge-bank at his feet and burst into tears. She did not cover up her face, but simply pressed one cheek down upon the grass while the water poured from her eyes with astonishing abundance. Willoughby saw the dry earth turn dark and moist as it drank the tears in. This, his first experience of Esther's powers of weeping, distressed him horribly; never in his life before had he seen anyone weep like that; he should not have believed such a thing possible, and he was alarmed, too, lest she should be noticed from the house. He opened the gate; “Esther!” he begged, “don't cry. Come out here, like a dear girl, and let us talk sensibly.”

Because she stumbled, unable to see her way through wet eyes, he gave her his hand, and they found themselves in a field of corn, walking along the narrow grass-path that skirted it, in the shadow of the hedgerow.

“What is there to cry about because you have not seen me for two days?” he began; “why, Esther, we are only strangers, after all. When we have been at home a week or two we shall scarcely remember each other's names.”

Esther sobbed at intervals, but her tears had ceased. “It's fine for you to talk of home,” she said to this. “You've got something that is a home, I s'pose? But me! my home's like hell, with nothing but quarrellin' and cursin', and father who beats us whether sober or drunk. Yes!” she repeated shrewdly, seeing the lively disgust on Willoughby's face, “he beat me, all ill as I was, jus' before I come away. I could show you the bruises on my arms still. And now to go back there after knowin' you! It'll be worse than ever. I can't endure it and I won't! I'll put an end to it or myself somehow, I swear!”

“But, my poor Esther, how can I help it, what can I do?” said Willoughby. He was greatly moved, full of wrath with her father, with all the world which makes women suffer. He had suffered himself at the hands of a woman, and severely, but this, instead of hardening his heart, had only rendered it the more supple. And yet he had a vivid perception of the peril in which he stood. An interior voice urged him to break away, to seek safety in flight even at the cost of appearing cruel or ridiculous; so, coming to a point in the field where an elm-bole jutted out across the path, he saw with relief he could now withdraw his hand from the girl's, since they must walk singly to skirt round it.

Esther took a step in advance, stopped and suddenly turned to face him; she held out her two hands and her face was very near his own.

“Don't you care for me one little bit?” she said wistfully, and surely sudden madness fell upon him. For he kissed her again, he kissed her many times, and pushed all thoughts of the consequences far from him.

But some of these consequences already called loudly to him as he and Esther reached the last gate on the road to Orton.

“You know I have only £130 a year?” he told her: “it's no very brilliant prospect for you to marry

me on that.”

For he had actually offered her marriage, although such conduct to the mediocre man must appear incredible or at least uncalled for. But to Willoughby it seemed the only course possible. How else justify his kisses, rescue her from her father's brutality, or bring back the smiles to her face?

As for Esther, sudden exultation had leaped in her heart; then ere fifty seconds were gone by, she was certain she would never have consented to anything less.

“O! I'me used to managin',” she told him confidently, and mentally resolved to buy herself, so soon as she was married, a black feather boa, such as she had coveted last winter.

Willoughby spent the remaining days of his holiday in thinking out and planning with Esther the details of his return to London and her own, the secrecy to be observed, the necessary legal steps to be taken, and the quiet suburb in which they would set up housekeeping. And, so successfully did he carry out his arrangements, that within five weeks from the day on which he had first met Esther Stables he and she came out one morning from a church in Highbury husband and wife. It was a mellow September day, the streets were filled with sunshine, and Willoughby, in reckless high spirits, imagined he saw a reflection of his own gaiety on the indifferent faces of the passers-by. There being no one else to perform the office he congratulated himself very warmly, and Esther's frequent laughter filled in the pauses of the day.

Three months later Willoughby was dining with a friend, and the hour-hand of the clock nearing ten the host no longer resisted the guest's growing anxiety to be gone. He arose and exchanged with him good wishes and good-byes.

“Marriage is evidently a most successful institution,” said he, half jesting, half sincere; “you almost make me inclined to go and get married myself. Confess now your thoughts have been at home the whole evening?”

Willoughby thus addressed turned red to the roots of his hair, but did not deny the soft impeachment.

The other laughed. “And very commendable they should be,” he continued, “since you are scarcely, so to speak, out of your honeymoon.”

With a social smile on his lips Willoughby calculated a moment before replying, “I have been married exactly three months and three days;” then, after a few words respecting their next meeting, the two shook hands and parted, the young host to finish the evening with books and pipe, the young husband to set out on a twenty minutes' walk to his home.

It was a cold clear December night following a day of rain. A touch of frost in the air had dried the pavements, and Willoughby's footfall ringing upon the stones re-echoed down the empty suburban street. Above his head was a dark remote sky thickly powdered with stars, and as he turned westward Alpherat hung for a moment «comme le point sur un *i*,» over the slender spire of St. John's. But he was insensible to the worlds about him; he was absorbed in his own thoughts, and these, as his friend had surmised, were entirely with his wife. For Esther's face was always before his eyes, her voice was always in his ears, she filled the universe for him; yet only four months ago he had never seen her, had never heard her name. This was the curious part of it—here in December he found himself the husband of a girl who was completely dependent upon him not only for food, clothes, and lodging, but for her present happiness, her whole future life; and last July he had been scarcely more than a boy himself, with no greater care on his mind than the pleasant difficulty of deciding where he should spend his annual three weeks' holiday.

But it is events, not months or years, which age. Willoughby, who was only twenty-six, remembered his youth as a sometime companion irrevocably lost to him; its vague, delightful hopes were now crystallised into definite ties, and its happy irresponsibility displaced by a sense of care inseparable perhaps from the most fortunate of marriages.

As he reached the street in which he lodged his pace involuntarily slackened. While still some distance off his eye sought out and distinguished the windows of the room in which Esther awaited him. Through the broken slats of the Venetian blinds he could see the yellow gaslight within. The parlour beneath was in darkness; his landlady had evidently gone to bed, there being no light over the hall door either. In some apprehension he consulted his watch under the last street-lamp he passed, to find comfort in assuring himself it was only ten minutes after ten. He let himself in with his latch-key, hung up his hat and overcoat by the sense of touch, and, groping his way upstairs, opened the door of the first floor sitting-room.

At the table in the centre of the room sat his wife, leaning upon her elbows, her two hands thrust up into her ruffled hair; spread out before her was a crumpled yesterday's newspaper, and so interested was she to all appearance in its contents that she neither spoke nor looked up as Willoughby entered. Around her were the still uncleared tokens of her last meal: tea-slops, bread-crumbs, and an eggshell crushed to fragments upon a plate, which was one of those trifles that set Willoughby's teeth on edge—whenever his wife ate an egg she persisted in turning the egg-cup upside down upon the tablecloth, and pounding the shell to pieces in her plate with her spoon.

The room was repulsive in its disorder. The one lighted burner of the gaselier, turned too high,

hissed up into a long tongue of flame. The fire smoked feebly under a newly administered shovelful of “slack,” and a heap of ashes and cinders littered the grate. A pair of walking boots, caked in dry mud, lay on the hearthrug just where they had been thrown off. On the mantelpiece, amidst a dozen other articles which had no business there, was a bedroom-candlestick; and every single article of furniture stood crookedly out of its place.

Willoughby took in the whole intolerable picture, and yet spoke with kindliness. “Well, Esther! I'm not so late, after all. I hope you did not feel the time dull by yourself?” Then he explained the reason of his absence. He had met a friend he had not seen for a couple of years, who had insisted on taking him home to dine.

His wife gave no sign of having heard him; she kept her eyes rivetted on the paper before her.

“You received my wire, of course,” Willoughby went on, “and did not wait?”

Now she crushed the newspaper up with a passionate movement, and threw it from her. She raised her head, showing cheeks blazing with anger, and dark, sullen, unflinching eyes.

“I did wyte then!” she cried. “I wyted till near eight before I got your old telegraph! I s'pose that's what you call the manners of a 'gentleman,' to keep your wife mewed up here, while you go gallivantin' off with your fine friends?”

Whenever Esther was angry, which was often, she taunted Willoughby with being a “gentleman,” although this was the precise point about him which at other times found most favour in her eyes. But to-night she was envenomed by the idea he had been enjoying himself without her, stung by fear lest he should have been in company with some other woman.

Willoughby, hearing the taunt, resigned himself to the inevitable. Nothing that he could do might now avert the breaking storm, all his words would only be twisted into fresh griefs. But sad experience had taught him that to take refuge in silence was more fatal still. When Esther was in such a mood as this it was best to supply the fire with fuel, that, through the very violence of the conflagration, it might the sooner burn itself out.

So he said what soothing things he could, and Esther caught them up, disfigured them, and flung them back at him with scorn. She reproached him with no longer caring for her; she vituperated the conduct of his family in never taking the smallest notice of her marriage; and she detailed the insolence of the landlady, who had told her that morning she pitied “poor Mr. Willoughby,” and had refused to go out and buy herrings for Esther's early dinner.

Every affront or grievance, real or imaginary, since the day she and Willoughby had first met, she poured forth with a fluency due to frequent repetition, for, with the exception of to-day's added injuries, Willoughby had heard the whole litany many times before.

While she raged and he looked at her, he remembered he had once thought her pretty. He had seen beauty in her rough brown hair, her strong colouring, her full red mouth. He fell into musing ... a woman may lack beauty, he told himself, and yet be loved....

Meantime Esther reached white heats of passion, and the strain could no longer be sustained. She broke into sobs and began to shed tears with the facility peculiar to her. In a moment her face was all wet with the big drops which rolled down her cheeks faster and faster and fell with audible splashes on to the table, on to her lap, on to the floor. To this tearful abundance, formerly a surprising spectacle, Willoughby was now acclimatised; but the remnant of chivalrous feeling not yet extinguished in his bosom forbade him to sit stolidly by while a woman wept, without seeking to console her. As on previous occasions, his peace-overtures were eventually accepted. Esther's tears gradually ceased to flow, she began to exhibit a sort of compunction, she wished to be forgiven, and, with the kiss of reconciliation, passed into a phase of demonstrative affection perhaps more trying to Willoughby's patience than all that had preceded it. “You don't love me?” she questioned, “I'm sure you don't love me?” she reiterated; and he asseverated that he loved her until he loathed himself. Then at last, only half satisfied, but wearied out with vexation—possibly, too, with a movement of pity at the sight of his haggard face—she consented to leave him; only what was he going to do? she asked suspiciously: write those rubbishing stories of his? Well, he must promise not to stay up more than half an hour at the latest—only until he had smoked one pipe!

Willoughby promised, as he would have promised anything on earth to secure to himself a half-hour's peace and solitude. Esther groped for her slippers, which were kicked off under the table; scratched four or five matches along the box and threw them away before she succeeded in lighting her candle; set it down again to contemplate her tear-swollen reflection in the chimney-glass, and burst out laughing.

“What a fright I do look, to be sure!” she remarked complacently, and again thrust her two hands up through her disordered curls. Then, holding the candle at such an angle that the grease ran over on to the carpet, she gave Willoughby another vehement kiss and trailed out of the room with an ineffectual attempt to close the door behind her.

Willoughby got up to shut it himself, and wondered why it was that Esther never did any one mortal thing efficiently or well. Good God! how irritable he felt! It was impossible to write. He must find an outlet for his impatience, rend or mend something. He began to straighten the room, but a wave of disgust came over him before the task was fairly commenced. What was the use? To-morrow all would be bad as ever. What was the use of doing anything? He sat down by

the table and leaned his head upon his hands.

The past came back to him in pictures: his boyhood's past first of all. He saw again the old home, every inch of which was familiar to him as his own name; he reconstructed in his thought all the old well-known furniture, and replaced it precisely as it had stood long ago. He passed again a childish linger over the rough surface of the faded Utrecht velvet chairs, and smelled again the strong fragrance of the white lilac-tree, blowing in through the open parlour-window. He savoured anew the pleasant mental atmosphere produced by the dainty neatness of cultured women, the companionship of a few good pictures, of a few good books. Yet this home had been broken up years ago, the dear familiar things had been scattered far and wide, never to find themselves under the same roof again; and from those near relatives who still remained to him he lived now hopelessly estranged.

Then came the past of his first love-dream, when he worshipped at the feet of Nora Beresford, and, with the wholeheartedness of the true fanatic, clothed his idol with every imaginable attribute of virtue and tenderness. To this day there remained a secret shrine in his heart wherein the Lady of his young ideal was still enthroned, although it was long since he had come to perceive she had nothing whatever in common with the Nora of reality. For the real Nora he had no longer any sentiment: she had passed altogether out of his life and thoughts; and yet, so permanent is all influence, whether good or evil, that the effect she wrought upon his character remained. He recognised to-night that her treatment of him in the past did not count for nothing among the various factors which had determined his fate.

Now the past of only last year returned, and, strangely enough, this seemed farther removed from him than all the rest. He had been particularly strong, well and happy this time last year. Nora was dismissed from his mind, and he had thrown all his energies into his work. His tastes were sane and simple, and his dingy, furnished rooms had become through habit very pleasant to him. In being his own they were invested with a greater charm than another man's castle. Here he had smoked and studied, here he had made many a glorious voyage into the land of books. Many a home-coming, too, rose up before him out of the dark ungenial streets to a clean blazing fire, a neatly laid cloth, an evening of ideal enjoyment; many a summer twilight when he mused at the open window, plunging his gaze deep into the recesses of his neighbour's lime-tree, where the unseen sparrows chattered with such unflagging gaiety.

He had always been given to much day-dreaming, and it was in the silence of his rooms of an evening that he turned his phantasmal adventures into stories for the magazines; here had come to him many an editorial refusal, but, here, too, he had received the news of his first unexpected success. All his happiest memories were embalmed in those shabby, badly furnished rooms.

Now all was changed. Now might there be no longer any soft indulgence of the hour's mood. His rooms and everything he owned belonged now to Esther, too. She had objected to most of his photographs, and had removed them. She hated books, and were he ever so ill-advised as to open one in her presence, she immediately began to talk, no matter how silent or how sullen her previous mood had been. If he read aloud to her she either yawned despairingly, or was tickled into laughter where there was no reasonable cause. At first, Willoughby had tried to educate her and had gone hopefully to the task. It is so natural to think you may make what you will of the woman who loves you. But Esther had no wish to improve. She evinced all the self-satisfaction of an illiterate mind. To her husband's gentle admonitions she replied with brevity that she thought her way quite as good as his; or, if he didn't approve of her pronunciation, he might do the other thing, she was too old to go to school again. He gave up the attempt, and, with humiliation at his previous fatuity, perceived that it was folly to expect a few weeks of his companionship could alter or pull up the impressions of years, or rather of generations.

Yet here he paused to admit a curious thing: it was not only Esther's bad habits which vexed him, but habits quite unblameworthy in themselves, and which he never would have noticed in another, irritated him in her. He disliked her manner of standing, of walking, of sitting in a chair, of folding her hands. Like a lover he was conscious of her proximity without seeing her. Like a lover, too, his eyes followed her every movement, his ear noted every change in her voice. But, then, instead of being charmed by everything as the lover is, everything jarred upon him.

What was the meaning of this? To-night the anomaly pressed upon him: he reviewed his position. Here was he quite a young man, just twenty-six years of age, married to Esther, and bound to live with her so long as life should last—twenty, forty, perhaps fifty years more. Every day of those years to be spent in her society; he and she face to face, soul to soul; they two alone amid all the whirling, busy, indifferent world. So near together in semblance, in truth so far apart as regards all that makes life dear.

Willoughby groaned. From the woman he did not love, whom he had never loved, he might not again go free; so much he recognised. The feeling he had once entertained for Esther, strange compound of mistaken chivalry and flattered vanity, was long since extinct; but what, then, was the sentiment with which she inspired him? For he was not indifferent to her—no, never for one instant could he persuade himself he was indifferent, never for one instant could he banish her from his thoughts. His mind's eye followed her during his hours of absence as pertinaciously as his bodily eye dwelt upon her actual presence. She was the principal object of the universe to him, the centre around which his wheel of life revolved with an appalling fidelity.

What did it mean? What could it mean? he asked himself with anguish.

And the sweat broke out upon his forehead and his hands grew cold, for on a sudden the truth lay

there like a written word upon the tablecloth before him. This woman, whom he had taken to himself for better for worse, inspired him with a passion—intense indeed, all-masterful, soul-subduing as Love itself—.... But when he understood the terror of his Hatred, he laid his head upon his arms and wept, not facile tears like Esther's, but tears wrung out from his agonising, unavailing regret.

Portrait of a Gentleman

By Will Rothenstein

Reproduced by the Swan Electric Engraving Company

Two Sonnets

By William Watson

I—The Frontier

At the hushed brink of twilight,—when, as though
Some solemn journeying phantom paused to lay
An ominous finger on the awestruck day,
Earth holds her breath till that great presence go,—
A moment comes of visionary glow,
Pendulous 'twixt the gold hour and the grey,
Lovelier than these, more eloquent than they
Of memory, foresight, and life's ebb and flow.

So have I known, in some fair woman's face,
While viewless yet was Time's more gross imprint,
The first, faint, hesitant, elusive hint
Of that invasion of the vandal years
Seem deeper beauty than youth's cloudless grace,
Wake subtler dreams, and touch me nigh to tears.

II—Night on Curbar Edge, Derbyshire

No echo of man's life pursues my ears;
Nothing disputes this Desolation's reign;
Change comes not, this dread temple to profane,
Where time by æons reckons, not by years.
Its patient form one crag, sole-stranded, rears,
Type of whate'er is destined to remain
While yon still host encamped on Night's waste plain
Keeps armèd watch, a million quivering spears.

Hushed are the wild and wing'd lives of the moor;
The sleeping sheep nestle 'neath ruined wall,
Or unhewn stones in random concourse hurled:
Solitude, sleepless, listens at Fate's door;
And there is built and 'stablisht over all
Tremendous Silence, older than the world.

The Reflected Faun

By Laurence Housman

Reproduced by Messrs. Carl Hentschel & Co.

A Sentimental Cellar

By George Saintsbury

[It would appear from the reference to a “Queen” that the following piece was written in or with a view to the reign of Queen Anne, though an anachronism or two (such as a reference to the '45 and a quotation from Adam Smith) may be noted. On the other hand, an occasional mixture of “you” and “thou” seems to argue a date before Johnson. It must at any rate have been composed for, or in imitation of the style of, one or other of the eighteenth-century collections of Essays.]

It chanced the other day that I had a mind to visit my old friend Falernianus. The maid who opened the door to me showed me into his study, and apologised for her master's absence by saying that he was in the cellar. He soon appeared, and I rallied him a little on the gravity of his occupation. Falernianus, I must tell you, is neither a drunkard nor a man of fortune. But he has a pretty taste in wine, indulges it rather in collection than in consumption, and arranges his cellar (or, as he sometimes calls it, “cellaret”) himself, having no butler or other man-servant. He took my pleasantry very good-humouredly; and when I asked him further if I might behold this temple of his devotions he complied at once. “'Tis rather a chantry than a temple, Eugenius,” said he, “but you are very welcome to see it if you please; and if you are minded to hear a sermon, perhaps I can preach one different from what you may expect at an Oracle of the Bottle.”

We soon reached the cavern, which, indeed, was much less magnificent than that over which Bacbuc presided; and I perused, not without interest (for I had often tasted the contents), the various bins in which bottles of different shapes and sizes were stowed away with a modest neatness. Falernianus amused himself, and did not go so far as to weary me, with some tales of luck or disappointment in his purchases, of the singular improvement of this vintage, and the mortifying conduct of that. For these wine-lovers are curious in their phrase; and it is not disgusting to hear them say regretfully that the claret of such and such a year “has not spoken yet”; or that another was long “under the curse of the seventies.” This last phrase, indeed, had a grandiloquent and romantic turn which half surprised me from my friend, a humourist with a special horror of fine speech or writing, and turning sharply I saw a smile on his lips.

“But,” said I, “my Falernianus, your sermon? For I scarce think that this wine-chat would be dignified by you with such a name.”

“You are right, Eugenius,” answered he, “but I do not quite know whether I am wise to disclose even to you the ruling fancy under which I have formed this little liquid museum, or Baccheum if you prefer it.”

“I think you may,” said I, “for in the first place we are old enough friends for such confidences, and in the second I know you to be too much given to laugh at your own foibles to be greatly afraid of another's ridicule.”

“You say well,” he said, "so mark! For if my sermon inflicts what our toasts call ennui upon you, remember that in the words of their favourite Molière, 'You have willed it.'

"I do not, Eugenius, pretend to be indifferent to good wine in itself. But when I called this little cellar of mine just now a museum I did no dishonour to the daughters of Mnemosyne. For you will observe that wine, by the fact of its keeping powers and by the other fact of its date being known, is a sort of calendar made to the hand of whoso would commemorate, with a festive solemnity, the things that are, as Mr. Dryden says,

'Hid in the sacred treasure of the past.'

If not the mere juice of the grape (for the merit of the strongest wine after fifty or sixty years is mostly but itself a memory), strong waters brewed on the day of a man's birth will keep their fire and gain ever fresh mellowness though he were to outlive the longest lifetime; and in these little flasks here, my Eugenius, you will find a cup of Nantz that was born with me, and that will keep its virtues long after thou and I have gone to solve the great enigma. Again, thou seest those pints of red port which nestle together? Within a few days, Eugenius, of the time when that must was foaming round the Douro peasants, I made mine entrance at the University. You can imagine with what a mixture of tender and humorous feelings I quaff them now and then. When their juice was tunned, what amiable visions, what boyish hopes floated before my eyes! I was to carry off all that Cam or Isis had of honours or profit, all that either could give of learning. I was to have my choice of learned retirement on the one hand, or of ardent struggle at the hoarse bar on the other, with the prizes of the senate beyond. They were scarce throwing down their crust when that dream faded; they had scarce become drinkable by a hasty toper before I saw clearly that metaphysical aid was wanting, and that a very different fate must be mine. I make no moan over it, Eugenius, and I puff away like a worse than prostitute as she is, the demon Envy when she whispers in my ear the names of Titius or Seius, and adds, 'Had they better parts, or only better stars than you?' But as they fable that the wine itself throbs with the early movement of the sap

in the vines, so, Eugenius, when I sip that cordial (and truth 'tis a noble vintage) the old hopes, the old follies, the old dreams waken in me, and I am once more eighteen.

“Look yonder again at those cobwebbed vessels of various shapes that lie side by side, although of different vineyards, in the peaceful bins. They all date from a year in which the wheel of fortune brought honest men to the top in England; and if only for a brief space, as, I am told, they sing in North Britain, ‘the de'il went hame wi' a' the Whigs before him’ (I must tell you, Mr. ——, that Falernianus, though a loyal subject to our good Queen, is a most malignant Tory, and indeed I have heard him impeached of Jacobitism by ill-willers). But no more of politics.” He paused a moment and then went on: “I think I see you smile again, Eugenius, and say to yourself, ‘These are but dry-lipped subjects for so flowing a calendar.’ And to tell the truth, my friend, the main part of my ephemerides of this kind has been filled by the aid of the goddess who was ever nearest and kindest to Bacchus. In yonder bin lie phials of the mightiest port that Lusitanian summers ever blackened, and flasks of sack from the more southern parts of that peninsula, which our Ben or his son Herrick would have loved. In the same year which saw the pressing of these generous juices the earth was made more fair by the birth of Bellamira and Candiope. The blackest purple of the Lusitanian grape is not so black as the tresses of Candiope's hair, nor doth the golden glow of the sherris approach in flame the locks of Bellamira; but if I let the sunlight play through both, Love, with fantastic triumph, shows me, as the bright motes flicker and flee through the sack, the tawny eyes of Candiope, and the stain, no longer black or purple, but rosy red, that floats from the Oportian juice on the white napery, recalls the velvet blush of Bellamira's cheek.”

“And this?” I said, pointing to a bin of Bordeaux near me. “Thou shalt try it this very day,” said Falernianus with a laugh, which I thought carried off some feelings a little overstrained; “'tis a right pleasant wine, and they made it in the year when I first saw the lips of Damaris. The flavour is not unlike theirs, and if it should fluster thine head a little, and cause thee what men call heartburn, I will not say that the effects are wholly dissimilar.” It is not like Falernianus even to jest at women, and I turned to another. His face cleared. “Many a year has passed,” he said, "since the grape that bore that juice was gathered, and even as it was ripening it chanced that I met Lalage and won her. The wine was always good and the love likewise; but in neither in their early years was there half the pleasure that there is now. But I weary you, Eugenius, and perhaps the philosopher speaks truly in saying that these things are not matters of sympathy, or, as the Scripture saith, a stranger is not partaker of them. Suffice it to say that these imprisoned rubies and topazes, amethysts and jacinths, never flash in the glass, nor collect their deeper body of colour in the flagon, without bringing a memory with them, that my lips seldom kiss them without recalling other kisses, my eye never beholds them without seeing other colours and other forms in 'the sessions of sweet silent thought.' At the refining of this elixir I assumed the virile gown; when that nectar was fit for drinking I made my first appearance in the field of letters; and this again recalls the death of dear friends and the waning of idle hopes. When I am dead, or if any reverse of fortune makes me part with this cabinet of quintessence, it will pass to heirs or purchasers as so much good wine and nothing more. To me it is that and much more—a casket of magic liquors, a museum, as I have called it, of glasses like that of Dr. Dee, in which I see again the smile of beauty and the hope of youth, in which once more I win, lose, possess, conquer, am defeated; in which I live over again in the recesses of fantasy the vanished life of the past.

“But it is not often that I preach in this fashion. Let us take a turn in the garden while they get dinner ready, that you may taste,” and he smiled, “that you may taste—if you dare—the wine that I have likened to the lips of Damaris.”

Night Piece

By Aubrey Beardsley

Reproduced by the Swan Electric Engraving Company

Stella Maris

by Arthur Symons

Why is it I remember yet
You, of all women one has met
In random wayfare, as one meets
The chance romances of the streets,
The Juliet of a night? I know
Your heart holds many a Romeo.
And I, who call to mind your face
In so serene a pausing-place,
Where the bright pure expanse of sea,
The shadowy shore's austerity,
Seems a reproach to you and me,
I too have sought on many a breast
The ecstasy of love's unrest,
I too have had my dreams, and met
(Ah me!) how many a Juliet.
Why is it, then, that I recall
You, neither first nor last of all?
For, surely as I see to-night
The glancing of the lighthouse light,
Against the sky, across the bay,
As turn by turn it falls my way,
So surely do I see your eyes
Out of the empty night arise,
Child, you arise and smile to me
Out of the night, out of the sea,
The Nereid of a moment there,
And is it seaweed in your hair?

O lost and wrecked, how long ago,
Out of the drownèd past, I know,
You come to call me, come to claim
My share of your delicious shame.
Child, I remember, and can tell
One night we loved each other well;
And one night's love, at least or most,
Is not so small a thing to boast.
You were adorable, and I
Adored you to infinity,
That nuptial night too briefly borne
To the oblivion of morn.
Oh, no oblivion! for I feel
Your lips deliriously steal
Along my neck, and fasten there;
I feel the perfume of your hair,
And your soft breast that heaves and dips,
Desiring my desirous lips,
And that ineffable delight
When souls turn bodies, and unite
In the intolerable, the whole
Rapture of the embodied soul.

That joy was ours, we passed it by;
You have forgotten me, and I
Remember you thus strangely, won
An instant from oblivion.
And I, remembering, would declare
That joy, not shame, is ours to share,
Joy that we had the will and power,
In spite of fate, to snatch one hour,
Out of vague nights, and days at strife,
So infinitely full of life.
And 'tis for this I see you rise,
A wraith, with starlight in your eyes,
Here, where the drowsy-minded mood
Is one with Nature's solitude;
For this, for this, you come to me
Out of the night, out of the sea.

A Study

By Sir Frederic Leighton, P.R.A.

Reproduced by the Swan Electric Engraving Company

Two Sketches

By Henry Harland

I—Mercedes

When I was a child some one gave me a family of white mice. I don't remember how old I was, I think about ten or eleven; but I remember very clearly the day I received them. It must have been a Thursday, a half-holiday, for I had come home from school rather early in the afternoon. Alexandre, dear old ruddy round-faced Alexandre, who opened the door for me, smiled in a way that seemed to announce, “There's a surprise in store for you, sir.” Then my mother smiled too, a smile, I thought, of peculiar promise and interest. After I had kissed her she said, “Come into the dining-room. There's something you will like.” Perhaps I concluded it would be something to eat. Anyhow, all agog with curiosity, I followed her into the dining-room—and Alexandre followed *me*, anxious to take part in the rejoicing. In the window stood a big cage, enclosing the family of white mice.

I remember it as a very big cage indeed; no doubt I should find it shrunken to quite moderate dimensions if I could see it again. There were three generations of mice in it: a fat old couple, the founders of the race, dozing phlegmatically on their laurels in a corner; then a dozen medium-sized, slender mice, trim and youthful-looking, rushing irrelevantly hither and thither, with funny inquisitive little faces; and then a squirming mass of pink things, like caterpillars, that were really infant mice, newborn. They didn't remain infants long, though. In a few days they had put on virile togas of white fur, and were scrambling about the cage and nibbling their food as independently as their elders. The rapidity with which my mice multiplied and grew to maturity was a constant source of astonishment to me. It seemed as if every morning I found a new litter of young mice in the cage—though how they had effected an entrance through the wire gauze that lined it was a hopeless puzzle—and these would have become responsible, self-supporting mice in no time.

My mother told me that somebody had sent me this soul-stirring present from the country, and I dare say I was made to sit down and write a letter of thanks. But I'm ashamed to own I can't remember who the giver was. I have a vague notion that it was a lady, an elderly maiden-lady—Mademoiselle ... something that began with P—who lived near Tours, and who used to come to Paris once or twice a year, and always brought me a box of prunes.

Alexandre carried the cage into my play-room, and set it up against the wall. I stationed myself in front of it, and remained there all the rest of the afternoon, gazing in, entranced. To watch their antics, their comings and goings, their labours and amusements, to study their shrewd, alert physiognomies, to wonder about their feelings, thoughts, intentions, to try to divine the meaning of their busy twittering language—it was such keen, deep delight. Of course I was an anthropomorphist, and read a great deal of human nature into them; otherwise it wouldn't have been such fun. I dragged myself reluctantly away when I was called to dinner. It was hard that evening to apply myself to my school-books. Before I went to bed I paid them a parting visit; they were huddled together in their nest of cotton-wool, sleeping soundly. And I was up at an unheard-of hour next morning, to have a bout with them before going to school. I found Alexandre, in his nightcap and long white apron, occupied with the *soins de propreté*, as he said. He cleaned out the cage, put in fresh food and water, and then, pointing to the fat old couple, the grandparents, who stopped lazily abed, sitting up and rubbing their noses together, whilst their juniors scampered merrily about their affairs, «Tiens! On dirait Monsieur et Madame Denis,» he cried. I felt the appositeness of his allusion; and the old couple were forthwith officially denominated Monsieur and Madame Denis, for their resemblance to the hero and heroine of the song—though which was Monsieur, and which Madame, I'm not sure that I ever clearly knew.

It was a little after this that I was taken for the first time in my life to the play. I fancy the theatre must have been the Porte St. Martin; at any rate, it was a theatre in the Boulevard, and towards the East, for I remember the long drive we had to reach it. And the piece was *The Count of Monte Cristo*. In my memory the adventure shines, of course, as a vague blur of light and joy; a child's first visit to the play, and that play *The Count of Monte Cristo*! It was all the breath-taking pleasantness of romance made visible, audible, actual. A vague blur of light and joy, from which only two details separate themselves. First, the prison scene, and an aged man, with a long white beard, moving a great stone from the wall; then—the figure of Mercedes. I went home terribly in love with Mercedes. Surely there are no such *grandes passions* in maturer life as those helpless, inarticulate ones we burn in secret with before our teens; surely we never love again so violently, desperately, consumedly. Anyhow, I went home terribly in love with Mercedes. And—do all children lack humour?—I picked out the prettiest young ladyish-looking mouse in my collection, cut off her moustaches, adopted her as my especial pet, and called her by the name of my *dea certè*.

All of my mice by this time had become quite tame. They had plenty to eat and drink, and a

comfortable home, and not a care in the world; and familiarity with their master had bred assurance; and so they had become quite tame and shamefully, abominably lazy. Luxury, we are taught, was ever the mother of sloth. I could put my hand in amongst them, and not one would bestir himself the littlest bit to escape me. Mercedes and I were inseparable. I used to take her to school with me every day; she could be more conveniently and privately transported than a lamb. Each *lycéen* had a desk in front of his form, and she would spend the school-hours in mine, I leaving the lid raised a little, that she might have light and air. One day, the usher having left the room for a moment, I put her down on the floor, thereby creating a great excitement amongst my fellow-pupils, who got up from their places and formed an eager circle round her. Then suddenly the usher came back, and we all hurried to our seats, while he, catching sight of Mercedes, cried out, “A mouse! A white mouse! Who dares to bring a white mouse to the class?” And he made a dash for her. But she was too quick, too 'cute, for “the likes of” Monsieur le Pion. She gave a jump, and in the twinkling of an eye had disappeared up my leg, under my trousers. The usher searched high and low for her, but she prudently remained in her hiding-place; and thus her life was saved, for when he had abandoned his ineffectual chase, he announced, “I should have wrung her neck.” I turned pale to imagine the doom she had escaped as by a hair's breadth. “It is useless to ask which of you brought her here,” he continued. “But mark my words: if ever I find a mouse again in the class *I will wring her neck*!” And yet, in private life, this bloodthirsty *pion* was a quite gentle, kindly, underfed, underpaid, shabby, struggling fellow, with literary aspirations, who would not have hurt a fly.

The secrets of a schoolboy's pocket! I once saw a boy surreptitiously angling in Kensington Gardens, with a string and a bent pin. Presently he landed a fish, a fish no bigger than your thumb, perhaps, but still a fish. Alive and wet and flopping as it was, he slipped it into his pocket. I used to carry Mercedes about in mine. One evening, when I put in my hand to take her out, I discovered to my bewilderment that she was not alone. There were four little pink mites of infant mice clinging to her.

I had enjoyed my visit to the theatre so much that at the *jour de l'an* my father included a toy-theatre among my presents. It had a real curtain of green baize, that would roll up and down, and beautiful coloured scenery that you could shift, and footlights, and a trap-door in the middle of the stage; and indeed it would have been altogether perfect, except for the Company. I have since learned that this is not infrequently the case with theatres. My company consisted of pasteboard men and women who, as artists, struck me as eminently unsatisfactory. They couldn't move their arms or legs, and they had such stolid, uninteresting faces. I don't know how it first occurred to me to turn them all off, and fill their places with my mice. Mercedes, of course, was leading lady; Monsieur and Madame Denis were the heavy parents; and a gentlemanlike young mouse named Leander was *jeune premier*. Then, in my leisure, they used to act the most tremendous plays. I was stage-manager, prompter, playwright, chorus, and audience, placing the theatre before a looking-glass, so that, though my duties kept me behind, I could peer round the edge, and watch the spectacle as from the front. I would invent the lines and deliver them, but, that my illusion might be the more complete, I would change my voice for each personage. The lines tried hard to be verses; no doubt they were *vers libres*. At any rate, they were mouth-filling and sonorous. The first play we attempted, I need hardly say, was *Le Comte de Monte Cristo*, such version of it as I could reconstruct from memory. That had rather a long run. Then I dramatised *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp*, *Paul et Virginie*, *Quentin Durward*, and *La Dame de Monsoreau*. Mercedes made a charming Diane, Leander a brilliant and dashing Bussy; Monsieur Denis was cast for the rôle of Frère Gorenflot; and a long, thin, cadaverous-looking mouse, Don Quichotte by name, somewhat inadequately represented Chicot. We began, as you see, with melodrama; presently we descended to light comedy, playing *Les Mémoires d'un Ane*, *Jean qui rit*, and other works of the immortal Madame de Ségur. And then at last we turned a new leaf, and became naturalistic. We had never heard of the naturalist school, though Monsieur Zola had already published some volumes of the *Rougon-Macquart*; but ideas are in the air; and we, for ourselves, discovered the possibilities of naturalism simultaneously, as it were, with the acknowledged apostle of that form of art. We would impersonate the characters of our own world —our schoolfellows and masters, our parents, servants, friends—and carry them through experiences and situations derived from our impressions of real life. Perhaps we rather led them a dance; and I dare say those we didn't like came in for a good deal of retributive justice. It was a little universe, of which we were the arch-arbiters, our will the final law.

I don't know whether all children lack humour; but I'm sure no grown-up author-manager can take his business more seriously than I took mine. Oh, I enjoyed it hugely; the hours I spent at it were enraptured hours; but it was grim, grim earnest. After a while I began to long for a less subjective public, a more various audience. I would summon the servants, range them in chairs at one end of the room, conceal myself behind the theatre, and spout the play with fervid solemnity. And they would giggle, and make flippant commentaries, and at my most impassioned climaxes burst into guffaws. My mice, as has been said, were overfed and lazy, and I used to have to poke them through their parts with sticks from the wings; but this was a detail which a superior imagination should have accepted as one of the conventions of the art. It made the servants laugh, however; and when I would step to the front in person, and, with tears in my eyes, beseech them to be sober, they would but laugh the louder. “Bless you, sir, they're only mice—*ce ne sont que des souris*,” the cook called out on one such occasion. She meant it as an apology and a consolation, but it was the unkindest cut of all. Only mice, indeed! To me they had been a young gentleman and lady lost in the Desert of Sahara, near to die for the want of water, and about to be attacked, captured, and sold into slavery, by a band of Bedouin Arabs. Ah, well, the artist must steel himself to meet with indifference or derision from the public, to be ignored, misunderstood,

or jeered at; and to rely for his real, his legitimate, reward on the pleasure he finds in his work.

And now there befell a great change in my life. Our home in Paris was broken up, and we moved to St. Petersburg. It was impossible to take my mice with us; their cage would have hopelessly complicated our impedimenta. So we gave them to the children of our concierge. Mercedes, however, I was resolved I would not part with, and I carried her all the way to the Russian capital by hand. In my heart I was looking to her to found another family—she had so frequently become a mother in the past. But month succeeded month, and she forever disappointed me, and at last I abandoned hope. In solitude and exile Mercedes degenerated sadly; got monstrously fat; too indolent to gnaw, let her teeth grow to a preposterous length; and in the end died of a surfeit of *smetana*.

When I returned to Paris, at the age of twenty, to *faire mon droit* in the Latin Quarter, I paid a visit to our old house, and discovered the same old concierge in the *loge*. I asked her about the mice, and she told me her children had found the care of them such a bother that at first they had neglected them, and at last allowed them to escape. “They took to the walls, and for a long time afterwards, Monsieur, the mice of this neighbourhood were pied. To this day they are of a paler hue than elsewhere.”

II—A Broken Looking-Glass

He climbed the three flights of stone stairs, and put his key into the lock; but before he turned it, he stopped—to rest, to take breath. On the door his name was painted in big white letters, Mr. Richard Dane. It is always silent in the Temple at midnight; to-night the silence was dense, like a fog. It was Sunday night; and on Sunday night, even within the hushed precincts of the Temple, one is conscious of a deeper hush.

When he had lighted the lamp in his sitting-room, he let himself drop into an arm-chair before the empty fireplace. He was tired, he was exhausted. Yet nothing had happened to tire him. He had dined, as he always dined on Sundays, with the Rodericks, in Cheyne Walk; he had driven home in a hansom. There was no reason why he should be tired. But he was tired. A deadly lassitude penetrated his body and his spirit, like a fluid. He was too tired to go to bed.

“I suppose I am getting old,” he thought.

To a second person the matter would have appeared one not of supposition but of certainty, not of progression but of accomplishment. Getting old indeed? But he *was* old. It was an old man, grey and wrinkled and wasted, who sat there, limp, sunken upon himself, in his easy-chair. In years, to be sure, he was under sixty; but he looked like a man of seventy-five.

“I am getting old, I suppose I am getting old.”

And vaguely, dully, he contemplated his life, spread out behind him like a misty landscape, and thought what a failure it had been. What had it come to? What had it brought him? What had he done or won? Nothing, nothing. It had brought him nothing but old age, solitude, disappointment, and, to-night especially, a sense of fatigue and apathy that weighed upon him like a suffocating blanket. On a table, a yard or two away, stood a decanter of whisky, with some soda-water bottles and tumblers; he looked at it with heavy eyes, and he knew that there was what he needed. A little whisky would strengthen him, revive him, and make it possible for him to bestir himself and undress and go to bed. But when he thought of rising and moving to pour the whisky out, he shrunk from that effort as from an Herculean labour; no—he was too tired. Then his mind went back to the friends he had left in Chelsea half an hour ago; it seemed an indefinably long time ago, years and years ago; they were like blurred phantoms, dimly remembered from a remote past.

Yes, his life had been a failure; total, miserable, abject. It had come to nothing; its harvest was a harvest of ashes. If it had been a useful life, he could have accepted its unhappiness; if it had been a happy life, he could have forgotten its uselessness; but it had been both useless and unhappy. He had done nothing for others, he had won nothing for himself. Oh, but he had tried, he had tried. When he had left Oxford people expected great things of him; he had expected great things of himself. He was admitted to be clever, to be gifted; he was ambitious, he was in earnest. He wished to make a name, he wished to justify his existence by fruitful work. And he had worked hard. He had put all his knowledge, all his talent, all his energy, into his work; he had not spared himself; he had passed laborious days and studious nights. And what remained to show for it? Three or four volumes upon Political Economy, that had been read in their day a little, discussed a little, and then quite forgotten—superseded by the books of newer men. “Pulped, pulped,” he reflected bitterly. Except for a stray dozen of copies scattered here and there—in the British Museum, in his College library, on his own bookshelves—his published writings had by this time (he could not doubt) met with the common fate of unsuccessful literature, and been “pulped.”

“Pulped—pulped; pulped—pulped.” The hateful word beat rhythmically again and again in his tired brain; and for a little while that was all he was conscious of.

So much for the work of his life. And for the rest? The play? The living? Oh, he had nothing to recall but failure. It had sufficed that he should desire a thing, for him to miss it; that he should set his heart upon a thing, for it to be removed beyond the sphere of his possible acquisition. It

had been so from the beginning; it had been so always. He sat motionless as a stone, and allowed his thoughts to drift listlessly hither and thither in the current of memory. Everywhere they encountered wreckage, derelicts: defeated aspirations, broken hopes. Languidly he envisaged these. He was too tired to resent, to rebel. He even found a certain sluggish satisfaction in recognising with what unvarying harshness destiny had treated him, in resigning himself to the unmerited.

He caught sight of his hand, lying flat and inert upon the brown leather arm of his chair. His eyes rested on it, and for the moment he forgot everything else in a sort of torpid study of it. How white it was, how thin, how withered; the nails were parched into minute corrugations; the veins stood out like dark wires; the skin hung loosely on it, and had a dry lustre: an old man's hand. He gazed at it fixedly, till his eyes closed and his head fell forward. But he was not sleepy, he was only tired and weak.

He raised his head with a start, and changed his position. He felt cold; but to endure the cold was easier than to get up, and put something on, or go to bed.

How silent the world was; how empty his room. An immense feeling of solitude, of isolation, fell upon him. He was quite cut off from the rest of humanity here. If anything should happen to him, if he should need help of any sort, what could he do? Call out? But who would hear? At nine in the morning the porter's wife would come with his tea. But if anything should happen to him in the meantime? There would be nothing for it but to wait till nine o'clock.

Ah, if he had married, if he had had children, a wife, a home of his own, instead of these desolate bachelor chambers!

If he had married, indeed! It was his sorrow's crown of sorrow that he had not married, that he had not been able to marry, that the girl he had wished to marry wouldn't have him. Failure? Success? He could have accounted failure in other things a trifle, he could have laughed at what the world calls failure, if Elinor Lynd had been his wife. But that was the heart of his misfortune, she wouldn't have him.

He had met her for the first time when he was a lad of twenty, and she a girl of eighteen. He could see her palpable before him now: her slender girlish figure, her bright eyes, her laughing mouth, her warm brown hair curling round her forehead. Oh, how he had loved her. For twelve years he had waited upon her, wooed her, hoped to win her. But she had always said, “No—I don't love you. I am very fond of you; I love you as a friend; we all love you that way—my mother, my father, my sisters. But I can't marry you.” However, she married no one else, she loved no one else; and for twelve years he was an ever-welcome guest in her father's house; and she would talk with him, play to him, pity him; and he could hope. Then she died. He called one day, and they said she was ill. After that there came a blank in his memory—a gulf, full of blackness and redness, anguish and confusion; and then a sort of dreadful sudden calm, when they told him she was dead.

He remembered standing in her room, after the funeral, with her father, her mother, her sister Elizabeth. He remembered the pale daylight that filled it, and how orderly and cold and forsaken it all looked. And there was her bed, the bed she had died in; and there her dressing-table, with her combs and brushes; and there her writing-desk, her bookcase. He remembered a row of medicine bottles on the mantelpiece; he remembered the fierce anger, the hatred of them, as if they were animate, that had welled up in his heart as he looked at them, because they had failed to do their work.

“You will wish to have something that was hers, Richard,” her mother said. “What would you like?”

On her dressing-table there was a small looking-glass in an ivory frame. He asked if he might have that, and carried it away with him. She had looked into it a thousand times, no doubt; she had done her hair in it; it had reflected her, enclosed her, contained her. He could almost persuade himself that something of her must remain in it. To own it was like owning something of herself. He carried it home with him, hugging it to his side with a kind of passion.

He had prized it, he prized it still, as his dearest treasure; the looking-glass in which her face had been reflected a thousand times; the glass that had contained her, known her; in which something of herself, he felt, must linger. To handle it, look at it, into it, behind it, was like holding a mystic communion with her; it gave him an emotion that was infinitely sweet and bitter, a pain that was dissolved in joy.

The glass lay now, folded in its ivory case, on the chimney-shelf in front of him. That was its place; he always kept it on his chimney-shelf; so that he could see it whenever he glanced round his room. He leaned back in his chair, and looked at it; for a long time his eyes remained fixed upon it. “If she had married me, she wouldn't have died. My love, my care, would have healed her. She could not have died.” Monotonously, automatically, the phrase repeated itself over and over again in his mind, while his eyes remained fixed on the ivory case into which her looking-glass was folded. It was an effect of his fatigue, no doubt, that his eyes, once directed upon an object, were slow to leave it for another; that a phrase once pronounced in his thought had this tendency to repeat itself over and over again.

But at last he roused himself a little, and leaning forward, put his hand out and up, to take the glass from the shelf. He wished to hold it, to touch it and look into it. As he lifted it towards him,

it fell open, the mirror proper being fastened to a leather back, which was glued to the ivory, and formed a hinge. It fell open; and his grasp had been insecure; and the jerk as it opened was enough. It slipped from his fingers, and dropped with a crash upon the hearthstone.

The sound went through him like a physical pain. He sank back into his chair, and closed his eyes. His heart was beating as after a mighty physical exertion. He knew vaguely that a calamity had befallen him; he could vaguely imagine the splinters of shattered glass at his feet. But his physical prostration was so great as to obliterate, to neutralise, emotion. He felt very cold. He felt that he was being hurried along with terrible speed through darkness and cold air. There was the continuous roar of rapid motion in his ears, a faint, dizzy bewilderment in his head. He felt that he was trying to catch hold of things, to stop his progress, but his hands closed upon emptiness; that he was trying to call out for help, but he could make no sound. On—on—on, he was being whirled through some immeasurable abyss of space.

“Ah, yes, he's dead, quite dead,” the doctor said. “He has been dead some hours. He must have passed away peacefully sitting here in his chair.”

“Poor gentleman,” said the porter's wife. “And a broken looking-glass beside him. Oh, it's a sure sign, a broken looking-glass.”

Portrait of a Lady

By Will Rothenstein

Reproduced by the Swan Electric Engraving Company

Two Poems

By Edmund Gosse

I—Alere Flammam

To A. C. B.

In ancient Rome, the secret fire,—
An intimate and holy thing,—
Was guarded by a tender choir
Of kindred maidens in a ring;
Deep, deep within the house it lay,
No stranger ever gazed thereon,
But, flickering still by night and day,
The beacon of the house, it shone;
Thro' birth and death, from age to age, It passed, a quenchless heritage;

And there were hymns of mystic tone
Sung round about the family flame,
Beyond the threshold all unknown,
Fast-welded to an ancient name;
There sacrificed the sire as priest,
Before that altar, none but he,
Alone he spread the solemn feast
For a most secret deity;
He knew the god had once been sire, And served the same memorial fire.

Ah! so, untouched by windy roar
Of public issues loud and long,
The Poet holds the sacred door,
And guards the glowing coal of song;
Not his to grasp at praise or blame,
Red gold, or crowns beneath the sun,
His only pride to tend the flame
That Homer and that Virgil won,
Retain the rite, preserve the act, And pass the worship on intact.

Before the shrine at last he falls;
The crowd rush in, a chattering band
But, ere he fades in death, he calls
Another priest to ward the brand;
He, with a gesture of disdain,
Flings back the ringing brazen gate,
Reproves, repressing, the profane,
And feeds the flame in primal state;
Content to toil and fade in turn, If still the sacred embers burn.

II—A Dream of November

Far, far away, I know not where, I know not how,
The skies are grey, the boughs are bare, bare boughs in flower:
Long lilac silk is softly drawn from bough to bough,
With flowers of milk and buds of fawn, a broidered shower.

Beneath that tent an Empress sits, with slanted eyes,
And wafts of scent from censers flit, a lilac flood;
Around her throne bloom peach and plum in lacquered dyes,
And many a blown chrysanthemum, and many a bud.

She sits and dreams, while bonzes twain strike some rich bell,
Whose music seems a metal rain of radiant dye;
In this strange birth of various blooms, I cannot tell
Which spring from earth, which slipped from looms, which sank from sky.

Beneath her wings of lilac dim, in robes of blue,
The Empress sings a wordless hymn that thrills her bower;
My trance unweaves, and winds, and shreds, and forms anew
Dark bronze, bright leaves, pure silken threads, in triple flower.

Portrait of Mrs. Patrick Campbell

By Aubrey Beardsley

Reproduced by the Swan Electric Engraving Company

The Dedication

By Fred M. Simpson

Persons Represented

Lucy Rimmerton. Harold Sekbourne

Scene I—The period is 1863

The sitting-room in Lucy Rimmerton's *lodgings. She is seated in front of the fire making some toast.*

Lucy. There! I think that will do, although it isn't anything very great. [*Rises.*] What a colour I must have! Harold says I always manage to toast myself very much better than I do the bread. [*Lights the gas, and begins arranging some flowers on the table.*] His favourite flowers; I know he will be pleased when he sees them. How strange it is that he should really care for me!—I, who am so commonplace and ordinary, hardly pretty either, although he says I am. I always tell him he might have done so much better than propose to a poor governess without a penny.—Oh, if only his book proves a success!—a really great success!—how glorious it will be! Why doesn't the wretched publisher make haste and bring it out? I believe he is keeping it back on purpose. What dreadful creatures they are! At first—squabble, squabble, squabble; squabble about terms, squabble about this, another squabble about that, and then, when everything is finally arranged, delay, delay, delay. "You must wait for the publishing season." As though a book were a young lady whose future might be seriously jeopardised if it made its *début* at an unfashionable time.

[*The door opens, and* Harold *bursts into the room.*]

Harold. It's out, it's out; out at last.

Lucy. What, the book! Really! Where is it? Do show it to me.

Harold. Do you think you deserve it!

Lucy. Oh! don't tantalise me. Have you seen it? What is it like!

Harold. It is printed, and very much like other books.

Lucy. You are horrid. I believe you have it with you. Have you?

Harold. And what if I say yes?

Lucy. You have. Do let me see it.

Harold. And will you be very good if I do!

Lucy. I'll be angelic.

Harold. Then on that condition only—There! take it gently. [Lucy *snatches it, and cuts the string.*] I thought you never cut string?

Lucy. There is never a never that hasn't an exception.

Harold. Not a woman's, certainly.

Lucy. Oh! how nice it looks! And to think that it is yours, really and truly yours. "Grace: a Sketch. By Harold Sekbourne." It's delicious! [*Holding the book, dances round the room.*]

Harold. I shall begin to be jealous. You will soon be more in love with my book than you are with me.

Lucy. And why shouldn't I be? Haven't you always said that a man's work is the best part of him?

Harold. If my silly sayings are to be brought up in evidence against me like this, I shall——

Lucy. You shall what?

Harold. Take the book back.

Lucy. Oh, will you? I should like to see you do it. [*Holds it behind her.*] You have got to get it first.

Harold. And what are you going to give me for it?

Lucy. Isn't it a presentation copy?

Harold. It is the very first to leave the printer's.

Lucy. Then you ought not to want any payment.

Harold. I do though, all the same. Come—no payment, no book.

Lucy. There, there, there!

Harold. And there.

Lucy. Oh! don't! You'll stifle me. And is this for me; may I really keep it?

Harold. Of course you may; I brought it expressly for you.

Lucy. How nice of you! And you'll write my name in it?

Harold. I'll write the dedication.

Lucy. What do you mean?

Harold. You shall see. Pen and ink for the author! A new pen and virgin ink!

Lucy. Your Authorship has but to command to be obeyed.

Harold. [*Sitting down, writes.*] It is printed in all the other copies, but this one I have had bound specially for you, with a blank sheet where the dedication comes, so that in your copy, and yours alone, I can write it myself. There.

Lucy. [*Looks over his shoulder and reads.*] “To my Lady Luce.” Oh, Harold, you have dedicated it to me!

Harold. Who else could I dedicate it to? although 'tis—

"Not so much honouring thee,
As giving it a hope that now
It may immortal be."

Lucy. It is good of you.

Harold. [*Writes again.*] “Harold Sekbourne”—what's to-day?—oh, yes, “3rd November, 1863.”

Lucy. And will people know who the “Lady Luce” is?

Harold. They will some day. The dedication in my next book shall be “To my Lady Wife.”

Lucy. I wonder if I shall ever be that. It seems so long coming.

Harold. I don't mind when it is—to-morrow, if you like.

Lucy. Don't talk nonsense, although it is my fault for beginning it. And now sit down—no, here in the arm-chair—and you shall have some nice tea.

[*She makes and pours out the tea as Harold talks.*]

Harold. You won't have to wait long if this proves a success: and it will be one. I know it; I feel it. It isn't only that everybody who has read it, likes it; it's something else that I can't describe, not even to you; a feeling inside, that—call it conceit if you like, but it isn't conceit; it isn't conceit to feel confidence in oneself. Why, look at the trash, the arrant trash, that succeeds every day; you will say, perhaps, that it succeeds because it is trash, that trash is what people want—they certainly get it. But no book that ever had real stuff in it has failed yet, and I feel that—Ha! ha! the same old feeling mentioned above. Don't think me an awful prig, Luce. I don't talk to anybody else as I do to you; and if you only knew what a relief it is to me to let myself go a bit occasionally, you would excuse everything.

Lucy. You have a right to be conceited.

Harold. Not yet. I have done nothing yet; but I mean to. [*Takes up the book.*] I wonder what will become of you and your fellows; what will be your future? Will you one day adorn the shelves of libraries, figure in catalogues of “Rare books and first editions,” and be contended for by snuffy, long-clothed bibliomaniacs, who will bid one against the other for the honour of possessing you? Or will you descend to the tables of secondhand book-stalls marked at a great reduction; or lie in a heap, with other lumber, outside the shop-front, all this lot sixpence each, awaiting there, uncared for, unnoticed, and unknown, your ultimate destination, the dust-hole?

Lucy. You are horrid. What an idea!

Harold. No, I don't think that will be your end. [*Puts down the book.*] You are not going to the dustbin, you are going to be a success. No more hack work for me after this. Why, supposing only the first edition is sold, I more than clear expenses, and if it runs to two—ten—twenty editions, I shall receive—the amount fairly takes my breath away. Twentieth thousand; doesn't it sound fine? We shall have our mansion in Grosvenor Square yet, Luce; and that charming, little old house we saw the other day up the river—we'll have that, too; so that we can run down here from Saturday to Monday, to get away from London fog and nastiness. Yes, I am going to be rich some day—rich—in ten years' time, if this book gets a fair start and I have anything like decent luck, I shall be the best known author in England. [*Rises.*] The son of the old bookseller who failed will be able then to repay those who helped him when he wanted help, and, more delightful thought still, pay back those with interest who did their best to keep him down, when they could just as easily have helped him to rise. I am going to have a success, I feel it. In a few weeks' time I'll bring you a batch of criticisms that will astonish you. But what is the matter? why so silent all of a sudden? has my long and conceited tirade disgusted you?

Lucy. No, not at all.

Harold. Then what is it?

Lucy. I was only thinking that—[*hesitates*].

Harold. Thinking what? About me:

Lucy. Yes, about you and—and also about myself.

Harold. That is just as it should be, about us two together.

Lucy. Yes, but I was afraid——

Harold. [*Smiling.*] Afraid! what of?

Lucy. Nothing, nothing really. I am ashamed that—let me give you some more tea.

Harold. No, thanks. Come, let me hear, make a clean breast of it.

Lucy. I can't, really; you would only laugh at me.

Harold. Then why deny me a pleasure, for you know I love to laugh?

Lucy. Well, then—if you become famous—and rich——

Harold. If I do; well?

Lucy. You won't—you won't forget me, will you?

Harold. Forget you, what an idea! Why do I want to become famous? why do I want to become rich? For my own sake? for the sake of the money? Neither. I want it for your sake, so that you can be rich; so that you can have everything you can possibly want. I don't mind roughing it a bit myself, but——

Lucy. No more do I: I am sure we might be very happy living even here.

Harold. No, thank you; no second pair fronts for me, or, rather, none for my wife. I want you to forget all about this place, as though it had never existed; I want you to only remember your giving lessons as a nightmare which has passed and gone. I want you to take a position in the world, to go into society——

Lucy. But, Harold——

Harold. To entertain, receive, lead——

Lucy. But I could never lead. I detest receiving. I hate entertaining——

Harold. Except me.

Lucy. I often wonder if I do. You are so clever and I——

Harold. Such a goose. Whatever put such ideas into your head? Why, you are actually crying.

Lucy. I am not.

Harold. Then what is that? [*Puts his finger against her cheek.*] What is that little sparkling drop?

Lucy. It must be a tear of joy, then.

Harold. Which shall be used to christen the book!

Lucy. Oh, don't—there, you have left a mark.

Harold. It is your fault. My finger wouldn't have done it by itself. Are you going to be silly any more?

Lucy. No, I am not.

Harold. And you are going to love me, believe in me, and trust me?

Lucy. I do all three—implicitly.

Harold. [*He kisses her.*] The seal of the trinity. [*Looks at his watch.*] By jove, I must be going.

Lucy. So soon?

Harold. Rather; I have to dine in Berkeley Square at eight o'clock, at Sir Humphrey Mockton's. You would like their house, it's a beauty, a seventeenth or eighteenth century one, with such a gorgeous old staircase. He's awfully rich, and just a little bit vulgar—“wool” I think it was, or “cottons,” or some other commodity; but his daughter is charming—I should say daughters, as there are two of them, so you needn't be jealous.

Lucy. Jealous? of course I am not. Have you known them long?

Harold. Oh! some little time. They are awfully keen to see my book. I am going to take—send them a copy. You see I must be civil to these people, they know such an awful lot of the right sort; and their recommendation of a book will have more weight than fifty advertisements. So good-

bye. [*Takes his overcoat.*]

Lucy. Let me help you. But you are going without noticing my flowers.

Harold. I have been admiring them all along, except when I was looking at you.

Lucy. Don't be silly.

Harold. They are charming. Sir Humphrey has some orchids just the same colours; you ought to see them; he has basketsful sent up every week from his place in Surrey.

Lucy. No wonder my poor little chrysanthemums didn't impress you.

Harold. What nonsense! I would give more for one little flower from you, than for the contents of all his conservatories.

Lucy. Then you shall have that for nothing.

Harold. Don't, it will destroy the bunch.

Lucy. What does that matter? they are all yours.

Harold. You do your best to spoil me.

Lucy. [*Pins the flower into his button-hole.*] Don't talk nonsense. There!

Harold. What a swell you have made me look!

Lucy. Good-bye; when shall I see you again?

Harold. Not until Sunday, I am afraid; I am so busy just now. But I'll come round early, and, if fine, we'll go and lunch at Richmond, and have a good walk across the Park afterwards. Would you like it?

Lucy. Above all things, but—but don't spend all your money on me.

Harold. Bother the money! I am going to be rich. Good-bye till Sunday.

Lucy. Au revoir; and while you are dining in your grand house, with lots of grand people, I am going to enjoy a delightful evening here, not alone, as I shall have your book for company. Good-bye.

Six Months elapse between Scene I. and Scene II.

Scene II—The Scene and Persons are the same

Lucy *is dressed as before; she is seated*. Harold *is in evening dress, with a flower in his button-hole; he stands by the fireplace*.

Harold. Well, all I have to say is, I think you are most unreasonable.

Lucy. You have no right to say that.

Harold. I have if I think it.

Lucy. Well, you have no right to think it.

Harold. My thoughts are not my own, I suppose?

Lucy. They are so different from what I should have expected you to have that I almost doubt it.

Harold. Better say I have changed at once.

Lucy. And so you have.

Harold. Who is saying things one has no right to say now?

Lucy. I am only saying what I think.

Harold. Then if you want to have the right to your own thoughts, kindly let me have the right to mine. [*Walks to the window.*] I can't prevent people sending me invitations, can I?

Lucy. You need not accept them.

Harold. And make enemies right and left, I suppose?

Lucy. I don't want you to do that, and I don't want either to prevent your enjoying yourself; but—but, I do want to see you occasionally.

Harold. And so you do.

Lucy. Yes, very—perhaps I should say I want to see you often.

Harold. And so do I you, but I can't be in two places at once. This is what I mean when I say you are unreasonable. I must go out. If I am to write, I must study people, character, scenes. I can't do that by stopping at home: I can't do that by coming here; I know you and I know your

landlady, and there is nobody else in the house, except the slavey and the cat; and although the slavey may be a very excellent servant and the cat a most original quadruped, still, I don't want to make elaborate studies of animals—either four-legged or two. One would imagine, from the way you talk, that I did nothing except enjoy myself. I only go out in the evenings.

Lucy. Still you might spare a little time, now and then, to come and see me, if only for half an hour.

Harold. What am I doing now? I gave up a dinner-party to come here to-night.

Lucy. Do you know it is exactly a month yesterday since you were here last?

Harold. I can't be always dangling at your apron-strings.

Lucy. Harold!

Harold. If we are going to be married, we——

Lucy. If?

Harold. Well, when, if you like it better; we shall see enough of one another then. I have written to you, it isn't as though I hadn't done that.

Lucy. But that is not the same thing as seeing you; and your letters, too, have been so scrappy. [Harold *throws himself into the arm-chair*.] They used to be so different before your book came out.

Harold. I had more time then.

Lucy. I sometimes wish that it had never been published at all, that you had never written it, or, at all events, that it had never been such a success.

Harold. That's kind, at all events—deuced kind and considerate!

Lucy. It seems to have come between us as a barrier. When I think how eagerly we looked forward to its appearance, what castles in the air we built as to how happy we were going to be, and all the things we were going to do, if it were a success, and now to think that——

Harold. [*Jumps up.*] Look here, Lucy, I'm damned if—I can't stand this much longer! Nag, nag, nag! I can't stand it. I am worked off my head during the day, I am out half the night, and when I come here for a little quiet, a little rest, its—[*Breaks off suddenly*].

Lucy. I am so sorry. If I had thought——

Harold. Can't you see that you are driving me mad? I have been here half an hour, and the whole of the time it has been nothing but reproaches.

Lucy. I don't think they would have affected you so much if you hadn't felt that you deserved them!

Harold. There you go again! I deserve them—[*laughs harshly*]. It is my fault, I suppose, that it is the season; it is my fault that people give dinner-parties and balls; it is my fault, I suppose, that you don't go out as much as I do?

Lucy. Certainly not; although, as a matter of fact, I haven't been out one single evening for the last three—nearly four—months.

Harold. That's right; draw comparisons; say I'm a selfish brute. You'll tell me next that I am tired of you, and——

Lucy. Harold! don't, don't—you—you hurt me! Of course I never thought of such a—[*she rises*]—You are not, are you? I—I couldn't bear it!

Harold. Of course I am not. Don't be so silly. [*He sits.*]

Lucy. It was silly of me, I confess it. I know you better than that. Why, it's rank high treason, I deserve to lose my head; and my only excuse is that thinking such a thing proves I must have lost it already. Will your majesty deign to pardon?

Harold. [*Testily.*] Yes, yes, that's all right! There, look out, you'll crumple my tie.

Lucy. I am so sorry! And now tell me all about your grand friends and——

Harold. They are not grand to me. Simply because a person is rich or has a title, I don't consider them any “grander” than I—by jove, no! These people are useful to me, or else I shouldn't stand it. They “patronise” me, put their hand on my shoulder and say, “My dear young friend, we predict great things for you.” The fools, as though a single one of them was capable even of forming an opinion, much less of prophesying. They make remarks about me before my face; they talk of, and pet, me as though I were a poodle. I go through my tricks and they applaud; and they lean over with an idiotic simper to the dear friend next to them and say, “Isn't he clever?” as though they had taught me themselves. Bah! They invite me to their houses, I dine with them once a week; but if I were to tell them to-morrow that I wanted to marry one of their daughters, they would kick me out of the room, and consider it a greater insult than if the proposal had come from their own footman.

Lucy. But that doesn't matter, because you don't want to marry one of them, do you? Was that Miss Mockton with you in the Park last Sunday?

Harold. How do you know I was in the Park at all?

Lucy. Because I saw you there.

Harold. You were spying, I suppose.

Lucy. Spying? I don't know what you mean. I went there for a walk after church.

Harold. Alone?

Lucy. Of course not, I was with Mrs. Glover.

Harold. Your landlady?

Lucy. Why not?—Oh! you need not be afraid. I shouldn't have brought disgrace upon you by obliging you to acknowledge me before your grand friends. I took good care to keep in the background.

Harold. Do you mean to insinuate that I am a snob?

Lucy. Be a little kind.

Harold. Well, it is your own fault, you insinuate that——

Lucy. I was wrong. I apologise, but—but—[*begins to cry*].

Harold. There, don't make a scene—don't, there's a good girl. There, rest your head here. I suppose I am nasty. I didn't mean it, really. You must make allowances for me. I am worried and bothered. I can't work—at least I can't do work that satisfies me—and altogether I am not quite myself. Late hours are playing the very deuce with my nerves. There, let me kiss away the tears—now give me your promise that you will never be so foolish again.

Lucy. I—I promise. It is silly of me—now I am all right.

Harold. Giboulées d'Avril! The sun comes out once more, the shower is quite over.

Lucy. Yes, quite over; you always are so kind. It is my fault entirely. I—I think my nerves must be a little upset, too.

Harold. We shall make a nice couple, shan't we? if we are often going to behave like this! Now, are you quite calm?

Lucy. Yes, quite.

Harold. That's right, because I want you to listen patiently for a few minutes to what I am going to say; it is something I want to talk to you about very seriously. You won't interrupt me until I have quite finished, will you?

Lucy. What is it? not that—no, I won't.

Harold. You know we talked about—I mean it was arranged we should be married the beginning of July—wasn't it?

Lucy. Yes.

Harold. Well, I want to know if you would mind very much putting it off a little—quite a little—only till the autumn? I'll tell you why. Of course if you *do* mind very much, I sha'n't press it, but—it's like this: the scene of my new book is, as you know, laid abroad. I have been trying to write it, but can't get on with it one little bit. I want some local colour. I thought I should be able to invent it, I find I can't. It is hampering and keeping me back terribly. And so—and so I thought if you didn't mind very much that—that if I were to go to France for—for six months or so—alone, that—in fact it would be the making of me. I have never had an opportunity before; it has always been grind, grind, grind, and if I am prevented from going now, I may never have a chance again. What do you say?

Lucy. But why shouldn't we be married as arranged, and spend our honeymoon over there?

Harold. Because I want to work.

Lucy. And would my being there prevent you? You used to say you always worked so much better when I was——

Harold. But you don't understand. This is different. I want to work *hard*, and no man could do that on his honeymoon—at least I know I couldn't.

Lucy. No, but—And—and till when did you want to put off our—our marriage? Until your return?

Harold. Well, that would depend on circumstances. You don't suppose I would postpone it for a second, if I could help it; but—Until my return? I hope sincerely that it can be managed then, but, you see, over there I shall be spending money all the time, and not earning a sou, and—and so we *might* have to wait a little bit longer, just until I could replenish the locker, until I had published and been paid for my new book.

Lucy. But I have given notice to leave at midsummer.

Harold. Has Mrs. Duncan got another governess!

Lucy. No, but——

Harold. Then you can stop on, can't you! They will surely be only too delighted to keep you.

Lucy. Yes—I can stop on. [*He tries to kiss her.*] No, don't; not now.

Harold. And you don't really mind the postponement very much, do you?

Lucy. Not if it will assist you.

Harold. I thought you would say that, I knew you would. It will assist me very much. I shouldn't otherwise suggest it. It does seem too bad though, doesn't it? To have to postpone it after waiting all these years, and just as it was so near, too. I have a good mind not to go, after all—only, if I let this chance slip, I may never have another. Besides, six months is not so very long, is it? And when they are over, then we won't wait any longer. You will come and see me off, won't you? It would never do for an engaged man to go away for even six months, without his lady love coming to see him start.

Lucy. Yes, I will come. When do you go?

Harold. The end of next week, I expect; perhaps earlier if I can manage it. But I shall see you before then. We'll go and have dinner together at our favourite little restaurant. When shall it be! Let me see, I am engaged on—I can't quite remember what my engagements are.

Lucy. I have none.

Harold. Then that's settled. Good-bye, Luce; you don't mind very much, do you? The time will soon pass. You are a little brick to behave as you have done. [*Going.*] It will be Monday or Tuesday next for our dinner, but I will let you know. Good-bye.

Lucy. Good-bye.

Thirty Years elapse between Scene II. and Scene III.

Scene III—Lucy Rimmerton, Agnes Rimmerton (her niece)

A well-furnished comfortable room in Lucy Rimmerton's *house. She is seated in front of the fire, in an easy-chair, reading. The door opens, without her noticing it, and* Agnes *comes in, closes the door gently, crosses the room, and bends over her.*

Agnes. A happy New Year to you, Aunt Luce.

Lucy. What! Agnes, is that you? I never heard you come in. I really think I must be getting deaf.

Agnes. What nonsense! I didn't intend you should hear me. I wanted to wish you a happy New Year first.

Lucy. So as to make your Aunt play second fiddle. The same to you, dear.

Agnes. Thank you. [*Warms her hands at the fire.*] Oh, it *is* cold; not here I mean, but out of doors; the thermometer is down I don't know how many degrees below freezing.

Lucy. It seems to agree with you, at all events. You look as bright and rosy as though you were the New Year itself come to visit me.

Agnes. [*Laughs merrily.*] So I ought to. I ran nearly all the way, except when I slid, to the great horror of an old gentleman who was busily engaged lecturing some little boys on the enormity of their sins in making a beautifully long slide in the middle of the pavement.

Lucy. And what brought you out so early?

Agnes. To see you, of course. Besides, the morning is so lovely it seemed a sin to remain indoors. I do hope the frost continues all the holidays.

Lucy. It is all very well for you, but it must be terribly trying for many people—the poor, for instance.

Agnes. Yes. [*A pause.*] Auntie, you don't know anything, do you, about how—how poor people live?

Lucy. Not so much as I ought to.

Agnes. I didn't mean *very* poor people, not working people. I meant a person poor like—like I am poor.

Lucy. [*Smiling.*] Don't you know how you live yourself?

Agnes. Of course I do, but—I was thinking of—of a friend of mine, a governess like myself, who has just got engaged; and I—I was wondering on how much, or, rather, how little, they could live. But you don't know of course. You are rich, and——

Lucy. But I wasn't always rich. Thirty years ago when I was your age——

Agnes. When you were my age! I like that! why you are not fifty.

Lucy. Little flatterer. Fifty-two last birthday.

Agnes. Fifty-two! Well, you don't look it, at all events.

Lucy. Gross flatterer. When I was your age I was poor and a governess as you are.

Agnes. But I thought that your Aunt Emily left you all her money.

Lucy. So she did, or nearly all; but that was afterwards. It isn't quite thirty years yet since she came back from India, a widow, just after she had lost her husband and only child. I was very ill at the time—I almost died; and she, good woman as she was, came and nursed me.

Agnes. Of course, I know. I have heard father talk about it. And then she was taken ill, wasn't she?

Lucy. Yes, almost before I was well. It was very unfair that she should leave everything to me; your father was her nephew, just as I was her niece, but he wouldn't hear of my sharing it with ——

Agnes. I should think not indeed! I should be very sorry to think that my father would ever allow such a thing. Although, at the same time, it is all very well for you to imagine that you don't share it, but you *do*. Who pays for Lillie's and May's and George's schooling? Who sent Alfred to Cambridge, and Frank to——

Lucy. Don't, please. What a huge family you are, to be sure.

Agnes. And last, but not least, who gave me a chance of going to Girton? Oh, we are not supposed to know anything about it, I know, but you see we do. You thought you had arranged it all so beautifully, and kept everyone of us entirely in the dark, but you haven't one little bit.

Lucy. Nonsense, Agnes, you——

Agnes. Oh, you are a huge big fraud, you know you are; I am quite ashamed of you. [Lucy *is going to speak*.] You are not to be thanked, I know; and you needn't be afraid, I am not going to do so; but if you could only hear us when we are talking quietly together, you would find that a certain person, who shall be nameless, is simply worship——

Lucy. Hush! you silly little girl. You don't know what you are saying. You have nothing to thank me for whatsoever.

Agnes. Haven't we just? I know better.

Lucy. Young people always do. So you see I do know something of how “the poor” live.

Agnes. Yes, but you were never married.

Lucy. No, dear.

Agnes. That is what I want to——Why weren't you married? Oh, I know I have no business to ask such a question: it is fearfully rude I know, but I have wondered so often. You are lovely now, and you must have been beautiful when you were a girl.

Lucy. No, I wasn't—I was barely pretty.

Agnes. I can't believe that.

Lucy. And I am not going to accept your description of me now as a true one; although I confess I am vain enough—even in my present old age—to look in the glass occasionally, and say to myself: “You are better-looking now than you ever were.”

Agnes. Well, at all events you were always an angel.

Lucy. And men don't like angels; besides—I was poor.

Agnes. You were not poor when you got Aunt Emily's money.

Lucy. No, but then it was too——I mean I then had no wish to marry.

Agnes. You mean you determined to sacrifice yourself for us, that is what you mean.

Lucy. I must have possessed a very prophetic soul then, or been gifted with second sight, as none of you, except Reginald, were born. But to come back to your friend, Agnes; has she no money?

Agnes. No, none.

Lucy. Nor he?

Agnes. Not a penny.

Lucy. And they want to get married?

Agnes. Yes.

Lucy. And are afraid they haven't enough.

Agnes. They certainly haven't.

Lucy. Then why don't they apply to some friend or relative who has more than enough; say, to—an aunt, for instance.

Agnes. Auntie!

Lucy. And what is his name?

Agnes. Geo——Mr. Reddell.

Lucy. And hers is?

Agnes. Oh, I never intended to tell you. I didn't mean to say a word.

Lucy. When did it happen?

Agnes. Three days ago. That is to say, he proposed to me then, but of course it has been going on for a long time. I could see that he—at least I thought I could see. But I can hardly realise it yet. It seems all so strange. And I *did* intend telling you, I felt I *must* tell somebody, although George doesn't want it known yet, because, as I told you, he—and so I haven't said a word to father yet; but I must soon—and you won't say anything, will you? and—and oh, I am silly.

Lucy. There, have your cry out, it will do you good. Now tell me about Mr. Reddell. What is he?

Agnes. He is a writer—an author. Don't you remember I showed you a story of his a little time ago?

Lucy. I thought I knew the name.

Agnes. And you said you liked it; I was so pleased.

Lucy. Yes, I did. I thought it clever and——

Agnes. He *is* clever; and I do so want you to know him. He wants to know you, too. You will try to like him, won't you, for my sake?

Lucy. I have no doubt I shall.

Agnes. He is just bringing out a book. Some of the stories have been published before; the one you read was one, and if that proves a success then it will be all right; we shall be able to get married and——

Lucy. Wait a minute, Agnes. How long have you known him?

Agnes. Over a year—nearly two years.

Lucy. And do you really know him well? Are you quite certain you can trust him?

Agnes. What a question! How can you doubt it? You wouldn't for a minute if you knew him.

Lucy. I ought not to, knowing you, you mean. And supposing this book is a success. May it not spoil him—make him conceited?

Agnes. All the better if it does. He is not conceited enough, and so I always tell him.

Lucy. But may it not make him worldly? May he not, after a time, regret his proposal to you if he sees a chance of making a more advantageous——

Agnes. Impossible. What a dreadful opinion you must have of mankind. You don't think it really, I know. I have never heard you say or hint anything nasty about anybody before.

Lucy. I only do it for your own good, my dear. I once knew a man—just such another as you describe Mr. Reddell to be. He was an author, too, and—and when I knew him his first book was also just about to appear. He was engaged to be married to—to quite a nice girl too, although she was never so pretty as you are.

Agnes. Who is the flatterer now?

Lucy. The book was published. It was a great success. He became quite the lion of the season—it is many years ago now. The wedding-day was definitely fixed. Two months before the date he suggested a postponement—for six months.

Agnes. How horrible!

Lucy. And just about the time originally fixed upon for the wedding she received a letter from him—he was abroad at the time—suggesting that their engagement had better be broken off.

Agnes. Oh, the brute! the big brute! But she didn't consent, did she?

Lucy. Of course. The man she had loved was dead. The new person she was indifferent to.

Agnes. But how—but you don't suggest that Mr. Reddell could behave like that? he couldn't. He wouldn't, I feel certain. But there must surely have been something else; I can't believe that any man would behave so utterly unfeelingly—so brutally. They say there are always two sides to

every story. Mayn't there have been some reason that you knew nothing about? Mayn't she have done something? She must have been a little bit to blame, too, and this side of the story you never heard.

Lucy. Yes—it is possible.

Agnes. I can't think that any man would deliberately behave so like a cad as you say he did.

Lucy. It may have been her fault. I used to think it might be—just a little, as you say.

Agnes. Well, it sha'n't be mine at all events. I won't give any cause—besides even if I did——Oh, no, it is utterly impossible to imagine such a thing!

Lucy. I hope it is, for your sake.

Agnes. Of course it is; of that I am quite certain. And you don't think it is very wrong of me to—to ——

Lucy. To say Yes to a man you love. No, my dear, that can never be wrong, although it may be foolish.

Agnes. From a worldly point of view, perhaps; but I should never have thought that you——

Lucy. I didn't mean that. But love seems to grow so quickly when you once allow it to do so, that it is sometimes wiser to——but never mind, bring him to see me, and—and may you be happy. [*A long pause.*]

Agnes. You are crying now, Auntie! You have nothing——

Lucy. Haven't I? What, not at the chance of losing you? So this is what brought you out so early this morning and occasioned your bright, rosy cheeks? You didn't only come to see me.

Agnes. To see you and talk to you, yes, that was all. No, by-the-by, it wasn't all. Have you seen a paper this morning? No? I thought it would interest you so I brought it round. It is bad news, not good news; your favourite author is dead.

Lucy. I am afraid my favourite authors have been dead very many years.

Agnes. I should say the author of your favourite book.

Lucy. You mean——

Agnes. Sir Harold Sekbourne. [Lucy *leans back in her chair.*] He died last night. Here it is; here is the paragraph. [*Reads.*] "We regret to announce the death of Sir Harold Sekbourne, the well-known novelist, which occurred at his town house, in Prince's Gate, late last evening." Shall I read it to you?

Lucy. No—no, give me the paper. And—and, Agnes, do you mind going down to Franklin's room, and telling her that receipt you promised her?

Agnes. For the Japanese custard? Of course I will; I quite forgot all about it. There it is. [*Gives her the paper, indicating the paragraph with her finger, then goes out.*]

Lucy. [*Sits staring at the paper for a few seconds, then reads slowly.*] "Sir Harold had been slightly indisposed for some weeks, but no anxiety was felt until two days ago, when a change for the worse set in, and despite all the care, attention, and skill of Drs. Thornton and Douglas, who hardly left his bedside, he never rallied, and passed peacefully away, at the early age of fifty-eight, at the time above mentioned. It is now thirty years ago since the deceased baronet published his first book, 'Grace: a Sketch,' which had such an immediate and great success. This was followed nearly a year afterwards by 'Alain Treven,' the scene of which is laid in Brittany; and from that time until his death his pen was never idle. His last work, 'The Incoming Tide,' has just been published in book form, it having appeared in the pages of *The Illustrated Courier* during the last year. Despite the rare power of his later works, disclosing thoroughly, as they do, his scholarly knowledge, his masterly construction, vivid imagination, and his keen insight into character and details of every-day life, they none of them can, for exquisite freshness and rare delicacy of execution, compare with his first publication, 'Grace: a Sketch.' We have before us, as we write, a first edition of this delightful story, with its curiously sentimental dedication 'To my Lady Luce,' which in the subsequent editions was omitted. A baronetcy was conferred on Sir Harold by her Majesty two years ago, at the personal instigation, it is said, of the Prime Minister, who is one of his greatest admirers, but the title is now extinct, as Sir Harold leaves no son. He married in June, 1866, a daughter of the late Sir Humphrey Mockton, who survives him. His two daughters are both married—one to Lord Duncan, eldest son of the Earl of Andstar; the other to Sir Reginald de Laver. His loss will be greatly felt, not only in the literary world, but wherever the English tongue is spoken and read."

[Lucy *goes to the bookcase, takes out a book, and opens it*. Agnes *comes in*.]

Agnes. Franklin is silly. I had to repeat the directions three times, and even now I doubt if she understands them properly. [*Comes behind* Lucy *and looks over her shoulder.*] Why, I never knew you had a first edition. [Lucy *starts and closes the book, then opens it again.*] May I look at it? But this is written; the ink is quite faded. "To my Lady Luce. Harold Sekbourne, 3rd November, 1863." What a strong handwriting it is! Luce! how strange that the name should be the same as

—— [*Looks suddenly at* Lucy.] Oh, Auntie, forgive me. I never dreamt——I am so sorry.

The Head of Minos

By J. T. Nettleship

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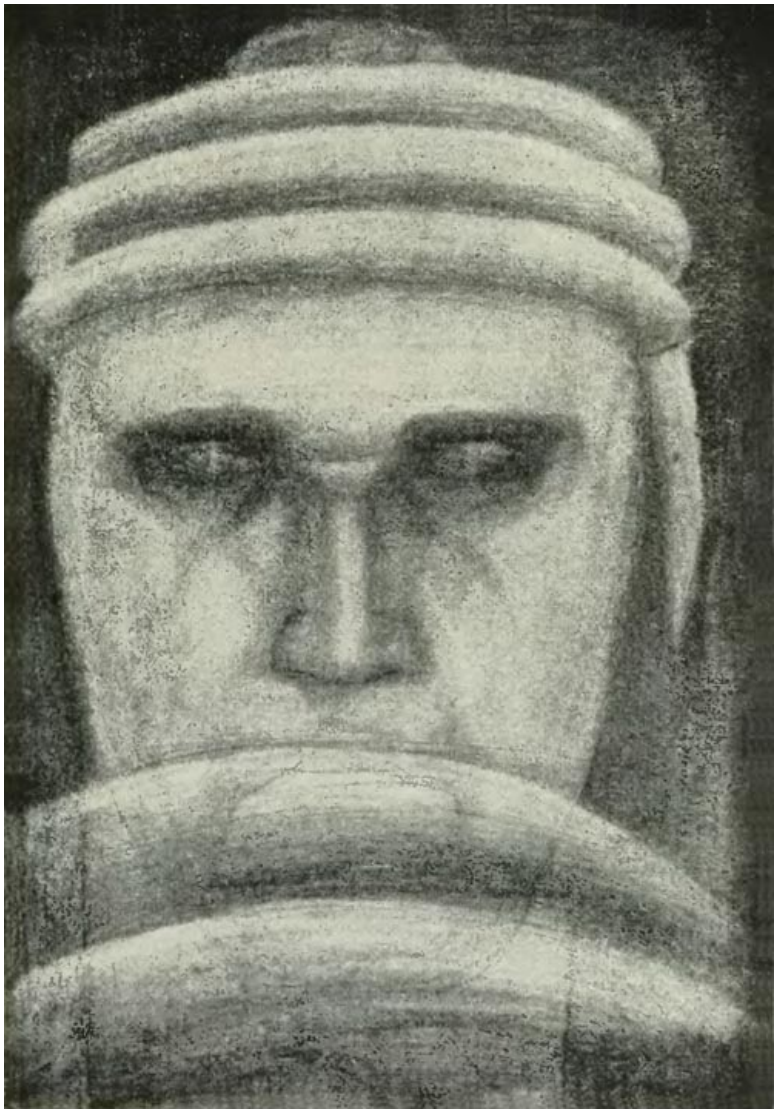

A Lost Masterpiece
A City Mood, Aug. '93

By George Egerton

I regret it, but what am I to do? It was not my fault—I can only regret it. It was thus it happened to me.

I had come to town straight from a hillside cottage in a lonely ploughland, with the smell of the turf in my nostrils, and the swish of the scythes in my ears; the scythes that flashed in the meadows where the upland hay, drought-parched, stretched thirstily up to the clouds that mustered upon the mountain-tops, and marched mockingly away, and held no rain.

The desire to mix with the crowd, to lay my ear once more to the heart of the world and listen to its life-throbs, had grown too strong for me; and so I had come back—but the sights and sounds of my late life clung to me—it is singular how the most opposite things often fill one with associative memory.

That *gamin* of the bird-tribe, the Cockney sparrow, recalled the swallows that built in the tumble-down shed; and I could almost see the gleam of their white bellies, as they circled in ever narrowing sweeps and clove the air with forked wings, uttering a shrill note, with a querulous grace-note in front of it.

The freshness of the country still lurked in me, unconsciously influencing my attitude towards the city.

One forenoon business drove me citywards, and following an inclination that always impels me to water-ways rather than roadways, I elected to go by river steamer.

I left home in a glad mood, disposed to view the whole world with kindly eyes. I was filled with a happy-go-lucky *insouciance* that made walking the pavements a loafing in Elysian fields. The coarser touches of street-life, the oddities of accent, the idiosyncrasies of that most eccentric of city-dwellers, the Londoner, did not jar as at other times—rather added a zest to enjoyment; impressions crowded in too quickly to admit of analysis, I was simply an interested spectator of a varied panorama.

I was conscious, too, of a peculiar dual action of brain and senses, for, though keenly alive to every unimportant detail of the life about me, I was yet able to follow a process by which delicate inner threads were being spun into a fanciful web that had nothing to do with my outer self.

At Chelsea I boarded a river steamer bound for London Bridge. The river was wrapped in a delicate grey haze with a golden subtone, like a beautiful bright thought struggling for utterance through a mist of obscure words. It glowed through the turbid waters under the arches, so that I feared to see a face or a hand wave through its dull amber—for I always think of drowned creatures washing wearily in its murky depths—it lit up the great warehouses, and warmed the brickwork of the monster chimneys in the background. No detail escaped my outer eyes—not the hideous green of the velveteen in the sleeves of the woman on my left, nor the supercilious giggle of the young ladies on my right, who made audible remarks about my personal appearance.

But what cared I? Was I not happy, absurdly happy?—because all the while my inner eyes saw undercurrents of beauty and pathos, quaint contrasts, whimsical details that tickled my sense of humour deliciously. The elf that lurks in some inner cell was very busy, now throwing out tender mimosa-like threads of creative fancy, now recording fleeting impressions with delicate sure brushwork for future use; touching a hundred vagrant things with the magic of imagination, making a running comment on the scenes we passed.

The warehouses told a tale of an up-to-date Soll und Haben, one of my very own, one that would thrust old Freytag out of the book-mart. The tall chimneys ceased to be giraffic throats belching soot and smoke over the blackening city. They were obelisks rearing granite heads heavenwards! Joints in the bricks, weather-stains? You are mistaken; they were hieroglyphics, setting down for posterity a tragic epic of man the conqueror, and fire his slave; and how they strangled beauty in the grip of gain. A theme for a Whitman!

And so it talks and I listen with my inner ear—and yet nothing outward escapes me—the slackening of the boat—the stepping on and off of folk—the lowering of the funnel—the name "Stanley" on the little tug, with its self-sufficient puff-puff, fussing by with a line of grimy barges in tow; freight-laden, for the water washes over them—and on the last a woman sits suckling her baby, and a terrier with badly cropped ears yaps at us as we pass....

And as this English river scene flashes by, lines of association form angles in my brain; and the point of each is a dot of light that expands into a background for forgotten canal scenes, with green-grey water, and leaning balconies, and strange crafts—Canaletti and Guardi seen long ago in picture galleries....

A delicate featured youth with gold-laced cap, scrapes a prelude on a thin-toned violin, and his companion thrums an accompaniment on a harp.

I don't know what they play, some tuneful thing with an undernote of sadness and sentiment running through its commonplace—likely a music-hall ditty; for a lad with a cheap silk hat, and the hateful expression of knowingness that makes him a type of his kind, grins appreciatively and hums the words.

I turn from him to the harp. It is the wreck of a handsome instrument, its gold is tarnished, its white is smirched, its stucco rose-wreaths sadly battered. It has the air of an antique beauty in dirty ball finery; and is it fancy, or does not a shamed wail lurk in the tone of its strings?

The whimsical idea occurs to me that it has once belonged to a lady with drooping ringlets and an embroidered spencer; and that she touched its chords to the words of a song by Thomas Haynes Baily, and that Miss La Creevy transferred them both to ivory.

The youth played mechanically, without a trace of emotion; whilst the harpist, whose nose is a study in purples and whose bloodshot eyes have the glassy brightness of drink, felt every touch of beauty in the poor little tune, and drew it tenderly forth.

They added the musical note to my joyous mood; the poetry of the city dovetailed harmoniously with country scenes too recent to be treated as memories—and I stepped off the boat with the melody vibrating through the city sounds.

I swung from place to place in happy, lightsome mood, glad as a fairy prince in quest of adventures. The air of the city was exhilarating ether—and all mankind my brethren—in fact I felt effusively affectionate.

I smiled at a pretty anaemic city girl, and only remembered that she was a stranger when she flashed back an indignant look of affected affront.

But what cared I? Not a jot! I could afford to say pityingly: “Go thy way, little city maid, get thee to thy typing.”

And all the while that these outward insignificant things occupied me, I knew that a precious little pearl of a thought was evolving slowly out of the inner chaos.

It was such an unique little gem, with the lustre of a tear, and the light of moonlight and streamlight and love smiles reflected in its pure sheen—and, best of all, it was all my own—a priceless possession, not to be bartered for the Jagersfontein diamond—a city childling with the prepotency of the country working in it—and I revelled in its fresh charm and dainty strength; it seemed original, it was so frankly natural.

And as I dodged through the great waggons laden with wares from outer continents, I listened and watched it forming inside, until my soul became filled with the light of its brightness; and a wild elation possessed me at the thought of this darling brain-child, this offspring of my fancy, this rare little creation, perhaps embryo of genius that was my very own.

I smiled benevolently at the passers-by, with their harassed business faces, and shiny black bags bulging with the weight of common every-day documents, as I thought of the treat I would give them later on; the delicate feast I held in store for them, when I would transfer this dainty elusive birthling of my brain to paper for their benefit.

It would make them dream of moonlit lanes and sweethearting; reveal to them the golden threads in the sober city woof; creep in close and whisper good cheer, and smooth out tired creases in heart and brain; a draught from the fountain of Jouvence could work no greater miracle than the tale I had to unfold.

Aye, they might pass me by now, not even give me the inside of the pavement, I would not blame them for it!—but later on, later on, they would flock to thank me. They just didn't realise, poor money-grubbers! How could they? But later on.... I grew perfectly radiant at the thought of what I would do for poor humanity, and absurdly self-satisfied as the conviction grew upon me that this would prove a work of genius—no mere glimmer of the spiritual afflatus—but a solid chunk of genius.

Meanwhile I took a 'bus and paid my penny. I leant back and chuckled to myself as each fresh thought-atom added to the precious quality of my pearl. Pearl? Not one any longer—a whole quarrelet of pearls, Oriental pearls of the greatest price! Ah, how happy I was as I fondled my conceit!

It was near Chancery Lane that a foreign element cropped up and disturbed the rich flow of my fancy.

I happened to glance at the side-walk. A woman, a little woman, was hurrying along in a most remarkable way. It annoyed me, for I could not help wondering why she was in such a desperate hurry. Bother the jade! what business had she to thrust herself on my observation like that, and tangle the threads of a web of genius, undoubted genius?

I closed my eyes to avoid seeing her; I could see her through the lids. She had square shoulders and a high bust, and a white gauze tie, like a snowy feather in the breast of a pouter pigeon.

We stop—I look again—aye, there she is! Her black eyes stare boldly through her kohol-tinted

lids, her face has a violet tint. She grips her gloves in one hand, her white-handled umbrella in the other, handle up, like a knobkerrie.

She has great feet, too, in pointed shoes, and the heels are under her insteps; and as we outdistance her I fancy I can hear their decisive tap-tap above the thousand sounds of the street.

I breathe a sigh of relief as I return to my pearl—my pearl that is to bring *me* kudos and make countless thousands rejoice. It is dimmed a little, I must nurse it tenderly.

Jerk, jerk, jangle—stop.—Bother the bell! We pull up to drop some passengers, the idiots! and, as I live, she overtakes us! How the men and women cede her the middle of the pavement! How her figure dominates it, and her great feet emphasise her ridiculous haste! Why should she disturb me? My nerves are quivering pitifully; the sweet inner light is waning, I am in mortal dread of losing my little masterpiece. Thank heaven, we are off again....

“Charing Cross, Army and Navy, V'toria!”—Stop!

Of course, naturally! Here she comes, elbows out, umbrella waving! How the steel in her bonnet glistens! She recalls something, what is it?—what is it? A-ah! I have it!—a strident voice, on the deck of a steamer in the glorious bay of Rio, singing:

"Je suis le vr-r-rai pompier,
Le seul pompier...."

and *la mióla* snaps her fingers gaily and trills her *r's*; and the Corcovado is outlined clearly on the purple background as if bending to listen; and the palms and the mosque-like buildings, and the fair islets bathed in the witchery of moonlight, and the star-gems twinned in the lap of the bay, intoxicate as a dream of the East.

"Je suis le vr-r-rai pompier,
Le seul pompier...."

What in the world is a *pompier*? What connection has the word with this creature who is murdering, deliberately murdering, a delicate creation of my brain, begotten by the fusion of country and town?

"Je suis le vr-r-rai pompier,

I am convinced *pompier* expresses her in some subtle way—absurd word! I look back at her, I criticise her, I anathematise her, I *hate* her!

What is she hurrying for? We can't escape her—always we stop and let her overtake us with her elbowing gait, and tight skirt shortened to show her great splay feet—ugh!

My brain is void, all is dark within; the flowers are faded, the music stilled; the lovely illusive little being has flown, and yet she pounds along untiringly.

Is she a feminine presentment of the wandering Jew, a living embodiment of the ghoul-like spirit that haunts the city and murders fancy?

What business had she, I ask, to come and thrust her white-handled umbrella into the delicate network of my nerves and untune their harmony?

Does she realise what she has done? She has trampled a rare little mind-being unto death, destroyed a precious literary gem. Aye, one that, for aught I know, might have worked a revolution in modern thought; added a new human document to the archives of man; been the keystone to psychic investigations; solved problems that lurk in the depths of our natures and tantalise us with elusive gleams of truth; heralded in, perchance, the new era; when such simple problems as Home Rule, Bimetallism, or the Woman Question will be mere themes for schoolboard compositions—who can tell?

Well, it was not my fault.—No one regrets it more, no one—but what could I do?

Blame her, woman of the great feet and dominating gait, and waving umbrella-handle!—blame her! I can only regret it—regret it!

Portrait of a Lady

By Charles W. Furse

Reproduced by the Swan Electric Engraving Company

Reticence in Literature

By Arthur Waugh

He never spoke out. Upon these four words, gathered by chance from a private letter, Matthew Arnold, with that super-subtle ingenuity which loved to take the word and play upon it and make it of innumerable colours, has constructed, as one may conjecture some antediluvian wonder from its smallest fragment, a full, complete, and intimate picture of the poet Thomas Gray. *He never spoke out.* Here, we are told, lies the secret of Gray's limitation as much in life as in literature: so sensitive was he in private life, so modest in public, that the thoughts that arose in him never got full utterance, the possibilities of his genius were never fulfilled; and we, in our turn, are left the poorer for that nervous delicacy which has proved the bane of the poet, living and dead alike. It is a singularly characteristic essay—this paper on Gray, showing the writer's logical talent at once in its strongest and its weakest capacities, and a complete study of Arnold's method might well, I think, be founded upon its thirty pages. But in the present instance I have recurred to that recurring phrase, *He never spoke out*, not to discuss Matthew Arnold's estimate of Gray, nor, indeed, to consider Gray's relation to his age; but merely to point out, what the turn of Arnold's argument did not require him to consider, namely, the extraordinarily un-English aspect of this reticence in Gray, a reticence alien without doubt to the English character, but still more alien to English literature. Reticence is not a national characteristic—far otherwise. The phrase “national characteristic” is, I know well, a cant phrase, and, as such, full of the dangers of abuse. Historical and ethnographical criticism, proceeding on popular lines, has tried from time to time to fix certain tendencies to certain races, and to argue from individuals to generalities with a freedom that every law of induction belies. And so we have come to endow the Frenchman, universally and without exception, with politeness, the Indian, equally universally, with cunning, the American with the commercial talent, the German with the educational, and so forth. Generalisations of this kind must, of course, be accepted with limitations. But it is not too much, perhaps, to say that the Englishman has always prided himself upon his frankness. He is always for speaking out; and it is this faculty of outspokenness that he is anxious to attribute to those characters which he sets up in the market-places of his religion and his literature, as those whom he chiefly delights to honour. The demigods of our national verse, the heroes of our national fiction, are brow-bound, above all other laurels, with this glorious freedom of free speech and open manners, and we have come to regard this broad, untrammelled virtue of ours, as all individual virtues *will* be regarded with the revolution of the cycle of provinciality, as a guerdon above question or control. We have become inclined to forget that every good thing has, as Aristotle pointed out so long ago, its corresponding evil, and that the corruption of the best is always worst of all. Frankness is so great a boon, we say: we can forgive anything to the man who has the courage of his convictions, the fearlessness of freedom—the man, in a word, who speaks out.

But we have to distinguish, I think, at the outset between a national virtue in the rough and the artificial or acquired fashion in which we put that virtue into use. It is obvious that, though many things are possible to us, which are good in themselves, many things are inexpedient, when considered relatively to our environment. Count Tolstoi may preach his gospel of non-resistance till the beauty of his holiness seems almost Christ-like; but every man who goes forth to his work and to his labour knows that the habitual turning of the right cheek to the smiter of the left, the universal gift of the cloak to the beggar of our coat, is subversive of all political economy, and no slight incentive to immorality as well. In the same way, it will be clear, that this national virtue of ours, this wholesome, sincere outspokenness, is only possible within certain limits, set by custom and expediency, and it is probably a fact that there was never a truly wise man yet but tempered his natural freedom of speech by an acquired habit of reticence. The man who never speaks out may be morose; the man who is always speaking out is a most undesirable acquaintance.

Now, I suppose everyone is prepared to admit with Matthew Arnold that the literature of an age (we are not now speaking of poetry alone, be it understood, but of literature as a whole), that this literature must, in so far as it is truly representative of, and therefore truly valuable to, the time in which it is produced, reflect and criticise the manners, tastes, development, the life, in fact, of the age for whose service it was devised. We have, of course, critical literature probing the past: we have philosophical literature prophesying the future; but the truly representative literature of every age is the creative, which shows its people its natural face in a glass, and leaves to posterity the record of the manner of man it found. In one sense, indeed, creative literature must inevitably be critical as well, critical in that it employs the double methods of analysis and synthesis, dissecting motives and tendencies first, and then from this examination building up a type, a sample of the representative man and woman of its epoch. The truest fiction of any given century, yes, and the truest poetry, too (though the impressionist may deny it), must be a criticism of life, must reflect its surroundings. Men pass, and fashions change; but in the literature of their day their characters, their tendencies, remain crystallised for all time: and what we know of the England of Chaucer and Shakespeare, we know wholly and absolutely in the truly representative, truly creative, because truly critical literature which they have left to those that come after.

It is, then, the privilege, it is more, it is the duty of the man of letters to speak out, to be fearless, to be frank, to give no ear to the puritans of his hour, to have no care for the objections of prudery; the life that he lives is the life he must depict, if his work is to be of any lasting value. He must be frank, but he must be something more. He must remember—hourly and momently he must remember—that his virtue, step by step, inch by inch, imperceptibly melts into the vice which stands at its pole; and that (to employ Aristotelian phraseology for the moment) there is a sort of middle point, a centre of equilibrium, to pass which is to disturb and overset the entire fabric of his labours. Midway between liberty and license, in literature as in morals, stands the pivot of good taste, the centre-point of art. The natural inclination of frankness, the inclination of the virtue in the rough, is to blunder on resolutely with an indomitable and damning sincerity, till all is said that can be said, and art is lost in photography. The inclination of frankness, restrained by and tutored to the limitations of art and beauty, is to speak so much as is in accordance with the moral idea: and then, at the point where ideas melt into mere report, mere journalistic detail, to feel intuitively the restraining, the saving influence of reticence. In every age there has been some point (its exact position has varied, it is true, but the point has always been there) at which speech stopped short; and the literature which has most faithfully reflected the manners of that age, the literature, in fine, which has survived its little hour of popularity, and has lived and is still living, has inevitably, invariably, and without exception been the literature which stayed its hand and voice at the point at which the taste of the age, the age's conception of art, set up its statue of reticence, with her finger to her lips, and the inscription about her feet: “So far shalt thou go, and no further.”

We have now, it seems, arrived at one consideration, which must always limit the liberty of frankness, namely, the standard of contemporary taste. The modesty that hesitates to align itself with that standard is a shortcoming, the audacity that rushes beyond is a violence to the unchanging law of literature. But the single consideration is insufficient. If we are content with the criterion of contemporary taste alone, our standard of judgment becomes purely historical: we are left, so to speak, with a sliding scale which readjusts itself to every new epoch: we have no permanent and universal test to apply to the literature of different ages: in a word, comparative criticism is impossible. We feel at once that we need, besides the shifting standard of contemporary taste, some fixed unit of judgment that never varies, some foot-rule that applies with equal infallibility to the literature of early Greece and to the literature of later France; and such an unit, such a foot-rule, can only be found in the final test of all art, the necessity of the moral idea. We must, in distinguishing the thing that may be said fairly and artistically from the thing whose utterance is inadmissible, we must in such a decision control our judgment by two standards—the one, the shifting standard of contemporary taste: the other, the permanent standard of artistic justification, the presence of the moral idea. With these two elements in action, we ought, I think, to be able to estimate with tolerable fairness the amount of reticence in any age which ceases to be a shortcoming, the amount of frankness which begins to be a violence in the literature of the period. We ought, with these two elements in motion, to be able to employ a scheme of comparative criticism which will prevent us from encouraging that retarding and dangerous doctrine that what was expedient and justifiable, for instance, in the dramatists of the Restoration is expedient and justifiable in the playwrights of our own Victorian era; we ought, too, to be able to arrive instinctively at a sense of the limits of art, and to appreciate the point at which frankness becomes a violence, in that it has degenerated into mere brawling, animated neither by purpose nor idea. Let us, then, consider these two standards of taste and art separately: and first, let us give a brief attention to the contemporary standard.

We may, I think, take it as a rough working axiom that the point of reticence in literature, judged by a contemporary standard, should be settled by the point of reticence in the conversation of the taste and culture of the age. Literature is, after all, simply the ordered, careful exposition of the thought of its period, seeking the best matter of the time, and setting it forth in the best possible manner; and it is surely clear that what is written in excess of what is spoken (in excess I mean on the side of license) is a violence to, a misrepresentation of, the period to whose service the literature is devoted. The course of the highest thought of the time should be the course of its literature, the limit of the most delicate taste of the time the limit of literary expression: whatever falls below that standard is a shortcoming, whatever exceeds it a violence. Obviously the standard varies immensely with the period. It would be tedious, nor is it necessary to our purpose, to make a long historical research into the development of taste; but a few striking examples may help us to appreciate its variations.

To begin with a very early stage of literature, we find among the Heracleidae of Herodotus a stage of contemporary taste which is the result of pure brutality. It is clear that literature adjusted to the frankness of the uxorious pleasantries of Candaules and Gyges would justifiably assume a degree of license which, reasonable enough in its environment, would be absolutely impossible, directly the influences of civilisation began to make themselves felt. The age is one of unrestrained brutality, and the literature which represented it would, without violence to the contemporary taste, be brutal too. To pass at a bound to the Rome of Juvenal is again to be transported to an age of national sensuality: the escapades of Messalina are the inevitable outcome of a national taste that is swamped and left putrescent by limitless self-indulgence; and the literature which represented this taste would, without violence, be lascivious and polluted to its depth. In continuing, with a still wider sweep, to the England of Shakespeare, we find a new development of taste altogether. Brutality is softened, licentiousness is restrained, immorality no longer stalks abroad shouting its coarse phrases at every wayfarer who passes the Mermaid or the Globe. But, even among types of purity, reticence is little known. The innuendoes are whispered under the breath, but when once the voice is lowered, it matters little what is said.

Rosalind and Celia enjoy their little *doubles entendres* together. Hero's wedding morning is an occasion for delicate hints of experiences to come. Hamlet plies the coarsest suggestions upon Ophelia in the intervals of a theatrical performance. The language reflects the taste: we feel no violence here. To take but one more instance, let us end with Sheridan. By his time speech had been refined by sentiment, and the most graceful compliments glide, without effort, from the lips of the adept courtier. But even still, in the drawing-rooms of fashion, delicate morsels of scandal are discussed by his fine ladies with a freedom which is absolutely unknown to the Mayfair of the last half-century, where innuendo might be conveyed by the eye and suggested by the smile, but would never, so reticent has taste become, find the frank emphatic utterance which brought no blush to the cheek of Mrs. Candour and Lady Sneerwell. In the passage of time reticence has become more and more pronounced; and literature, moving, as it must, with the age, has assumed in its normal and wholesome form the degree of silence which it finds about it.

The standard of taste in literature, then, so far as it responds to contemporary judgment, should be regulated by the normal taste of the hale and cultured man of its age: it should steer a middle course between the prudery of the manse, which is for hiding everything vital, and the effrontery of the pot-house, which makes for ribaldry and bawdry; and the more it approximates to the exact equilibrium of its period, the more thoroughly does it become representative of the best taste of its time, the more certain is it of permanent recognition. The literature of shortcoming and the literature of violence have their reward:

> “They have their day, and cease to be”;

the literature which reflects the hale and wholesome frankness of its age can be read, with pleasure and profit, long after its openness of speech and outlook has ceased to reproduce the surrounding life. The environment is ephemeral, but the literature is immortal. But why is the literature immortal? Why is it that a play like *Pericles*, for instance, full as it is of scenes which revolt the moral taste, has lived and is a classic forever, while innumerable contemporary pieces of no less genius (for *Pericles* is no masterpiece) have passed into oblivion? Why is it that the impurity of *Pericles* strikes the reader scarcely at all, while the memory dwells upon its beauties and forgets its foulness in recollection of its refinement? The reason is not far to seek. *Pericles* is not only free of offence when judged by the taste of its age, it is no less blameless when we subject it to the test by which all literature is judged at last; it conforms to the standard of art; it is permeated by the moral idea. The standard of art—the presence of the idea—the two expressions are, I believe, synonymous. It is easy enough to babble of the beauty of things considered apart from their meaning, it is easy enough to dilate on the satisfaction of art in itself, but all these phrases are merely collocations of terms, empty and meaningless. A thing can only be artistic by virtue of the idea it suggests to us; when the idea is coarse, ungainly, unspeakable, the object that suggests it is coarse, ungainly, unspeakable; art and ethics must always be allied in that the merit of the art is dependent on the merit of the idea it prompts.

Perhaps I shall show my meaning more clearly by an example from the more tangible art of painting; and let me take as an instance an artist who has produced pictures at once the most revolting and most moral of any in the history of English art. I mean Hogarth. We are all familiar with his coarsenesses; all these have we known from our youth up. But it is only the schoolboy who searches the Bible for its indecent passages; when we are become men, we put away such childish satisfactions. Then we begin to appreciate the idea which underlies the subject: we feel that Hogarth—

> "Whose pictured morals charm the mind,
> And through the eye correct the heart"—

was, even in his grossest moments, profoundly moral, entirely sane, because he never dallied lasciviously with his subject, because he did not put forth vice with the pleasing semblance of virtue, because, like all hale and wholesome critics of life, he condemned excess, and pictured it merely to portray the worthlessness, the weariness, the dissatisfaction of lust and license. Art, we say, claims every subject for her own; life is open to her ken; she may fairly gather her subjects where she will. Most true. But there is all the difference in the world between drawing life as we find it, sternly and relentlessly, surveying it all the while from outside with the calm, unflinching gaze of criticism, and, on the other hand, yielding ourselves to the warmth and colour of its excesses, losing our judgment in the ecstasies of the joy of life, becoming, in a word, effeminate.

The man lives by ideas; the woman by sensations; and while the man remains an artist so long as he holds true to his own view of life, the woman becomes one as soon as she throws off the habit of her sex, and learns to rely upon her judgment, and not upon her senses. It is only when we regard life with the untrammelled view of the impartial spectator, when we pierce below the substance for its animating idea, that we approximate to the artistic temperament. It is unmanly, it is effeminate, it is inartistic to gloat over pleasure, to revel in immoderation, to become passion's slave; and literature demands as much calmness of judgment, as much reticence, as life itself. The man who loses reticence loses self-respect, and the man who has no respect for himself will scarcely find others to venerate him. After all, the world generally takes us at our own valuation.

We have now, I trust, arrived (though, it may be, by a rather circuitous journey) at something like a definite and reasonable law for the exercise of reticence; it only remains to consider by what test we shall most easily discover the presence or absence of the animating moral idea which we have found indispensable to art. It seems to me that three questions will generally suffice. Does the work, we should ask ourselves, make for that standard of taste which is normal to

wholesomeness and sanity of judgment? Does it, or does it not, encourage us to such a line of life as is recommended, all question of tenet and creed apart, by the experience of the age, as the life best calculated to promote individual and general good? And does it encourage to this life in language and by example so chosen as not to offend the susceptibilities of that ordinarily strong and unaffected taste which, after all, varies very little with the changes of the period and development? When creative literature satisfies these three requirements—when it is sane, equable, and well spoken, then it is safe to say it conforms to the moral idea, and is consonant with art. By its sanity it eludes the risk of effeminate demonstration; by its choice of language it avoids brutality; and between these two poles, it may be affirmed without fear of question, true taste will and must be found to lie.

These general considerations, already too far prolonged, become of immediate interest to us as soon as we attempt to apply them to the literature of our own half-century, and I propose concluding what I wished to say on the necessity of reticence by considering, briefly and without mention of names, that realistic movement in English literature which, under different titles, and protected by the ægis of various schools, has proved, without doubt, the most interesting and suggestive development in the poetry and fiction of our time. During the last quarter of a century, more particularly, the English man-of-letters has been indulging, with an entirely new freedom, his national birthright of outspokenness, and during the last twelve months there have been no uncertain indications that this freedom of speech is degenerating into license which some of us cannot but view with regret and apprehension. The writers and the critics of contemporary literature have, it would seem, alike lost their heads; they have gone out into the byways and hedges in search of the new thing, and have brought into the study and subjected to the microscope mean objects of the roadside, whose analysis may be of value to science but is absolutely foreign to art. The age of brutality, pure and simple, is dead with us, it is true; but the age of effeminacy appears, if one is to judge by recent evidence, to be growing to its dawn. The day that follows will, if it fulfils the promise of its morning, be very serious and very detrimental to our future literature.

Every great productive period of literature has been the result of some internal or external revulsion of feeling, some current of ideas. This is a commonplace. The greatest periods of production have been those when the national mind has been directed to some vast movement of emancipation—the discovery of new countries, the defeat of old enemies, the opening of fresh possibilities. Literature is best stimulated by stirrings like these. Now, the last quarter of a century in English history has been singularly sterile of important improvements. There has been no very inspiring acquisition to territory or to knowledge: there has been, in consequence, no marked influx of new ideas. The mind has been thrown back upon itself; lacking stimulus without, it has sought inspiration within, and the most characteristic literature of the time has been introspective. Following one course, it has betaken itself to that intimately analytical fiction which we associate primarily with America; it has sifted motives and probed psychology, with the result that it has proved an exceedingly clever, exact, and scientific, but scarcely stimulating, or progressive school of literature. Following another course, it has sought for subject-matter in the discussion of passions and sensations, common, doubtless, to every age of mankind, interesting and necessary, too, in their way, but passions and sensations hitherto dissociated with literature, hitherto, perhaps, scarcely realised to their depth and intensity. It is in this development that the new school of realism has gone furthest; and it is in this direction that the literature of the future seems likely to follow. It is, therefore, not without value to consider for a moment whither this new frankness is leading us, and how far its freedom is reconciled to that standard of necessary reticence which I have tried to indicate in these pages.

This present tendency to literary frankness had its origin, I think, no less than twenty-eight years ago. It was then that the dovecotes of English taste were tremulously fluttered by the coming of a new poet, whose naked outspokenness startled his readers into indignation. Literature, which had retrograded into a melancholy sameness, found itself convulsed by a sudden access of passion, which was probably without parallel since the age of the silver poets of Rome. This new singer scrupled not to revel in sensations which for years had remained unmentioned upon the printed page; he even chose for his subjects refinements of lust, which the commonly healthy Englishman believed to have become extinct with the time of Juvenal. Here was an innovation which was absolutely alien to the standard of contemporary taste—an innovation, I believe, that was equally opposed to that final moderation without which literature is lifeless.

Let us listen for one moment:

"By the ravenous teeth that have smitten
Through the kisses that blossom and bud,
By the lips intertwisted and bitten
Till the foam has a savour of blood,
By the pulse as it rises and falters,
By the hands as they slacken and strain,
I adjure thee, respond from thine altars,
Our Lady of Pain.

As of old when the world's heart was lighter,
Through thy garments the grace of thee glows,
The white wealth of thy body made whiter
By the blushes of amorous blows,

And seamed with sharp lips and fierce fingers,
    And branded by kisses that bruise;
When all shall be gone that now lingers,
    Ah, what shall we lose?

Thou wert fair in thy fearless old fashion,
    And thy limbs are as melodies yet,
And move to the music of passion
    With lithe and lascivious regret.
What ailed us, O gods, to desert you
    For creeds that refuse and restrain?
Come down and redeem us from virtue,
    Our Lady of Pain."

This was twenty-eight years ago; and still the poetry lives. At first sight it would seem as though the desirable reticence, upon which we have been insisting, were as yet unnecessary to immortality. A quarter of a century has passed, it might be argued, and the verse is as fresh to-day and as widely recognised as it was in its morning: is not this a proof that art asks for no moderation? I believe not. It is true that the poetry lives, that we all recognise, at some period of our lives, the grasp and tenacity of its influence; that, even when the days come in which we say we have no pleasure in it, we still turn to it at times for something we do not find elsewhere. But the thing we seek is not the matter, but the manner. The poetry is living, not by reason of its unrestrained frankness, but in spite of it, for the sake of something else. That sweet singer who charmed and shocked the audiences of 1866, charms us, if he shocks us not now, by virtue of the one new thing that he imported into English poetry, the unique and as yet imperishable faculty of musical possibilities hitherto unattained. There is no such music in all the range of English verse, seek where you will, as there is in him. But the perfection of the one talent, its care, its elaboration, have resulted in a corresponding decay of those other faculties by which alone, in the long run, poetry can live. Open him where you will, there is in his poetry neither construction nor proportion; no development, no sustained dramatic power. Open him where you will, you acquire as much sense of his meaning and purpose from any two isolated stanzas as from the study of a whole poem. There remains in your ears, when you have ceased from reading, the echo only of a beautiful voice, chanting, as it were, the melodies of some outland tongue.

Is this the sort of poetry that will survive the trouble of the ages? It cannot survive. The time will come (it must) when some newer singer discovers melodies as yet unknown, melodies which surpass in their modulations and varieties those poems and ballads of twenty-eight years ago; and, when we have found the new note, what will be left of the earlier singer, to which we shall of necessity return? A message? No. Philosophy? No. A new vision of life? No. A criticism of contemporary existence? Assuredly not. There remains the melody alone; and this, when once it is surpassed, will charm us little enough. We shall forget it then. Art brings in her revenges, and this will be of them.

But the new movement did not stop here. If, in the poet we have been discussing, we have found the voice among us that corresponds to the decadent voices of the failing Roman Republic, there has reached us from France another utterance, which I should be inclined to liken to the outspoken brutality of Restoration drama. Taste no longer fails on the ground of a delicate, weakly dalliance, it begins to see its own limitations, and springs to the opposite pole. It will now be virile, full of the sap of life, strong, robust, and muscular. It will hurry us out into the fields, will show us the coarser passions of the common farm-hand; at any expense it will paint the life it finds around it; it will at least be consonant with that standard of want of taste which it falsely believes to be contemporary. We get a realistic fiction abroad, and we begin to copy it at home. We will trace the life of the travelling actor, follow him into the vulgar, sordid surroundings which he chooses for the palace of his love, be it a pottery-shed or the ill-furnished lodging-room with its black horsehair sofa—we will draw them all, and be faithful to the lives we live. Is that the sort of literature that will survive the trouble of the ages? It cannot survive. We are no longer untrue to our time, perhaps, if we are to seek for the heart of that time in the lowest and meanest of its representatives; but we are untrue to art, untrue to the record of our literary past, when we are content to turn for our own inspiration to anything but the best line of thought, the highest school of life, through which we are moving. This grosser realism is no more representative of its time than were the elaborate pastiches of classical degradation; it is as though one should repeople Eden with creatures imagined from a study of the serpent's head. In the history of literature this movement, too, will with the lapse of time pass unrecognised; it has mourned unceasingly to an age which did not lack for innocent piping and dancing in its market-places.

The two developments of realism of which we have been speaking seem to me to typify the two excesses into which frankness is inclined to fall; on the one hand, the excess prompted by effeminacy—that is to say, by the want of restraints which starts from enervated sensation; and on the other, the excess which results from a certain brutal virility, which proceeds from coarse familiarity with indulgence. The one whispers, the other shouts; the one is the language of the courtesan, the other of the bargee. What we miss in both alike is that true frankness which springs from the artistic and moral temperament; the episodes are no part of a whole in unity with itself; the impression they leave upon the reader is not the impression of Hogarth's pictures; in one form they employ all their art to render vice attractive, in the other, with absolutely no art at all, they merely reproduce, with the fidelity of the kodak, scenes and situations the existence of which we all acknowledge, while taste prefers to forget them.

But the latest development of literary frankness is, I think, the most insidious and fraught with the greatest danger to art. A new school has arisen which combines the characteristics of effeminacy and brutality. In its effeminate aspect it plays with the subtler emotions of sensual pleasure, on its brutal side it has developed into that class of fiction which for want of a better word I must call chirurgical. In poetry it deals with very much the same passions as those which we have traced in the verse to which allusion has been made above; but, instead of leaving these refinements of lust to the haunts to which they are fitted, it has introdduced them into the domestic chamber, and permeated marriage with the ardours of promiscuous intercourse. In fiction it infects its heroines with acquired diseases of names unmentionable, and has debased the beauty of maternity by analysis of the process of gestation. Surely the inartistic temperament can scarcely abuse literature further. I own I can conceive nothing less beautiful.

It was said of a great poet by a little critic that he wheeled his nuptial couch into the area; but these small poets and smaller novelists bring out their sick into the thoroughfare, and stop the traffic while they give us a clinical lecture upon their sufferings. We are told that this is a part of the revolt of woman, and certainly our women-writers are chiefly to blame. It is out of date, no doubt, to clamour for modesty; but the woman who describes the sensations of childbirth does so, it is to be presumed—not as the writer of advice to a wife—but as an artist producing literature for art's sake. And so one may fairly ask her: How is art served by all this? What has she told us that we did not all know, or could not learn from medical manuals? and what impression has she left us over and above the memory of her unpalatable details? And our poets, who know no rhyme for “rest” but that “breast” whose snowinesses and softnesses they are for ever describing with every accent of indulgence, whose eyes are all for frills, if not for garters, what have they sung that was not sung with far greater beauty and sincerity in the days when frills and garters were alluded to with the open frankness that cried shame on him who evil thought. The one extremity, it seems to me, offends against the standard of contemporary taste; (“people,” as Hedda Gabler said, “do not say such things now”); the other extremity rebels against that universal standard of good taste that has from the days of Milo distinguished between the naked and the nude. We are losing the distinction now; the cry for realism, naked and unashamed, is borne in upon us from every side:

> "Rip your brother's vices open, strip your own foul passions bare;
> Down with Reticence, down with Reverence—forward—naked—let them stare."

But there was an Emperor once (we know the story) who went forth among his people naked. It was said that he wore fairy clothes, and that only the unwise could fail to see them. At last a little child raised its voice from the crowd! “Why, he has nothing on,” it said. And so these writers of ours go out from day to day, girded on, they would have us believe, with the garments of art; and fashion has lacked the courage to cry out with the little child: “They have nothing on.” No robe of art, no texture of skill, they whirl before us in a bacchanalian dance naked and unashamed. But the time will come, it must, when the voices of the multitude will take up the cry of the child, and the revellers will hurry to their houses in dismay. Without dignity, without self-restraint, without the morality of art, literature has never survived; they are the few who rose superior to the baser levels of their time, who stand unimpugned among the immortals now. And that mortal who would put on immortality must first assume that habit of reticence, that garb of humility by which true greatness is best known. To endure restraint—*that* is to be strong.

A Lady Reading

By Walter Sickert

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Modern Melodrama

By Hubert Crackanthorpe

The pink shade of a single lamp supplied an air of subdued mystery; the fire burned red and still; in place of door and windows hung curtains, obscure, formless; the furniture, dainty, but sparse, stood detached and incoördinate like the furniture of a stage-scene; the atmosphere was heavy with heat, and a scent of stale tobacco; some cut flowers, half withered, tissue-paper still wrapping their stalks, lay on a gilt, cane-bottomed chair.

“Will you give me a sheet of paper, please?”

He had crossed the room, to seat himself before the principal table. He wore a fur-lined overcoat, and he was tall, and broad, and bald; a sleek face, made grave by gold-rimmed spectacles.

The other man was in evening dress; his back leaning against the mantelpiece, his hands in his pockets: he was moodily scraping the hearthrug with his toe. Clean-shaved; stolid and coarsely regular features; black, shiny hair, flattened on to his head; under-sized eyes, moist and glistening; the tint of his face uniform, the tint of discoloured ivory; he looked a man who ate well and lived hard.

“Certainly, sir, certainly,” and he started to hurry about the room.

“Daisy,” he exclaimed roughly, a moment later, “where the deuce do you keep the note-paper?”

“I don't know if there is any, but the girl always has some.” She spoke in a slow tone—insolent and fatigued.

A couple of bed-pillows were supporting her head, and a scarlet plush cloak, trimmed with white down, was covering her feet, as she lay curled on the sofa. The fire-light glinted on the metallic gold of her hair, which clashed with the black of her eyebrows; and the full, blue eyes, wide-set, contradicted the hard line of her vivid-red lips. She drummed her fingers on the sofa-edge, nervously.

“Never mind,” said the bald man shortly, producing a notebook from his breast-pocket, and tearing a leaf from it.

He wrote, and the other two stayed silent; the man returned to the hearthrug, lifting his coat-tails under his arms; the girl went on drumming the sofa-edge.

“There,” sliding back his chair, and looking from the one to the other, evidently uncertain which of the two he should address. “Here is the prescription. Get it made up to-night, a table-spoonful at a time, in a wine-glassful of water at lunch-time, at dinner-time and before going to bed. Go on with the port wine twice a day, and (to the girl, deliberately and distinctly) you *must* keep quite quiet; avoid all sort of excitement—that is extremely important. Of course you must on no account go out at night. Go to bed early, take regular meals, and keep always warm.”

“I say,” broke in the girl, “tell us, it isn't bad—dangerous, I mean?”

“Dangerous!—no, not if you do what I tell you.”

He glanced at his watch, and rose, buttoning his coat.

“Good-evening,” he said gravely.

At first she paid no heed; she was vacantly staring before her: then, suddenly conscious that he was waiting, she looked up at him.

“Good-night, doctor.”

She held out her hand, and he took it.

“I'll get all right, won't I?” she asked, still looking up at him.

“All right—of course you will—of course. But remember you must do what I tell you.”

The other man handed him his hat and umbrella, opened the door for him, and it closed behind them.

The girl remained quiet, sharply blinking her eyes, her whole expression eager, intense.

A murmer of voices, a muffled tread of footsteps descending the stairs—the gentle shutting of a door—stillness.

She raised herself on her elbow, listening; the cloak slipped noiselessly to the floor. Quickly her arm shot out to the bell-rope: she pulled it violently; waited, expectant; and pulled again.

A slatternly figure appeared—a woman of middle-age—her arms, bared to the elbows, smeared with dirt; a grimy apron over her knees.

“What's up?—I was smashin' coal,” she explained.

“Come here,” hoarsely whispered the girl—“here—no—nearer—quite close. Where's he gone?”

“Gone? 'oo?”

“That man that was here.”

“I s'ppose 'ee's in the downstairs room. I ain't 'eard the front door slam.”

“And Dick, where's he?”

“They're both in there together, I s'ppose.”

“I want you to go down—quietly—without making a noise—listen at the door—come up, and tell me what they're saying.”

“What? down there?” jerking her thumb over her shoulder.

“Yes, of course—at once,” answered the girl, impatiently.

“And if they catches me—a nice fool I looks. No, I'm jest blowed if I do!” she concluded. “Whatever's up?”

“You must,” the girl broke out excitedly. “I tell you, you must.”

“Must—must—an' if I do, what am I goin' to git out of it?” She paused, reflecting; then added: “Look 'ere—I tell yer what—I'll do it for half a quid, there?”

“Yes—yes—all right—only make haste.”

“An' 'ow d' I know as I'll git it?” she objected doggedly. “It's a jolly risk, yer know.”

The girl sprang up, flushed and feverish.

“Quick—or he'll be gone. I don't know where it is—but you shall have it—I promise—quick—please go—quick.”

The other hesitated, her lips pressed together; turned, and went out.

And the girl, catching at her breath, clutched a chair.

A flame flickered up in the fire, buzzing spasmodically. A creak outside. She had come up. But the curtains did not move. Why didn't she come in? She was going past. The girl hastened across the room, the intensity of the impulse lending her strength.

“Come—come in,” she gasped. “Quick—I'm slipping.”

She struck at the wall; but with the flat of her hand, for there was no grip. The woman bursting in, caught her, and led her back to the sofa.

“There, there, dearie,” tucking the cloak round her feet. “Lift up the piller, my 'ands are that mucky. Will yer 'ave anythin'?”

She shook her head. “It's gone,” she muttered. “Now—tell me.”

“Tell yer?—tell yer what! Why—why—there ain't jest nothin' to tell yer.”

“What were they saying? Quick.”

“I didn't 'ear nothin'. They was talking about some ballet-woman.”

The girl began to cry, feebly, helplessly, like a child in pain.

“You might tell me, Liz. You might tell me. I've been a good sort to you.”

“That yer 'ave. I knows yer 'ave, dearie. There, there, don't yer take on like that. Yer'll only make yerself bad again.”

“Tell me—tell me,” she wailed. “I've been a good sort to you, Liz.”

“Well, they wasn't talkin' of no ballet-woman—that's straight,” the woman blurted out savagely.

“What did he say?—tell me.” Her voice was weaker now.

“I can't tell yer—don't yer ask me—for God's sake, don't yer ask me.”

With a low crooning the girl cried again.

“Oh! for God's sake, don't yer take on like that—it's awful—I can't stand it. There, dearie, stop that cryin' an' I'll tell yer—I will indeed. It was jest this way—I slips my shoes off, an' I goes down as careful—jest as careful as a cat—an' when I gets to the door I crouches myself down, listenin' as 'ard as ever I could. The first things as I 'ears was Mr. Dick speakin' thick-like—like as if 'ee'd bin drinkin'—an t'other chap 'ee says somethin' about lungs, using some long word—I missed that—there was a van or somethin' rackettin' on the road. Then 'ee says 'gallopin', gallopin',' jest like as 'ee was talkin' of a 'orse. An' Mr. Dick, 'ee says, 'ain't there no chance—no'ow?' and 'ee give a sort of a grunt. I was awful sorry for 'im, that I was, 'ee must 'ave been crool bad, 'ee's mostly so quiet-like, ain't 'ee? An', in a minute, ee sort o' groans out somethin', an' t'other chap 'es answer 'im quite cool-like, that 'ee don't properly know; but, anyways, it 'ud be over afore the end of February. There I've done it. Oh! dearie, it's awful, awful, that's jest what it is. An' I 'ad no intention to tell yer—not a blessed word—that I didn't—may God strike me blind if I did! Some'ow it all come out, seein' yer chokin' that 'ard an' feelin' at the wall there. Yer 'ad no right to ask me to do it—'ow was I to know 'ee was a doctor?”

She put the two corners of her apron to her eyes, gurgling loudly.

“Look 'ere, don't yer b'lieve a word of it—I don't—I tell yer they're a 'umbuggin' lot, them doctors, all together. I know it. Yer take my word for that—yer'll git all right again. Yer'll be as well as I am, afore yer've done—Oh, Lord!—it's jest awful—I feel that upset—I'd like to cut my tongue out, for 'avin' told yer—but I jest couldn't 'elp myself.” She was retreating towards the door, wiping her eyes, and snorting out loud sobs—“An', don't you offer me that half quid—I couldn't take it of yer—that I couldn't.”

She shivered, sat up, and dragged the cloak tight round her shoulders. In her desire to get warm she forgot what had happened. She extended the palms of her hands towards the grate: the grate was delicious. A smoking lump of coal clattered on to the fender: she lifted the tongs, but the sickening remembrance arrested her. The things in the room were receding, dancing round: the fire was growing taller and taller. The woollen scarf chafed her skin: she wrenched it off. Then hope, keen and bitter, shot up, hurting her. “How could he know? Of course he couldn't know. She'd been a lot better this last fortnight—the other doctor said so—she didn't believe it—she didn't care——Anyway, it would be over before the end of February!”

Suddenly the crooning wail started again: next, spasms of weeping, harsh and gasping.

By-and-by she understood that she was crying noisily, and that she was alone in the room; like a light in a wind, the sobbing fit ceased.

“Let me live—let me live—I'll be straight—I'll go to church—I'll do anything! Take it away—it hurts—I can't bear it!”

Once more the sound of her own voice in the empty room calmed her. But the tension of emotion slackened, only to tighten again: immediately she was jeering at herself. What was she wasting her breath for? What had Jesus ever done for her? She'd had her fling, and it was no thanks to Him.

“'Dy-sy—Dy-sy——'”

From the street below, boisterous and loud, the refrain came up. And, as the footsteps tramped away, the words reached her once more, indistinct in the distance:

“'I'm jest cryzy, all for the love o' you.'”

She felt frightened. It was like a thing in a play. It was as if some one was there, in the room—hiding—watching her.

Then a coughing fit started, racking her. In the middle, she struggled to cry for help; she thought she was going to suffocate.

Afterwards she sank back, limp, tired, and sleepy.

The end of February—she was going to die—it was important, exciting—what would it be like? Everybody else died. Midge had died in the summer—but that was worry and going the pace. And they said that Annie Evans was going off too. Damn it! she wasn't going to be chicken-hearted. She'd face it. She'd had a jolly time. She'd be game till the end. Hell-fire—that was all stuff and nonsense—she knew that. It would be just nothing—like a sleep. Not even painful: she'd be just shut down in a coffin, and she wouldn't know that they were doing it. Ah! but they might do it before she was quite dead! It had happened sometimes. And she wouldn't be able to get out. The lid would be nailed, and there would be earth on the top. And if she called, no one would hear.

Ugh! what a fit of the blues she was getting! It was beastly, being alone. Why the devil didn't Dick come back?

That noise, what was that?

Bah! only some one in the street. What a fool she was!

She winced again as the fierce feeling of revolt swept through her, the wild longing to fight. It was damned rough—four months! A year, six months even, was a long time. The pain grew acute, different from anything she had felt before.

“Good Lord! what am I maundering on about? Four months—I'll go out with a fizzle like a firework. Why the devil doesn't Dick come?—or Liz—or somebody? What do they leave me alone like this for?”

She dragged at the bell-rope.

He came in, white and blear-eyed.

“Whatever have you been doing all this time?” she began angrily.

“I've been chatting with the doctor.” He was pretending to read a newspaper: there was something funny about his voice.

“It's ripping. He says you'll soon be fit again, as long as you don't get colds, or that sort of thing. Yes, he says you'll soon be fit again”—a quick, crackling noise—he had gripped the newspaper in his fist.

She looked at him, surprised, in spite of herself. She would never have thought he'd have done it like that. He was a good sort, after all. But—she didn't know why—she broke out furiously:

“You infernal liar!—I know. I shall be done for by the end of February—ha! ha!”

Seizing a vase of flowers, she flung it into the grate. The crash and the shrivelling of the leaves in the flames brought her an instant's relief. Then she said quietly:

“There—I've made an idiot of myself; but” (weakly) “I didn't know—I didn't know—I thought it was different.”

He hesitated, embarrassed by his own emotion. Presently he went up to her and put his hands round her cheeks.

“No,” she said, “that's no good, I don't want that. Get me something to drink. I feel bad.”

He hurried to the cupboard and fumbled with the cork of a champagne bottle. It flew out with a bang. She started violently.

“You clumsy fool!” she exclaimed.

She drank off the wine at a gulp.

“Daisy,” he began.

She was staring stonily at the empty glass.

“Daisy,” he repeated.

She tapped her toe against the fender-rail.

At this sign, he went on:

“How did you know?”

“I sent Liz to listen,” she answered mechanically.

He looked about him, helpless.

“I think I'll smoke,” he said feebly.

She made no answer.

“Here, put the glass down,” she said.

He obeyed.

He lit a cigarette over the lamp, sat down opposite her, puffing dense clouds of smoke.

And, for a long while, neither spoke.

“Is that doctor a good man?”

“I don't know. People say so,” he answered.

Two Songs

By John Davidson

I—London

Athwart the sky a lowly sigh
From west to east the sweet wind carried;
The sun stood still on Primrose Hill;
His light in all the city tarried:
The clouds on viewless columns bloomed
Like smouldering lilies unconsumed.

"Oh, sweetheart, see, how shadowy,
Of some occult magician's rearing,
Or swung in space of Heaven's grace,
Dissolving, dimly reappearing,
Afloat upon ethereal tides
St. Paul above the city rides!"

A rumour broke through the thin smoke
Enwreathing Abbey, Tower, and Palace,
The parks, the squares, the thoroughfares,
The million-peopled lanes and alleys,
An ever-muttering prisoned storm,
The heart of London beating warm.

II-Down-a-down

Foxes peeped from out their dens,
Day grew pale and olden;
Blackbirds, willow-warblers, wrens,
Staunched their voices golden.

High, oh high, from the opal sky,
Shouting against the dark,
"Why, why, why must the day go by?"
Fell a passionate lark.

But the cuckoos beat their brazen gongs,
Sounding, sounding so;
And the nightingales poured in starry songs
A galaxy below.

Slowly tolling the vesper bell
Ushered the stately night.
Down-a-down in a hawthorn dell
A boy and a girl and love's delight.

The Love-Story of Luigi Tansillo

By Richard Garnett

Now that my wings are spread to my desire,
The more vast height withdraws the dwindling land,
Wider to wind these pinions I expand,
And earth disdain, and higher mount and higher
Nor of the fate of Icarus inquire,
Or cautious droop, or sway to either hand;
Dead I shall fall, full well I understand;
But who lives gloriously as I expire?
Yet hear I my own heart that pleading cries,
Stay, madman! Whither art thou bound? Descend!
Ruin is ready Rashness to chastise.
But I, Fear not, though this indeed the end;
Cleave we the clouds, and praise our destinies,
If noble fall on noble flight attend.

The above sonnet, one of the finest in Italian literature, is already known to many English readers in another translation by the late Mr. J. Addington Symonds, which originally appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, and is prefixed to his translation of the sonnets of Michael Angelo and Campanella (London, 1878), under the title of "The Philosopher's Flight." In his preface Mr. Symonds says: "The sonnet prefixed as a proem to the whole book is generally attributed to Giordano Bruno, in whose Dialogue in the 'Eroici Furori' it occurs. There seems, however, good reason to suppose that it was really written by Tansillo, who recites it in that dialogue. Whoever may have been its author, it expresses in noble and impassioned verse the sense of danger, the audacity, and the exultation of those pioneers of modern thought, for whom philosophy was a voyage of discovery into untravelled regions." Mr. Symonds's knowledge of Italian literature was so extensive that he must have had ground for stating that the sonnet is generally attributed to Giordano Bruno; as it certainly is by De Sanctis, though it is printed as Tansillo's in all editions of his works, imperfect as these were before the appearance of Signor Fiorentino's in 1882. It is, nevertheless, remarkable that he should add: "*There seems good reason to suppose* that it was really written by Tansillo," as if there could be a shadow of doubt on the matter. "Eroici Furori" is professedly a series of dialogues between Luigi Tansillo the Neapolitan poet, who had died about twenty years before their composition, and Cicero, but is in reality little more than a monologue, for Tansillo does nearly all the talking, and Cicero receives his instructions with singular docility. The reason of Tansillo's selection for so great an honour was undoubtedly that, although born at Venosa, he belonged by descent to Nola, Bruno's own city. In making such free use of Tansillo's poetry as he has done throughout these dialogues, Bruno was far from the least idea of pillaging his distinguished countryman. In introducing the four sonnets he has borrowed (for there are three besides that already quoted) he is always careful to make Tansillo speak of them as his own compositions, which he never does when Bruno's own verses are put into his mouth. If a particle of doubt could remain, it would be dispelled by the fact that this sonnet, with other poems by Tansillo, including the three other sonnets introduced into Bruno's dialogue, is published under his name in the «Rime di diversi illustri Signori Napoletani,» edited by Lodovico Dolce at Venice, in 1555, when Bruno was about seven years old!

Mr. Symonds's interpretation of the sonnet also is erroneous—in so far, at least, as that the meaning assigned by him never entered into the head of the author. It is certainly fully susceptible of such an exposition. But Tansillo, no philosopher, but a cavalier, the active part of whose life was mainly spent in naval expeditions against the Turks, no more thought with Mr. Symonds of "the pioneers of modern philosophy," than he thought with Bruno of "arising and freeing himself from the body and sensual cognition." On the contrary, the sonnet is a love-sonnet, and depicts with extraordinary grandeur the elation of spirit, combined with a sense of peril, consequent upon the poet having conceived a passion for a lady greatly his superior in rank. The proof of this is to be found in the fact that the sonnet is one of a series, unequivocally celebrating an earthly passion; and especially in the sonnet immediately preceding it in Dolce's collection, manifestly written at the same time and referring to the same circumstance, in which the poet ascribes his Icarian flight, not to the influence of Philosophy, but of Love:

Love fits me forth with wings, which so dilate,
Sped skyward at the call of daring thought,
I high and higher soar, with purpose fraught
Soon to lay smiting hand on Heaven's gate.
Yet altitude so vast might well abate
My confidence, if Love not succour brought,
Pledging my fame not jeopardised in aught,
And promising renown as ruin great.

If he whom like audacity inspired,
Falling gave name immortal to the flood,
As sunny flame his waxen pinion fired;
Then of thee too it shall be understood,
No meaner prize than Heaven thy soul required,
And firmer than thy life thy courage stood.

The meaning of the two sonnets is fully recognised by Muratori, who prints them together in his treatise, «Della perfetta poesia,» and adds: "*volea dire costui che s'era imbarcato in un'amor troppo alto, e s'andava facendo coraggio*."

This is surely one of the most remarkable instances possible to adduce of the infinite significance of true poetry, and its capacity for inspiring ideas and suggesting interpretations of which the poet never dreamed, but which are nevertheless fairly deducible from his expressions.

It is now a matter of considerable interest to ascertain the identity of this lady of rank, who could inspire a passion at once so exalted and so perilous. The point has been investigated by Tansillo's editor, Signor F. Fiorentino, who has done so much to rescue his unpublished compositions from oblivion, and his view must be pronounced perfectly satisfactory. She was Maria d'Aragona, Marchioness del Vasto, whose husband, the Marquis del Vasto, a celebrated general of Spanish descent, famous as Charles the Fifth's right hand in his successful expedition against Tunis, and at one time governor of the Milanese, was as remarkable for his jealousy as the lady, grand-daughter of a King of Naples, was for her pride and haughtiness. Fiorentino proves his case by showing how well all personal allusions in Tansillo's poems, so far as they can be traced, agree with the circumstances of the Marchioness, and in particular that the latter is represented as at one time residing on the island of Ischia, where del Vasto was accustomed to deposit his wife for security, when absent on his campaigns. He is apparently not aware that the object of Tansillo's affection had already been identified with a member of the house of Aragon by Faria e Sousa, the Portuguese editor of Camoëns, who, in his commentary on Camoëns's sixty-ninth sonnet, gives an interminable catalogue of ladies celebrated by enamoured poets, and says, "Tansillo sang Donna Isabel de Aragon." This lady, however, the niece of the Marchioness del Vasto, was a little girl in Tansillo's time, and is only mentioned by him as inconsolable for the death of a favourite dwarf.

The sentiment, therefore, of the two sonnets of Tansillo which we have quoted, is sufficiently justified by the exalted station of the lady who had inspired his passion, and the risk he ran from the power and jealousy of her husband. It seems certain, however, that the Marquis had on his part no ground for apprehension. Maria d'Aragona does not seem to have had much heart to bestow upon anyone, and would, in any case, have disdained to bestow what heart she had upon a poor gentleman and retainer of Don Garcia de Toledo, son of the Viceroy of Naples. She would think that she honoured him beyond his deserts by accepting his poetical homage. Tansillo, on his part, says in one of his sonnets that his devotion is purely platonic; it might have been more ardent, he hints, but he is dazzled by the splendour of the light he contemplates, and intimidated by the richness of the band by which he is led. So it may have been at first, but as time wore on the poet naturally craved some proof that his lady was not entirely indifferent to him, and did not tolerate him merely for the sake of his verses. This, in the nature of things, could not be given; and the poet's raptures pass into doubt and suspicion, thence into despairing resignation; thence into resentment and open hostility, terminating in a cold reconciliation, leaving him free to marry a much humbler but probably a more affectionate person, to whom he addresses no impassioned sonnets, but whom he instructs in a very elegant poem ("La Balia") how to bring up her infant children. These varying affections are depicted with extreme liveliness in a series of sonnets, of which we propose to offer some translated specimens. The order will not be that of the editions of Tansillo, where the pieces are distributed at random, but the probable order of composition, as indicated by the nature of the feeling expressed. It is, of course, impossible to give more than a few examples, though most deserve to be reproduced. Tansillo had the advantage over most Italian poets of his time of being in love with a real woman; hence, though possibly inferior in style and diction to such artists in rhyme as Bembo or Molza, he greatly surpasses them in all the qualities that discriminate poetry from the accomplishment of verse.

The first sonnet which we shall give is still all fire and rapture:—

I

Lady, the heart that entered through your eyes
Returneth not. Well may he make delay,
For if the very windows that display
Your spirit, sparkle in such wondrous wise,
Of her enthroned within this Paradise
What shall be deemed? If heart for ever stay,
Small wonder, dazzled by more radiant day
Than gazers from without can recognise.
Glory of sun and moon and silver star
In firmament above, are these not sign
Of things within more excellent by far?
Rejoice then in thy kingdom, heart of mine,
While Love and Fortune favourable are,
Nor thou yet exiled for default of thine.

Although, however, Tansillo's heart might well remain with its lady, Tansillo's person was

necessitated to join the frequent maritime expeditions of the great nobleman to whom he was attached, Don Garcia de Toledo, against the Turks. The constant free-booting of the Turkish and Barbary rovers kept the Mediterranean in a state of commotion comparable to that of the Spanish Main in the succeeding age, and these expeditions, whose picturesque history remains to be written, were no doubt very interesting; though from a philosophical point of view it is impossible not to sympathise with the humane and generous poet when he inquires:—

Che il Turco nasca turco, e 'l Moro moro,
È giusta causa questa, ond'altri ed io
Dobbiam incrudelir nel sangue loro?

With such feelings it may well be believed that in his enforced absence he was thinking at least as much of love as of war, and that the following sonnet is as truthful as it is an animated picture of his feelings:—

II

No length of banishment did e'er remove
My heart from you, nor if by Fortune sped
I roam the azure waters, or the Red,
E'er with the body shall the spirit rove:
If by each drop of every wave we clove,
Or by Sun's light or Moon's encompassèd,
Another Venus were engenderèd,
And each were pregnant with another Love:
And thus new shapes of Love where'er we went
Started to life at every stroke of oar,
And each were cradled in an amorous thought;
Not more than now this spirit should adore;
That none the less doth constantly lament
It cannot worship as it would and ought.

Before long, however, the pangs of separation overcome this elation of spirit, while he is not yet afraid of being forgotten:—

III

Like lightning shining forth from east to west,
Hurled are the happy hours from morn to night,
And leave the spirit steeped in undelight
In like proportion as themselves were blest.
Slow move sad hours, by thousand curbs opprest,
Wherewith the churlish Fates delay their flight;
Those, impulses of Mercury incite,
These lag at the Saturnian star's behest.
While thou wert near, ere separation's grief
Smote me, like steeds contending in the race,
My days and nights with equal speed did run:
Now broken either wheel, not swift the pace
Of summer's night though summer's moon be brief;
Or wintry days for brevity of sun.

IV

Now that the Sun hath borne with him the day,
And haled dark Night from prison subterrene,
Come forth, fair Moon, and, robed in light serene,
With thy own loveliness the world array.
Heaven's spheres, slow wheeled on their majestic way,
Invoke as they revolve thy orb unseen,
And all the pageant of the starry scene,
Wronged by thy absence, chides at thy delay.
Shades even as splendours, earth and heaven both
Smile at the apparition of thy face,
And my own gloom no longer seems so loth;
Yet, while my eye regards thee, thought doth trace
Another's image; if in vows be troth,
I am not yet estranged from Love's embrace.

Continual separation, however, and the absence of any marked token that he is borne in memory, necessarily prey more and more on the sensitive spirit of the poet. During the first part, her husband's tenure of office as Governor of the Milanese, the Marchioness, as already mentioned, took up her residence in the island of Ischia, where she received her adorer's eloquent aspirations for her welfare—heartfelt, but so worded as to convey a reproach:

V

That this fair isle with all delight abound,
Clad be it ever in sky's smile serene,

No thundering billow boom from deeps marine,
And calm with Neptune and his folk be found.
Fast may all winds by Æolus be bound,
Save faintest breath of lispings Zephyrene;
And be the odorous earth with glowing green
Of gladsome herbs, bright flowers, quaint foliage crowned.
All ire, all tempest, all misfortune be
Heaped on my head, lest aught thy pleasure stain,
Nor this disturbed by any thought of me,
So scourged with ills' innumerable train,
New grief new tear begetteth not, as sea
Chafes not the more for deluge of the rain.

The “quaint foliage” is in the original “Arab leaves,” *arabe frondi*, an interesting proof of the cultivation of exotic plants at the period.

The lady rejoins her husband at Milan, and Tansillo, landing on the Campanian coast, lately devastated by earthquakes and eruptions, finds everywhere the image of his own bosom, and rejoices at the opportunity which yawning rifts and chasms of earth afford for an appeal to the infernal powers:—

VI

Wild precipice and earthquake-riven wall;
Bare jagged lava naked to the sky;
Whence densely struggles up and slow floats by
Heaven's murky shroud of smoke funereal;
Horror whereby the silent groves enthral;
Black weedy pit and rifted cavity;
Bleak loneliness whose drear sterility
Doth prowling creatures of the wild appal:
Like one distraught who doth his woe deplore,
Bereft of sense by thousand miseries,
As passion prompts, companioned or alone;
Your desert so I rove; if as before
Heaven deaf continue, through these crevices,
My cry shall pierce to the Avernian throne.

The poet's melancholy deepens, and he enters upon the stage of dismal and hopeless resignation to the inevitable:

VII

As one who on uneasy couch bewails
Besetting sickness and Time's tardy course,
Proving if drug, or gem, or charm have force
To conquer the dire evil that assails:
But when at last no remedy prevails,
And bankrupt Art stands empty of resource,
Beholds Death in the face, and scorns recourse
To skill whose impotence in nought avails.
So I, who long have borne in trust unspent
That distance, indignation, reason, strife
With Fate would heal my malady, repent,
Frustrate all hopes wherewith my soul was rife,
And yield unto my destiny, content
To languish for the little left of life.

A lower depth still has to be reached ere the period of salutary and defiant reaction:—

VIII

So mightily abound the hosts of Pain,
Whom sentries of my bosom Love hath made,
No space is left to enter or evade,
And inwardly expire sighs born in vain,
If any pleasure mingle with the train,
Instant he dies, or else, in bondage stayed,
Pines languishing, or flies that drear domain.
Pale semblances of terror keep the keys,
Of frowning portals they for none displace
Save messengers of novel miseries:
All thoughts they scare that wear a gladsome face;
And, were they anything but Miseries,
Themselves would hasten from the gloomy place.

Slighted love easily passes from rejection into rebellion, and we shall see that such was the case with Tansillo. The following sonnet denotes an intermediate stage, when resignation is almost renunciation, but has not yet become revolt:—

IX

Cease thy accustomed strain, my mournful lute;
New music find, fit for my lot forlorn;
Henceforth be Wrath and Grief resounded, torn
The strings that anciently did Love salute,
Not on my own weak wing irresolute
But on Love's plumes I trusted to be borne,
Chanting him far as that remotest bourne
Whence strength Herculean reft Hesperian fruit.
To such ambition was my spirit wrought
By gracious guerdon Love came offering
When free in air my thought was bold to range:
But otherwhere now dwells another's thought,
And Wrath has plucked Love's feather from my wing,
And hope, style, theme, I all alike must change.

This, however, is not a point at which continuance is possible, the mind must go either backward or forward. The lover for a time persuades himself that he has broken his mistress's yoke, and that his infatuation is entirely a thing of the past. But the poet, like the lady, protests too much:—

X

If Love was miser of my liberty,
Lo, Scorn is bounteous and benevolent,
Such scope permitting, that, my fetter rent,
Not lengthened by my hand, I wander free.
The eyes that yielded tears continually
Have now with Lethe's drops my fire besprent,
And more behold, Illusion's glamour spent,
Than fabled Argus with his century.
The tyrant of my spirit, left forlorn
As vassal thoughts forsake him, doth remove,
And back unto her throne is Reason borne,
And I my metamorphosis approve,
And, old strains tuning to new keys, of Scorn
Will sing as anciently I sang of Love.

Several solutions of this situation are conceivable. Tansillo's is that which was perhaps that most likely in the case of an emotional nature, where the feelings are more powerful than the will. He simply surrenders at discretion, retracts everything disparaging that he has said of the lady (taking care, however, not to burn the peccant verses, which are much too good to be lightly parted with), and professes himself her humble slave upon her own terms:—

XI

All bitter words I spoke of you while yet
My heart was sore, and every virgin scroll
Blackened with ire, now past from my control,
These would I now recall; for 'tis most fit
My style should change, now Reason doth reknit,
Ties Passion sundered, and again make whole;
Be then Oblivion's prey whate'er my soul
Hath wrongly of thee thought, spoke, sung, or writ.
Not, Lady, that impeachment of thy fame
With tongue or pen I ever did design;
But that, if unto these shall reach my name,
Ages to come may study in my line
How year by year more streamed and towered my flame,
And how I living was and dying thine.

There is no reason to doubt the perfect sincerity of these lines at the period of their composition; but Tansillo's mistress had apparently resolved that his attachment should not henceforth have the diet even of a chameleon; and it is small wonder to find him shortly afterwards a tender husband and father, lamenting the death of an infant son in strains of extreme pathos, and instructing his wife on certain details of domestic economy in which she might have been supposed to be better versed than himself. His marriage took place in 1550, and in one of his sonnets he says that his unhappy attachment had endured sixteen years, which, allowing for a decent interval between the Romeo and the Benedict, would date its commencement at 1532 or 1533.

Maria d'Aragona died on November 9, 1568, and Tansillo, whose services had been rewarded by a judicial appointment in the kingdom of Naples, followed her to the tomb on December 1. If her death is really the subject of the two poems in terza rima which appear to deplore it, he certainly lost no time in bewailing her, but the interval is so brief, and the poems are so weak, that they may have been composed on some other occasion. With respect to the latter consideration, however, it must be remembered that he was himself, in all probability, suffering from disabling sickness, having made his will on November 29. It is also worthy of note that the first sonnets

composed by Petrarch upon the death of Laura are in general much inferior in depth of tenderness to those written years after the event. “In Memoriam” is another proof that the adequate poetical expression of grief, unlike that of life, requires time and study. Tansillo, then, may not have been so completely disillusioned as his editor thinks. If the poems do not relate to Maria d'Aragona, we have no clue to the ultimate nature of his feelings towards her.

A generally fair estimate of Tansillo's rank as a poet is given in Ginguéné's “History of Italian Literature,” vol. ix., pp. 340-343. It can scarcely be admitted that his boldness and fertility of imagination transported him beyond the limits of lyric poetry—for this is hardly possible—but it is true that they sometimes transcended the limits of good taste, and that the germs may be found in him of the extravagance which so disfigured Italian poetry in the seventeenth century. On the other hand, he has the inestimable advantage over most Italian poets of his day of writing of genuine passion from genuine experience. Hence a truth and vigour preferable even to the exquisite elegance of his countryman, Angelo di Costanzo, and much more so to the mere amatory exercises of other contemporaries. After Michael Angelo he stands farther aloof than any contemporary from Petrarch, a merit in an age when the study of Petrarch had degenerated into slavish imitation. His faults as a lyrist are absent from his didactic poems, which are models of taste and elegance. His one unpardonable sin is want of patriotism; he is the dependant and panegyrist of the foreign conqueror, and seems equally unconscious of the past glories, the actual degradation, or the prospective regeneration of Italy. Born a Spanish subject, his ideal of loyalty was entirely misplaced, and he must not be severely censured for what he could hardly avoid. But Italy lost a Tyrtæus in him.

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The Fool's Hour

The First Act of a Comedy

By John Oliver Hobbes
and George Moore

Characters of the Comedy

Lord Doldrummond
Cyril, *his Son* (Viscount Aprile)
Sir Digby Soame
Charles Mandeville, *a tenor*
Mr. Banish, *a banker*
The Hon. Arthur Featherleigh
Mr. Samuel Benjamin, *a money-lender*
Lady Doldrummond
Julia, *an heiress*
The Hon. Mrs. Howard de Trappe, *her mother, a widow*
Sarah Sparrow, *an American prima donna*

Act I

SCENE—*The Library in* Lord Doldrummond's *house at Brighton. The scene represents a richly-furnished but somewhat oppressive room. The chairs and tables are all narrow, the lamp-shades stiff, the windows have double glasses.* Lord Doldrummond, *a man of middle-age, handsome, but with a dejected, browbeaten air, sits with a rug over his knees, reading "The Church Times." The* Butler *announces* "Sir Digby Soame." Sir Digby *is thin and elderly; has an easy smile and a sharp eye; dresses well; has two manners—the abrupt with men, the suave with women; smiles into his beard over his own witticisms.*

Lord Dol. Ah, Soame, so you are here at last?

Soame. [*Looking at his watch.*] I am pretty punctual, only a few minutes late.

Lord Dol. I am worried, anxious, irritable, and that has made the time seem long.

Soame. Worried, anxious? And what about? Are you not well? Have you found that regularity of life ruins the constitution?

Lord Dol. No, my dear Soame, no. But I am willing to own that the existence which my wife enjoys, and which I have learnt to endure, would not suit everyone.

Soame. I am glad to find you more tolerant. You used to hold the very harshest and most crude opinions. I remember when we were boys, I could never persuade you to accept the admirable doctrine that a reformed rake makes the best husband!

Lord Dol. [*Timidly.*] Repentance does not require so large an income as folly! This may explain that paradox. You know, in my way, I, too, am something of a philosopher! I married very young, whereas you entered the Diplomatic Service and resolved to remain single: you wished to study women. I have lived with one for five-and-twenty years. [*Sighs.*]

Soame. Oh, I admit at once that yours is the greater achievement and was the more daring ambition.

Lord Dol. I know all I wish to know about women, but men puzzle me extremely. So I have sent for you. I want your advice. It is Cyril who is the cause of my uneasiness. I am afraid that he is not happy.

Soame. Cyril not happy? What is he unhappy about? You have never refused him anything?

Lord Dol. Never! No man has had a kinder father! When he is unreasonable I merely say "You are a fool, but please yourself!" No man has had a kinder father!

Soame. Does he complain?

Lord Dol. He has hinted that his home is uncongenial—yet we have an excellent cook! Ah, thank heaven every night and morning, my dear Digby, that you are a bachelor. Praying for sinners and breeding them would seem the whole duty of man. I was no sooner born than my parents were filled with uneasiness lest I should not live to marry and beget an heir of my own. Now I have an heir, his mother will never know peace until she has found him a wife!

Soame. And will you permit Lady Doldrummond to use the same method with Cyril which your mother adopted with such appalling results in your own case?

Lord Dol. It does not seem my place to interfere, and love-affairs are not a fit subject of conversation between father and son!

Soame. But what does Cyril say to the matrimonial prospect?

Lord Dol. He seems melancholy and eats nothing but oranges. Yes, Cyril is a source of great uneasiness.

Soame. Does Lady Doldrummond share this uneasiness?

Lord Dol. My wife would regard a second thought on any subject as a most dangerous form of temptation. She insists that Cyril has everything which a young man could desire, and when he complains that the house is dull, she takes him for a drive!

Soame. But *you* understand him?

Lord Dol. I think I do. If I were young again——

Soame. Ah, you regret! I always said you would regret it if you did not take your fling! The pleasures we imagine are so much more alluring, so much more dangerous, than those we experience. I suppose you recognise in Cyril the rascal you might have been, and feel that you have missed your vocation?

Lord Dol. [*Meekly.*] I was never unruly, my dear Soame. We all have our moments, I own, yet—well, perhaps Cyril has inherited the tastes which I possessed at his age, but lacked the courage to obey.

Soame. And so you wish me to advise you how to deal with him! Is he in love? I have constantly

observed that when young men find their homes unsympathetic, it is because some particular lady does not form a member of the household. It is usually a lady, too, who would not be considered a convenient addition to any mother's visiting-list!

Lord Dol. Lady Doldrummond has taught him that women are the scourges of creation. You, perhaps, do not share that view!

Soame. Certainly not. I would teach him to regard them as the reward, the compensation, the sole delight of this dreariest of all possible worlds.

Lord Dol. [*Uneasily.*] Reward! Compensation! Delight! I beg you will not go so far as that. What notion would be more upsetting? Pray do not use such extreme terms!

Soame. Ha! ha! But tell me, Doldrummond, is it true that your wife insists on his retiring at eleven and rising at eight? I hear that she allows him nothing stronger than ginger ale and lemon; that she selects his friends, makes his engagements, and superintends his amusements? Should he marry, I am told she will even undertake the office of best man!

Lord Dol. Poor soul! she means well; and if devotion could make the boy a saint he would have been in heaven before he was out of his long clothes. As it is, I fear that nothing can save him.

Soame. Save him? You speak as though you suspected that he was not such a saint as his mother thinks him.

Lord Dol. I suspect nothing. I only know that my boy is unhappy. You might speak to him, and draw him out if occasion should offer—but do not say a word about this to Lady Doldrummond.

[*Enter* Lady Doldrummond.—*She is a tall, slight, but not angular woman. Her hair is brown, and brushed back from her temples in the simplest possible fashion. Self-satisfaction (of a gentle and ladylike sort) and eminent contentment with her lot are the only writings on her smooth, almost girlish countenance. She has a prim tenderness and charm of manner which soften her rather cutting voice.*]

Lady Dol. What! Cyril not here? How do you do, Sir Digby? I am looking for my tiresome boy. I promised to take him to pay some calls this afternoon, and as he may have to talk I must tell him what to say. He has no idea of making himself pleasant to women, and is the shyest creature in the world!

Soame. You have always been so careful to shield him from all responsibility, Lady Doldrummond. Who knows what eloquence, what decision, what energy he might display, if you did not possess these gifts in so pre-eminent a degree as to make any exertion on his part unnecessary, and perhaps disrespectful.

Lady Dol. Ah! mothers are going out of fashion. Even Cyril occasionally shows a certain impatience when I venture to correct him. As if I would hurt anyone's feelings unless from a sense of duty! And pray, where is the pleasure of having a son if you may not direct his life?

Lord Dol. Cyril might ask, where is the pleasure of having parents if you may not disobey them.

Lady Dol. [*To* Soame.] When Herbert is alone with me he never makes flippant remarks of this kind. [*To* Lord Doldrummond.] I wonder that you like to give your friends such a wrong impression of your character. [*Turning to* Sir Digby.] But I think I see your drift, Sir Digby. You wish to remind me that Cyril is now at an age when I must naturally desire to see him established in a home of his own.

Soame. You have caught my meaning. As he is now two-and-twenty, I think he should be allowed more freedom than may have been expedient when he was—say, six months old.

Lady Dol. I quite agree with you, and I trust you will convince Herbert that women understand young men far better than their fathers ever could. I have found the very wife for Cyril, and I hope I may soon have the pleasure of welcoming her as a daughter.

Soame. A wife! Good heavens! I was suggesting that the boy had more liberty. Marriage is the prison of all emotions, and I should be very sorry to ask any young girl to be a man's gaol-keeper.

Lord Dol. Sir Digby is right.

Lady Dol. The presence of a third person has the strangest effect on Herbert's moral vision. As I have trained my son with a care and tenderness rarely bestowed nowadays even on a girl, I think I may show some resentment when I am asked to believe him a being with the instincts of a ruffian and the philosophy of a middle-aged bachelor. No, Sir Digby, Cyril is not *my* child if he does not make his home and his family the happiest in the world!

Soame. Yes?

Lady Dol. He has no taste for cards, horses, brandy, or actresses. We read together, walk together, and drive together. In the evening, if he is too tired to engage in conversation, I play the piano while he dozes. Lately he has taken a particular interest in Mozart's classic light opera. Any interest of that kind is so elevating, and I know of nothing more agreeable than a musical husband.

Lord Dol. You see she is resolved on his marriage, and she has had Julia de Trappe on a visit with

us for the last five weeks in the hope of bringing matters to a crisis.

Lady Dol. And why not? Our marriage was arranged for us, and what idle fancies of our own could have led to such perfect contentment?

[Lord Doldrummund *avoids her eyes*.]

Soame. Julia de Trappe? She must be the daughter of that Mrs. Howard de Trappe who gives large At Homes in a small house, and who spends her time hunting for old lovers and new servants.

Lady Dol. I own that dear Julia has been allowed to meet men and women who are not fit companions for a young girl, no matter how interesting they may be to the general public. Only yesterday she told me she was well acquainted with Mr. Mandeville, the tenor. Mrs. de Trappe, it seems, frequently invites him to dinner. Still, Julia herself is very sensible, and the family is of extraordinary antiquity.

Soame. But the mother? If she has not been in the divorce court, it is through no fault of her own.

Lady Dol. [*Biting her lip.*] Mrs. de Trappe is vain and silly, I admit; but as she has at last decided to marry Mr. Banish, the banker, I am hoping she will live in his house at Hampstead, and think a little more about her immortal soul.

Soame. Does Cyril seem at all interested in Miss Julia?

Lady Dol. Cyril has great elegance of mind, and is not very strong in the expression of his feelings one way or the other. But I may say that a deep attachment exists between them.

Soame. A man must have sound wisdom before he can appreciate innocence. But I have no desire to be discouraging, and I hope I may soon have the pleasure of congratulating you all on the wedding. Good-bye.

Lord Dol. What! Must you go?

Soame. Yes. But [*aside to* Lord Dol.] I shall bear in mind what you say. I will do my best. I have an engagement in town to-night. [*Chuckles.*] An amusing one.

Lord Dol. [*With envy.*] Where?

Soame. At the Parnassus.

Lady Dol. [*With a supercilious smile.*] And what is the Parnassus?

Soame. A theatre much favoured by young men who wish to be thought wicked, and by young ladies who *are.* Good-bye, good-bye. [*Shakes hands with* Lord *and* Lady Doldrummond *and goes out*.]

Lady Dol. Thank goodness, he is gone! What a terrible example for Cyril. I was on thorns every second lest he should come in. Soame has just those meretricious attractions which appeal to youth and inexperience. That you should encourage such an acquaintance, and even discuss before him such an intimate matter as my hope with regard to Julia, is, perhaps, more painful than astonishing.

Lord Dol. They are both too young to marry. Let them enjoy life while they may.

Lady Dol. Enjoy life? What a degrading suggestion! I have often observed that there is a lurking taste for the vicious in every Doldrummond. [*Picking up* Cyril's *miniature from the table*.] Cyril is pure Bedingfield: my second self!

[*The Butler announces* Mrs. De Trappe, Mr. Arthur Featherleigh, Mr. Banish. Mrs. de Trappe *is a pretty woman with big eyes and a small waist; she has a trick of biting her under-lip, and looking shocked, as it were, at her own audacity. Her manner is a little effusive, but always well-bred. She does not seem affected, and has something artless, confiding, and pathetic.* Mr. Featherleigh *has a nervous laugh and a gentlemanly appearance; otherwise inscrutable*. Mr. Banish *is old, well-preserved, rather pompous, and evidently mistakes deportment for dignity.*]

Mrs. de Trappe. [*Kissing* Lady Dol. *on each cheek*.] Dear Edith, I knew we should surprise you. But Mr. Banish and I are house-hunting, and I thought I must run in and see you and Julia, if only for a second. I felt sure you would not mind my bringing Arthur [*indicating* Featherleigh.] He is so lonely at the prospect of my marriage that Mr. Banish and I have promised to keep him always with us. We have known each other so long. How should we spend our evenings without him? James admits they would be tedious, don't you, James? [*Indicating* Banish.]

Banish. Certainly, my dear.

Lady Dol. [*Stiffly.*] I can well understand that you have learned to regard Mr. Featherleigh as your own son. And as we advance in years, it is so pleasant to have young people about us.

Mrs. de Trappe. [*After a slight pause.*] How odd that it should never have struck me in that light before! I have always thought of Arthur as the trustee, as it were, of my poor fatherless Julia [*To* Banish.] Have I not often said so, James?

Banish. [*Dryly.*] Often. In fact I have always thought that Julia would never lack a father whilst Arthur was alive. But I admit that he is a little young for the responsibility.

Feather. [*Unmoved.*] Do not forget, Violet, that our train leaves in fifty-five minutes.

Lord Dol. [*Catching a desperate glance from* Lady Doldrummond.] Then I shall have time to show you the Russian poodles which the Duke of Camdem brought me from Japan.

Mrs. de Trappe. [*Peevishly.*] Yes, please take them away. [*Waving her hand in the direction of* Banish *and* Featherleigh.] Edith and I have many secrets to discuss. Of course she will tell you [*to* Lord Dol.] everything I have said when we are gone, and I shall tell Arthur and James all she has said as we go home. But it is so amusing to think ourselves mysterious for twenty minutes. [*As the men go out laughing, she turns to* Lady Doldrummond *with a sigh.*] Ah, Edith, when I pause in all these gaieties and say to myself, Violet, you are about to marry a second husband, I cannot feel sufficiently thankful that it is not the third.

Lady Dol. The third?

Mrs. de Trappe. To face the possibility of a third honeymoon, a third disappointment, and a third funeral would tax my courage to the utmost! And I am not strong.

Lady Dol. I am shocked to see you so despondent. Surely you anticipate every happiness with Mr. Banish?

Mrs. de Trappe. Oh, yes. He has money, and Arthur thinks him a very worthy sort of person. He is a little dull, but then middle-class people are always so gross in their air when they attempt to be lively or amusing; so long as they are grave I can bear them well enough, but I know of nothing so unpleasant as the sight of a banker laughing. As Arthur says, City men and butlers should always be serious.

Lady Dol. Do you think that the world will quite understand—Arthur?

Mrs. de Trappe. What do you mean, Edith? A woman must have an adviser. Arthur was my late husband's friend, and he is my future husband's friend. Surely that should be enough to satisfy the most exacting.

Lady Dol. But why marry at all? why not remain as you are?

Mrs. de Trappe. How unreasonable you are, Edith! How often have you urged me to marry Mr. Banish, and now that it is all arranged and Arthur is satisfied, you begin to object.

Lady Dol. I thought that you liked Mr. Banish better.

Mrs. de Trappe. Better than Arthur? No, I am not so unkind as that, nor would James wish it. I am marrying because I am poor. My husband, as you know, left nearly all his money to Julia, and I feel the injustice so acutely that the absurd settlement he made on me is spent upon doctor's bills alone. If it were not for Arthur and one or two other kind friends who send me game and other little things from time to time, I could not exist at all. [*Draws off her gloves, displays a diamond ring on each finger, and wipes her eyes with a point-lace pocket-handkerchief.*] And when I think of all that I endured with De Trappe! How often have I been roused from a sound sleep to see the room illuminated and De Trappe, rolled up in flannel, sitting by the fire reading “Lead, kindly Light.” What an existence! But now tell me about Julia. I hope she does not give you much trouble.

Lady Dol. I only hope that I may keep her always with me.

Mrs. de Trappe. How she must have improved! When she is at home I find her so depressing. And she does not appeal to men in the least.

Lady Dol. I could wish that all young girls were as modest.

Mrs. de Trappe. Oh, I daresay Julia has all the qualities we like to see in some other woman's daughter. But if you were her mother and had to find her a husband, you would regard her virtues in another light. Fortunately she has eight thousand a year, so she may be able to find somebody. Still, even money does not tempt men as it once did. A girl must have an extraordinary charm. She is so jealous of me. I cannot keep her out of the drawing-room when I have got callers, especially when Mr. Mandeville is there.

Lady Dol. I have heard of Mr. Mandeville. He is an actor, a singer.

Mrs. de Trappe. A lovely tenor voice. All the women are in love with him, except me. I would not listen to him. And now they say he is going to marry Sarah Sparrow—a great mistake. I should like to know who would care about him or his singing, once he is married.

Lady Dol. And who is Sarah Sparrow?

Mrs. de Trappe. Don't you know? She is the last great success. She has two notes: B flat and the lower G—the orchestra plays the rest. You must go to the Parnassus and hear her. To-night is the dress rehearsal of the new piece.

Lady Dol. And do you receive Miss Sparrow?

Mrs. de Trappe. No, women take up too much time. They say, too, that she is frantically jealous

because Mandeville used to come and practise in my boudoir. He says no one can accompany him as I do!

Lady Dol. I hope Cyril does not meet Mr. Mandeville when he goes to your house.

Mrs. de Trappe. Let me see. I believe I introduced them. At any rate, I know I saw them at luncheon together last week.

Lady Dol. At luncheon together! Cyril and this person who sings? What could my boy and Mr. Mandeville have in common?

Mrs. de Trappe. They both appear to admire Sarah Sparrow very much. And I cannot find what men see in her. She is not tall and her figure is most innocent; you would say she was still in pinafores. As for her prettiness, I admit she has fine eyes, but of course she blackens them. I think the great attraction is her atrocious temper. One never knows whom she will stab next.

Lady Dol. [*Half to herself.*] Last week Cyril came in after midnight. He refused to answer my questions.

Mrs. de Trappe. You seem absent-minded, my dear Edith. [*Pause.*] I must be going now. Where are Arthur and James? We have not a moment to lose. We are going to choose wedding presents. James is going to choose Arthur's and Arthur is going to choose James's, so there can be no jealousy. It was I who thought of that way out of the difficulty. One does one's best to be nice to them, and then something happens and upsets all one's plans. Where is Cyril?

Lady Dol. I am afraid Cyril is not at home.

Mrs. de Trappe. Then I shall not see him. Tell him I am angry, and give my love to Julia. I hope she does not disturb you when you are in the drawing-room and have visitors. So difficult to keep a grown-up girl out of the drawing-room. Where can those men be? [*Enter* Lord Doldrummond, Mr. Featherleigh, *and* Mr. Banish.] Ah! here they are. Now, come along; we haven't a moment to lose. Good-bye, Edith.

[*Exeunt* (*after wishing their adieux*) Mrs. de Trappe, Mr. Featherleigh, *and* Mr. Banish, Lord Doldrummond *following them*.]

Lady Dol. [*Stands alone in the middle of the room, repeating.*] Cyril and—Sarah Sparrow! My son and Sarah Sparrow! And he has met her through the one woman for whom I have been wrong enough to forget my prejudices. What a punishment!

[Julia *enters cautiously. She is so unusually beautiful that she barely escapes the terrible charge of sublimity. But there is a certain peevishness in her expression which adds a comfortable smack of human nature to her classic features.*]

Julia. I thought mamma would never go. I have been hiding in your boudoir ever since I heard she was here.

Lady Dol. Was Cyril with you?

Julia. Oh, no; he has gone out for a walk.

Lady Dol. Tell me, dearest, have you and Cyril had any disagreement lately? Is there any misunderstanding?

Julia. Oh, no. [*Sighs.*]

Lady Dol. I remember quite well that before I married Herbert he often suffered from the oddest moods of depression. Several times he entreated me to break off the engagement. His affection was so reverential that he feared he was not worthy of me. I assure you I had the greatest difficulty in overcoming his scruples, and persuading him that whatever his faults were I could help him to subdue them.

Julia. But Cyril and I are not engaged. It is all so uncertain, so humiliating.

Lady Dol. Men take these things for granted. If the truth were known, I daresay he already regards you as his wife.

Julia. [*With an inspired air.*] Perhaps that is why he treats me so unkindly. I have often thought that if he were my husband he could not be more disagreeable! He has not a word for me when I speak to him. He does not hear. Oh, Lady Doldrummond, I know what is the matter. He is in love, but I am not the one. You are all wrong.

Lady Dol. No, no, no. He loves you; I am sure of it. Only be patient with him and it will come all right. Hush! is that his step? Stay here, darling, and I will go into my room and write letters. [*Exit, brushing the tears from her eyes.*]

[Butler *ushers in* Mr. Mandeville. *Neither of them perceive Julia, who has gone to the window.*]

Butler. His Lordship will be down in half an hour, sir. He is now having his hair brushed.

Julia. [*In surprise as she looks round.*] Mr. Mandeville! [*Pause.*] I hardly expected to meet you here.

Mandeville. And why, may I ask?

Julia. You know what Lady Doldrummond is. How did you overcome her scruples?

Mandeville. Is my reputation then so very bad?

Julia. You—you are supposed to be rather dangerous. You sing on the stage, and have a tenor voice.

Mandeville. Is that enough to make a man dangerous?

Julia. How can *I* tell? But mamma said you were invincible. You admire mamma, of course. [*Sighs.*]

Mandeville. A charming woman, Mrs. de Trappe. A very interesting woman; so sympathetic.

Julia. But she said she would not listen to you

.*Mandeville.* Did she say that? [*A slight pause.*] I hope you will not be angry when I own that I do not especially *admire* your mother. A quarter of a century ago she may have had considerable attractions, but—are you offended?

Julia. Offended? Oh, no. Only it seems strange. I thought that all men admired mamma. [*Pause.*] You have not told me yet how you made Lady Doldrummond's acquaintance.

Mandeville. I am here at Lord Aprile's invitation. He has decided that he feels no further need of Lady Doldrummond's apron-strings.

Julia. Oh, Mr. Mandeville, are you teaching him to be wicked?

Mandeville. But you will agree with me that a young man cannot make his mother a kind of scribbling diary?

Julia. Still, if he spends his time well, there does not seem to be any reason why he should refuse to say where he dines when he is not at home.

Mandeville. Lady Doldrummond holds such peculiar ideas; she would find immorality in a sofa-cushion. If she were to know that Cyril is coming with me to the dress rehearsal of our new piece!

Julia. It would break her heart. And Lord Doldrummond would be indignant. Mamma says his own morals are so excellent!

Mandeville. Is he an invalid?

Julia. Certainly not. Why do you ask?

Mandeville. Whenever I hear of a charming husband I always think that he *must* be an invalid. But as for morals, there can be no harm in taking Cyril to a dress rehearsal. If you do not wish him to go, however, I can easily say that the manager does not care to have strangers present. [*Pause.*] Afterwards there is to be a ball at Miss Sparrow's.

Julia. Is Cyril going there, too?

Mandeville. I believe that he has an invitation, but I will persuade him to refuse it, if you would prefer him to remain at home.

Julia. You are very kind, Mr. Mandeville, but it is a matter of indifference to me where Lord Aprile goes.

Mandeville. Perhaps I ought not to have mentioned this to you?

Julia. [*Annoyed.*] It does not make the least difference. In fact, I am delighted to think that you are taking Cyril out into the world. He is wretched in this house. [*With heroism.*] I am glad to think that he knows anyone so interesting and clever and beautiful as Sarah Sparrow. I suppose she would be considered beautiful?

Mandeville. [*With a profound glance.*] One can forget her—sometimes.

Julia. [*Looking down.*] Perhaps—when I am as old as she is—I shall be prettier than I am at present.

Mandeville. You always said you liked my voice. We never see anything of each other now. I once thought that—well—that you might like me better. Are you sure you are not angry with me because I am taking Cyril to this rehearsal?

Julia. Quite sure. Why should I care where Cyril goes? I only wish that I, too, might go to the theatre to-night. What part do you play? And what do you sing? A serenade?

Mandeville. [*Astounded.*] Yes. How on earth did you guess that? The costume is, of course, picturesque, and that is the great thing in an opera. A few men can sing—after a fashion—but to find the right clothes to sing *in*—that shows the true artist.

Julia. And Sarah; does she look *her* part?

Mandeville. Well, I do not like to say anything against her, but she is not quite the person I should cast for la Marquise de la Perdrigonde. Ah! if you were on the stage, Miss de Trappe! You

have just the exquisite charm, the grace, the majesty of bearing which, in the opinion of those who have never been to Court, is the peculiar distinction of women accustomed to the highest society.

Julia. Oh, I should like to be an actress!

Mandeville. No! no! I spoke selfishly—if you only acted with *me*, it would be different; but—but I could not bear to see another man making love to you—another man holding your hand and singing into your eyes—and—and——Oh, this is madness. You must not listen to me.

Julia. I am not—angry, but—you must never again say things which you do not mean. If I thought you were untruthful it would make me so—so miserable. Always tell me the truth. [*Holds out her hand.*]

Mandeville. You are very beautiful!

[*She drops her eyes, smiles, and wanders unconsciously to the mirror.*]

[Lady Doldrummond *suddenly enters from the boudoir, and* Cyril *from the middle door*. Cyril *is handsome, but his features have that delicacy and his expression that pensiveness which promise artistic longings and domestic disappointment.*]

Cyril. [*Cordially and in a state of suppressed excitement.*] Oh, mother, this is my friend Mandeville. You have heard me mention him?

Lady Dol. I do not remember, but——

Cyril. When I promised to go out with you this afternoon, I forgot that I had another engagement. Mandeville has been kind enough to call for me.

Lady Dol. Another engagement, Cyril?

[Lord Doldrummond *enters and comes down, anxiously looking from one to the other.*]

Cyril. Father, this is my friend Mandeville. We have arranged to go up to town this afternoon.

Lady Dol. [*Calmly.*] What time shall I send the carriage to the station for you? The last train usually arrives about——

Cyril. I shall not return to-night. I intend to stay in town. Mandeville will put me up.

Lord Dol. And where are you going?

Mandeville. He is coming to our dress rehearsal of the “Dandy and the Dancer.”

Cyril. At the Parnassus. [Lord *and* Lady Doldrummond *exchange horrified glances.*] I daresay you have never heard of the place, but it amuses me to go there, and I must learn life for myself. I am two-and-twenty, and it is not extraordinary that I should wish to be my own master. I intend to have chambers of my own in town.

Lady Dol. Surely you have every liberty in this house?

Lord Dol. If you leave us, you will leave the rooms in which your mother has spent every hour of her life, since the day you were born, planning and improving. Must all her care and thought go for nothing? The silk hangings in your bedroom she worked with her own hands. There is not so much as a pen-wiper in your quarter of the house which she did not choose with the idea of giving you one more token of her affection.

Cyril. I am not ungrateful, but I cannot see much of the world through my mother's embroidery. As you say, I have every comfort here. I may gorge at your expense and snore on your pillows and bully your servants. I can do everything, in fact, but live. Dear mother, be reasonable. [*Tries to kiss her. She remains quite frigid.*]

[Footman *enters.*]

Footman. The dog-cart is at the door, my lord.

Cyril. You think it well over and you will see that I am perfectly right. Come on, Mandeville, we shall miss the train. Make haste: there is no time to be polite. [*He goes out, dragging* Mandeville *after him, and ignoring* Julia.]

Lord Dol. Was that my son? I am ashamed of him! To desert us in this rude, insolent, heartless manner. If I had whipped him more and loved him less, he would not have been leaving me to lodge with a God knows who. I disown him! The fool!

Lady Dol. If you have anything to say, blame *me*! Cyril has the noblest heart in the world; *I* am the fool.

Curtain.

Transcriber's Notes:

Scroll the mouse over words in Greek and the transliteration will appear.

Punctuation was standardized. Words in dialect, obsolete or alternative spellings were not changed. The following were corrected:

missing 'f' added to of
allution to allusion
needed to heeded
undiscouragable to undiscourageable
snggest to suggest
gasp to grasp
deing to being
geos to goes
Gardi to Guardi
waning to waving
allign to align
poem to poet
requiees to requires
upsettting to upsetting
missing 'l' added to small

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An Illustrated Quarterly
Volume I April 1894
London: Elkin Mathews & John Lane
[The following text was cropped out of the illustration:
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