



THE LANTERN

Edited by
Theodore F Bonnet and Edward F O'Day

*It is better to search for the truth of what
concerns us than to hunt for an honest man*

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THE LANTERN

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No. 1

Great Women

By THEODORE F. BONNET

The greatness of women: an inspiring theme this, on which it would be easier to write a book than an essay. For when one thinks of great women worth writing about the situation resembles that of Don Juan when he found himself in the Sultan's harem at Stamboul. History abounds in great women, and they are of many types. Roughly speaking, to be great is to be able to be what you wish. Hence there are many manifestations and degrees of greatness. There have been great rogues as well as great heroes. You may find greatness in many kinds of perfect action, good and bad, in the wreck no less than in the conquest of empire. Whenever we are made sensible of the supreme adaptation of means to an end we perceive a manifestation of greatness. Jeanne de Vaubervier, the natural daughter of a sempstress, who became Madame Du Barry, one of the most immediate symbols of the luxury and caprice of the ancient order in France, was great when with magnificent serenity she mounted the grand staircase at Versailles. During the five years of her reign she gave her name to a period. She chose all the fashions in dress and house decorations and proved herself a woman of fine artistic taste. She was great in her way, just as Moll Cutpurse was great in her way. Moll reduced her craft to a set of wise and imperious rules, and she has been pronounced one of the bravest of the Elizabethans. Great, too, was that "royal morcel" Madame de Pompadour who cultivated the art of pleasing. She believed as a girl that it was her destiny to be the king's mistress. She

had never met the king. But she "set her cap for him," as the saying is, threw herself in his path, and achieved her purpose. She was great after her fashion, and in her day it was not a bad fashion.

Thus we see there may be greatness without nobility. There is greatness of a kind that at times commands respect and at others evokes the scathing censures of the moralist. For further example there is the greatness of an emotional personality like Eleanor Duse, who is able, as Arthur Symons has said, to express all the emotions of the world because she has felt them twice over in her own flesh. Eleanor Duse is great in the sense in which Rachel was great and Ristori, and she has no complaint to find with the world. Great women seldom have. When one considers how well great women got along in the world before Susan B. Anthony came into it one is inclined to wonder whether women really require the advantages for which some women are now loudly clamoring. Glancing back through the centuries one is astonished at the number of remarkably gifted women who were important links in the long chain of culture and refinement. Saint-Beuve calls them "civilizers," and he doesn't mean women of the Jane Addams type. He includes in his category a few of the "kings' women" of France, women whose biographies would be required for that great work *The History of Love*, which, somebody has said, would be the history of humanity and the most beautiful book to write. The fact is there are many types of great women; and the tokens of greatness in women are governed by a law of perpetual mutability. Hence it is that some of the great women of the past are not recognized today. They would be snubbed on Pacific Heights and driven out of Los Angeles. A Florence Nightingale we should doubtless receive with enthusiasm, for she is one of the easiest types of great women to appreciate. She was a woman of great and noble qualities of heart and mind, and there was something of great generalship in her talent

for organization. But Florence Nightingale would have received scant notice from the hedonists of the Merry Monarch's court wherein neither a stainless life nor a superior merit was indispensable to the elect.

The inner and essential elements of greatness remain the same in every age but the popular ideals of greatness change. A Madame de Pompadour might have some difficulty in winning recognition today, or even that Countess of Bedford of whom Ben Jonson gave us a portrait:

“ Courteous, facile, sweet,

Hating that solemn vice of greatness—pride.”

According to twentieth century ideals the elements of greatness are to be found in the average “advanced woman,” but fancy an Ellen Key winning recognition as a “leader of thought” in the days of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu whose letters are still an instructive and profitable study, if not to the very young at least to the half-baked philosophers of our day, if any there be with sense enough to read them. According to the standards of our time Lady Mary was an ill-raised young woman, and eugenically considered she was not well-born, for her father was a man about town. One night when she was only eight he toasted her in a London tavern, and sent home for her, and she was brought to the place to be shown off to her father's convivial friends. This experience she always remembered with keen pleasure, and despite her early training she became a great woman, great not only as a literary critic and companion of the greatest folk of the day, but great also in politics, and she never felt the need of a vote. No, Ellen Key would hardly have shone in that circle. One might as reasonably think of Jane Addams cutting a figure in the days when the accomplished Madame la Comtesse de Genlis was writing *The Reflections of a Mother of Twenty*, or later when she was writing plays for her daughters

and instructing some of the leading statesmen of Europe.

Nowadays we are told that women have been a downtrodden sex through the centuries and that they should be emancipated and received on the basis of a single standard of morality in order that they might be free to do the big things of which they are inherently capable. Yet nowadays, though there is no lack of educational facilities for women, they appear to be doing less than formerly to win intelligent admiration for their talents. Let me not be understood as intimating that great women lived only in the past. I have not yet begun to lament the universal decay of things. My judgment is not that of the prohibitionist who tells us that liquor is destroying the race; nor yet is it that of the eugenist doctrinaires who have faith in scientific mating. My notion is that human affairs now, as always, are a mixture of good and bad, and that the world is pursuing its ordinary way, though for the present it is doing an extraordinary amount of fighting. Also at present mediocrity is having its periodical inning, and we are at present paying less attention to great women than to those super-caloric persons who are raving for a destiny unknown to nature. I mean the women who are making a lot of noise calling on men to accelerate the descent of women into a wild world where passion shall be without poetry and the voices of children never heard. Theirs is the voice of epicene mediocrity demanding birthrights in strange alternatives. Where do we find a great woman among them? With ideal opportunities to educate themselves, in towns rich in libraries and specialized schools, enjoying freedom to indulge all the creative impulses that extend the boundaries of life, yet how few are the women of distinction that rise above the herd! Every little while somebody points to Madame Curie as a specimen of what may be expected of the sex as a result of partial emancipation. But Madame Curie is just a little less

wonderful than Madame du Chatelet who lived in the first half of the eighteenth century when there was no little red school house accessible to girls. Madame du Chatelet was the lady that Voltaire lived with. She translated into French Newton's immortal principles, and in her *Institutions de Physique* she expounded the particular ideas of Leibnitz.

At times when reading the lives of great women it has occurred to me that perhaps the sex was providentially held in restraint through the ages. For when I think of what women have done despite restraint I wonder what might have happened to the general scheme of creation had they been encouraged from the beginning of time to pay particular attention to the development of their mental faculties. Usually the female of the species is reprobated for the evil uses she has made of her physical charms, so frequently she has reigned by right of beauty. But the fact is that woman has more often ruled by virtue of her intellectual power. Indeed, as a rule short was the reign of the woman whose chief asset was her beauty. Mme. de Pompadour, though little more than a grisette, had brains as well as beauty, and she held the king thrall with a thousand diversions and enchantments borrowed from the arts. When her power was threatened she cleverly armed herself against enmities and perfidies, and in the midst of the brilliant scandals of her royal liaison she found time for politics and became a minister of state. Her life, as she said herself, was a perpetual combat, but she maintained her position to the end, even after the king had ceased to love her.

How different was the experience of poor Louise de la Valliere, who loved the *Roi Soleil* for himself alone. The only art known to "little La Valliere," as she was called, was the art of love. To love was her function. It was all that she could do, and that she did with a selflessness which makes her unique. So far from flaunting her conquest she was never more modest than in her moments of greatest power.

“What a difference,” wrote Mme. de Sévigné, “between the beautiful Montespan and the little Violet who hides herself under the grass, who is ashamed of being a mistress, of being a mother and of being a duchess. We shall never see her like again.” The fickle king caught by the fresh beauty of Montespan turned from the “little La Valliere,” and that sensitive creature turned from Court to the Carmelite convent where she welcomed the hardest tasks and spent thirty years doing penance for her sins. Far different is the story of Mme. de Maintenon. Her philosophy of life was something more than pleasure; she had a faculty for intrigue, and an instinct for power. It is the woman of this type rather than the mere beauty who has done things worth while.

Semiramis, the only Assyrian queen whose name is recorded on the monuments, did not reign by right of beauty alone, though we know she must have been good to behold. We know it because it is related of her that when with vanquished kings in her train she was passing over her triumphal bridge across the Euphrates a soldier murmured: “I would hold her in my arms if I were a moment afterwards thrown to the dogs.” Turning to him she said, “Come.” But Semiramis did some thinking as well as loving. She was the “advanced woman” of her day. She was the first woman to think of the immorality of marriage. She would not be married legitimately lest she lose her sovereignty; but she selected the handsomest men of her army, and afterwards made them disappear.

Another great beauty and great woman was Marguerite of Navarre. An intellectual genius of the Renaissance was Marguerite, born as long ago as the year in which Columbus discovered America. There was not much schooling to be had by girls in her day, but as she was a king’s sister doubtless she had a private tutor. She was so beautiful that a Polish ambassador talked of putting out his eyes in order to see nothing after seeing her. But she

is not remembered for her beauty. She immortalized herself by writing the *Heptameron*. As I have said, doubtless her parents could afford a private tutor, but what wonderful private tutors there were in the bleak centuries before the summer school was invented for the dissemination of culturine! Think of Mary Stuart at fourteen reciting before King Henry an orison in Latin which she herself had written. Undoubtedly Mary, too, had her private tutor. But what about Emma Lyons, the daughter of a London laborer?

Here is a woman who illustrates the point I am trying to make. Emma Lyons had no private tutor. Yet Emma Lyons was a very great woman. She was a self-made woman. True, she never did spell correctly, but she did some very big things in the world, and she made history.

The Emma Lyons I am speaking of is better known as Lady Hamilton, mistress of Lord Nelson. She belonged to the dragged-up class of the community. When young she worked as a nursery-maid, and before meeting Nelson she lived with half a dozen men. Nevertheless she developed into a woman with "a fine-pointed brain," and she became Nelson's greatest inspiration. When that great sailor signaled that England expected every man to do his duty, you may be quite sure that he was mindful of the fact that his beloved Lady Hamilton expected him to do his duty. On board the *Victory*, in sight of the combined fleets of France and Spain, he retired to his cabin, wrote down an account of the services Lady Hamilton had rendered to him and to her country, and then he wrote this codicil to his will: "Could I have rewarded those services, I would not now call upon my country; but as that has not been in my power, I leave Emma Lady Hamilton, therefore, a legacy to my king and country, that they will give her an ample provision to maintain her rank in life." And Nelson's king and country allowed Lady Hamilton to live and suffer and die in poverty.

In the eighteenth century there were scores of really great women in the world, and none asking for emancipation. In the midst of an intellectual and sumptuous epicureanism there was more feminine genius in Paris than you can find now in all the United States. Yet few were the opportunities for mental cultivation except among the elect who were educated in convents. But many of the great women of the period were self-made like the illustrious tragedienne and pseudo-German princess, Mlle. Clairon. She was born in such poverty that her mother went out working for a living, and left her under the guardianship of lock and key in their home, which was a bedroom. To pass the time, the child used to climb on a chair and look into a room opposite where an actress was engaged in rehearsing her part. She watched the actress closely, studying her gestures and practicing them until she became an accomplished mimic. One night the actress, who was Mlle. Dangeville of the Comedie Francaise, took her to see a performance of *Le Comte d'Essex et les Folies Amoureuses*. Great was her absorption in the play, and that night in bed she turned over and over in her little brain what she had heard declaimed on the stage, and next day she was able to repeat to her mother more than two hundred verses from the tragedy and two-thirds of the little play. But this effort of memory, it is said, was nothing compared to her assimilation of the manner of every actor and actress in the play. Henceforth, notwithstanding all the abuse and blows her mother showered upon her, she refused to learn to sew. Her little dramatic soul thrilled with the sense of her vocation, the budding tragedienne gave utterance to her emotions in tragic phrase: "Kill me," she exclaimed, "you had better do so, for if you don't I shall be an actress." Reared in a sordid atmosphere of low vice, with lovers galore, yet when my lord the Duke of Marlborough offered her an immense fortune, for patriotic reasons she declined to accept. In her twenties she is estab-

lished in Paris, a great actress, creating the leading parts in all the great tragedies of her time. Mlle. Clairon was a woman of splendid intellect and of a certain nobility of soul that fills one with wonder and admiration. Love of art and love of man were her two great passions. All else she sacrificed to these.

As I have said, there were scores of really great women in the world in the eighteenth century. It was in that century that many brilliant beauties of the salons were queening it in that grand society of Old France that Europe "came to copy and vainly strove to imitate." The portraits of some of them are to be found in Saint-Beuve's *Galleries des Femmes Célèbres*, but among them one does not find Madame Chemineau. She is mentioned incidentally, but not by name. She is mentioned merely as the grandmother of Madame Geoffrin, and it required considerable research to find her name. I was curious about the old lady, for it was she that inspired all that I have written herein. The salience of her personality is due to the fact that it was she that formed and developed the mind of Mme. Geoffrin. This is worth knowing, for Madame Geoffrin was one of the greatest women of her day. She was the presiding genius of the best salon that Paris ever knew. That salon made its influence felt throughout Europe. That salon was the chief centre and rendezvous of the greatest men of the eighteenth century. It was the resort of such foreigners as Hume and Gibbons. Under the Geoffrin roof-tree men eminent in science and diplomacy mingled with sculptors and painters, and always the conversation was under the guidance of Madame Geoffrin. It was an eminently respectable salon that Madame Geoffrin conducted, and in a licentious age she held the society of Paris in leading strings. It was the age of Louis XV and of Madame de Pompadour, the great courtesan as she has been called, who contributed to the ruin of monarchy. Now Madame de Pompadour was herself a woman of great intellect, enamored

of the arts and the pleasures of the mind. When she died Voltaire said of her in a letter to a friend, "She was one of us." She was beloved by the painters, the sculptors and the architects of the day, for she had done much to foster the arts. And it was in this period that Madame Geoffrin, the wife of a substantial burgher, a manufacturer of mirrors, established a salon that flourished for a quarter of a century. What was the nature of this woman's education? The answer to this question I regard as of great interest, especially in these days of universal schooling and clamorous demand for equal opportunity. Nowadays it is so difficult for one to escape knowledge that nothing is so common as a little learning. The world is full of superficially educated women, but how rare among them is a Mme. Geoffrin! So it is interesting to learn the character of her early training under the guidance of her grandmother. The Empress Catherine of Russia wanted to know, and asked, and Mme. Geoffrin replied in a letter which, says Saint-Beuve, "might be added to all that Montaigne has written on education." It might serve also as a formula for the instruction of young women in the universities of this day and generation. This is what she wrote:

"I lost my father and mother in infancy. I was brought up by an old grandmother, who was very intelligent and had a good head. She had had very little education, but her mind was so clear, so adroit, so active, that it never failed her; it always took the place of learning. She spoke so pleasantly of things she did not know, that nobody desired her to know more; and when her ignorance was too obvious, she would get out of it by a witticism which disconcerted the pedants who tried to humiliate her. She was so contented with her lot that she regarded learning as a very useless thing for a woman. She would say: 'I have done so well without it that I have never felt the need of it. If my granddaughter is a fool, learning would make her con-

ceited, and insupportable; if she has wit and sensibility, she will do as I did, she will make up for what she does not know by address and feeling; and when she is more reasonable, she will learn that for which she has the most aptitude, and she will learn it very quickly.' So she taught me nothing in my childhood, except to read; but she made me read much; she taught me to think by making me argue; she taught me to know my fellow-creatures by making me say what I thought of them, and by telling me her opinion of them. She obliged me to give her an account of all my doings and all my feelings, and she corrected them with so much sweetness and grace that I never concealed my thoughts and feelings from her: my heart was as visible to her as my body. My education was continuous."

Through this simple system of training was developed a woman of whom Horace Walpole, writing to his friend Gray on January 25, 1766, said:

"Mme. Geoffrin, of whom you have heard much, is an extraordinary woman with more commonsense than I ever met with. She has great quickness in discovering characters, penetration in going to the bottom of them and a pencil that never fails in a likeness. . . . She is an epitome of empire existing by rewards and merits."

Surely Madame Chemineau was a great woman.

MY OLD-FASHIONED AUNT

By EDWARD F. O'DAY

"The Principle of the Thing!" exclaimed my aunt with great scorn. "The Principle of the Thing is humbug. People who are forever prating about the Principle of the Thing are the most disagreeable people in the world.

"I don't mind losing the money, but it's the Principle of the Thing." Rot!

"She's a wretch and beneath me, and ordinarily I'd take no notice of her conduct, but it's the Principle of the Thing." Poppycock!

"The man who uses such language is an old woman, and the woman who uses it is a nagger or a spite-cat or a fuss-bag. You never heard of a person making a sacrifice for the Principle of the Thing, did you? No, the Principle of the Thing is always lugged in to excuse some meanness or to justify some cruelty. Bother the Principle of the Thing!"

Having relieved her mind in this fashion aunty sank back into her easy chair before the wood fire and smiled at her own vehemence. Dear old aunty is not given to outbreaks like that except when thoroughly aroused. I must admit however that it is not hard to arouse her if you go about it the right way. Aunty is the most generous of women. Her generosity is not merely of the heart, a common enough trait; but of the mind also, and that is pretty rare in women. Just because she has a generous mind she is apt to be impulsive, for she cannot brook pettiness or deliberate wrong. And so she becomes vehement on occasions. It is one of her old-fashioned ways.

I have known aunty to lash out at people a little unjustly now and then. But I have never known her too proud to acknowledge a mistake. Sometimes when aunty apologizes for an unkind remark she is surprised to find how little importance the subject of the remark attached to it. She discovers that her reparation is regarded as unnecessary.

"There are people," I have heard aunty comment

at such times, "who place so low a value on truth that they don't seem to mind in the least when their own actions are misrepresented or their motives misconstrued. Is it worth while making amends to such people? Yes, I believe it is. What they think of you doesn't matter; it's what you think of yourself that counts."

Aunty places an old-fashioned value on politeness. She is so behind the times, however, that she distinguishes between politeness and etiquette. She holds that a man may be well-mannered though ignorant of social usage. To be gentle and considerate, says aunty, is to be polite. She tells me that one of the politest men she ever knew was an honest farmer who ate with his knife to the day of his death.

"The fork," aunty explains, "is a comparatively recent implement of feeding. Still, to disregard it argues a lack of observation. But a busy farmer with a wife, a mortgage and six children cannot observe everything. This farmer did not observe the rules of table deportment, but on the other hand he was a stickler for the Ten Commandments."

Aunty is quite aware that superficial politeness may cloak bad qualities, but she thinks that the keen-sighted can always see through that sort of disguise. She has none of that rather common prejudice which distrusts a man simply because he is polite.

"The man who is the first to stand up when ladies enter a room," she says, "may not be the most up-standing of men, but at least he has his wits about him."

Aunty contends, however, that there are limits beyond which politeness need not go.

"No one," she insists, "is obliged to pretend lively interest in the narration of a long-drawn-out dream."

In nothing is aunty so old-fashioned as in her attitude toward politics. For the woman in politics she has a horror she does not try to conceal.

"The female politician who carries a mirror and

a powder paper is ridiculous," she insists; "and the female politician who does without these necessary articles is avoided by the men. The former may command attention, though there are no brains in her pretty head; the latter, though she be a giantess of intellect, can scarcely command respect. This condition will continue as long as men remain in politics, namely for a few hundred years at least.

"I don't know whether a woman's vote ever changed an election for the better," aunty continues, "but I have observed it change many a woman for the worse. The women I like are not those who go to the polls triumphantly, but those who go reluctantly, nerving themselves to perform an unpleasant duty."

Aunty is dreadfully backward in all the sciences that build on statistics—economics, sociology and all that sort of thing. She has absolutely no solution for the problem of pauperism, but she always has a nickel or a pair of old shoes for a beggar. She is quite indifferent to the evil of overpopulation, but she knows the birthday of every youngster in the block and never forgets to send a little present. Her charities would not be countenanced by any trained charity worker.

"When the card index was introduced, and charity became uplift," she says, "the devil rubbed his hands in glee."

In world events aunty takes a languid interest. I am sure she does not know who is commanding the French troops at Verdun, or the Russian army in the Caucasus. Indeed, on aunty's war map the most clearly defined places seem to be Louvain and Rheims, which of course most of us have now forgotten. I have talked with her about Mexico, only to find her profoundly unversed in our policy toward that unhappy republic. Judge of my dismay when aunty introduced into this conversation a tender reference to her favorite recipe for frijoles! She listens quite coldly to denunciation of the President's official mis-

takes; but mention his second marriage, and she springs warmly to the defense—of the first Mrs. Wilson

Aunty loathes gossip, but I must add that she sometimes indulges in it. The admission will not offend her, for she is fond of saying that women may give themselves all sorts of airs except the airs of consistency.

“If consistency is a jewel,” says aunty, “it is the only jewel no womanly woman ever had the right to wear. Ours is the weaker sex, and we are particularly frail when it comes to pursuing a settled course. That is why no man ever dies of despair. While there’s life in a woman there’s hope of her changing her mind.”

Being very close to aunty I can talk to her rather freely about my dear old eccentric uncle, her late husband.

“The first time I received a proposal of marriage,” she has confided to me, “I cried and accepted. The second time I cried and declined. You see, I had been married in between. The happiest day of my life was my wedding day, and the happiest moment of that day was when my best friend caught the bridal bouquet.”

“And the saddest day of your life, aunty?” I asked, thinking I knew the answer.

“The saddest day of my life was not the day of your uncle’s death,” aunty answered very soberly. “It was the day I realized I was beginning to bear my loss with equanimity.”

Aunty never had a child. Perhaps this is what makes her so tender to young mothers, so fond of babies and so considerate to nurse girls. Of these last I have heard aunty say that the good Lord grants them a greater privilege than any she ever enjoyed.

“What can I know of life?” she said to me one day. “I who never folded a diaper or heated a milk bottle?”

Aunty is severe on fashionable finishing schools

for girls, declaring that if the pupils learned more in the class rooms and less in the dormitories we should have better women.

"I have noticed," says aunty, "that mothers who themselves attended these fashionable academies often send their daughters to convent schools. Also that the mothers who were trained by the good nuns select the same training for their daughters. The exceptions to this rule are usually climbers."

One day aunty found me reading Schopenhauer's essay on *Woman*, and it was easy to perceive that she was not pleased.

"I have read many books by learned men on this subject," she said. "They explain everything about our sex except why women cry at weddings and giggle at funerals. One of the silliest things of all is this masculine wonderment about Mona Lisa's smile. Every woman knows that the lady is smiling because she has just thought what to do with that piece of silk left over from last season's dress."

One day I dared accuse aunty of being vain.

"Of course I am vain," she replied with the utmost good humor. "I am even vain of my vanity. I am too vain to carry my first aids to vanity in a vanity case; they are locked up in the drawer of my dressing table. You see, I still cherish illusions. I do not believe I look as old as I really am. But if you ask me what good reason I have for this belief, I must be honest and answer: Absolutely none."

"Aunty, you are a wise woman," I said, though I really thought her very old-fashioned to talk like this.

"We women," she retorted, "are not as silly as the editor of the *Ladies Home Journal* thinks we are. Nor," she added, "as profound as we sound in a convention of women's clubs. And yet we know our way about. A woman may be intensely interested in Ninon de l'Enclos, but she prefers her husband to read the biography of Clara Barton."

Aunty is not always defending her sex by any

means. She can say sharp things on the subject. Thus, she told me that there was only one object in the world more wretched than a designing woman, and that was the man on whom the woman had designs. She holds that the most genuine thing about a man is his modesty, and the falsest thing about a woman, her frankness.

"Beware of the woman who makes you her confidant," she warned me. "The confidence man preys on the purses of the gullible; but the 'confidence woman' is after bigger booty."

Out of the fulness of her experience aunty delights to lecture young married men.

"Avoid the neighborhood which has more delicatessen shops than meat markets," is one of her counsels; "it is sure to be unhealthy." Also: "The man who brings a friend home to take 'pot luck' without telephoning his wife is fool enough to attempt an impromptu after-dinner speech." And again: "Sometimes an apartment house is a home; more often it is the antechamber of the divorce court."

Perhaps aunty is a trifle cynical in these matters, as when she says: "There is an old joke about the wedding choir singing, 'What will the harvest be?' To bring that joke up to date we must change the name of the song to 'What will the alimony be?'"

All of aunty's remarks on this subject are not of the discouraging order.

"Remember, young man," she told a bridegroom, very much to his embarrassment, "a weekly bunch of violets after the first baby is weaned means ever so much more than a daily orchid during the engagement time."

But when the poor fellow had digested this she added: "If you want to test your wife's imagination give her a check book and tell her to go as far as she likes. This is also a good recipe for making her unhappy."

Speaking of recipes reminds me of another of aunty's remarks. She said some people were always

planning to live, but never did. And that their tragedy was symbolized by the housewife who is so busy pasting recipes in her scrap book that she never has time to try them.

Aunty does not smoke, but I think she has no objection to the pastime for women who like it. At least it did not seem to be positive disapproval of smoking which prompted her to say of a woman with nicotine on her fingers: "The poor thing was so badly raised that she does not know about sapolio."

Being old-fashioned, aunty is of course superstitious. Her weakness in this regard is shown by certain maxims for women which I have heard her utter. Here are three that I remember:

"Never walk near a ladder up which a climber is mounting, for when she falls—as she is sure to do—she will blame you. A climber's anger is very dangerous.

"Never marry your third husband on a Friday; some evil is bound to follow. This warning applies to six other days in the week.

"Be careful never to break a mirror; and to this end don't look in one immediately after rising."

One of aunty's favorite axioms is that "if you live long enough you'll hear everything," and this, she says, is the reason she is reconciled to an early death. And speaking of death I have heard her say that she wishes a very simple funeral but will be disappointed if her wish is respected.

"Aunty," I said to her while we were cheerfully discussing this melancholy subject, "yours has been a happy life."

"On the whole, I suppose it has," aunty replied. "As a child I had as many dolls, as many beans bags, as many tricycles and as many birthdays parties as were good for me, but never as many as I wanted. Little girls, you know, are greedy. My graduation dress was at least as pretty as any other girl's of my year. This softened my chagrin at finishing near the foot of the class. My first evening frock was all

that I could desire, and I only missed two dances at my first ball. Subsequently I was a wall flower often enough to save me from giddy conceit. For a time I cherished the dream of becoming a poetess and spoiled a great deal of white linen paper, but your uncle happened along and proposed to me, so I never really got into the poetical habit of neglecting my hair and my finger nails. About this time I began to regard my school paintings with a critical eye and hid most of them so effectually that they have never been uncovered since. My married life was happier than most childless married lives. Knowing what I know of my nephew I sometimes thank God that I never had a son.* Your uncle was very good to me. He never told me of his earlier loves, or doubted that I had had many admirers before he met me. He never read the paper at breakfast, or grumbled when we had pork chops two nights in succession. He never expected me to have the same high opinion of his pals which he entertained, and never talked about his club for more than ten minutes at a time. He never made fun of a bonnet that he thought I was attached to. He was sufficiently jealous of me to keep me in good humor. I think he was true to me, but I never investigated the matter too closely. Perhaps his most appealing trait was a willingness to admit that he was wrong, even when both of us knew that he was right. He made me cry sometimes, but not too often. Of course he patronized me a little: what husband does not? But on the other hand he affected to believe what I told him about the wickedness of beautiful women, so that balanced things nicely. Looking back over our life together I can see that I must have amused him many times, but bless him! there were plenty of times when he unconsciously amused me. We had our quarrels, of course. But fortunately we never said things that rankled. When the end came I know he

*I am not sure what aunty means by this, and I am afraid to ask her.

was sorry to leave me. Yes, indeed, I have had a happy time."

At the conclusion of this, the longest speech I ever heard my dear aunt make, she gave me an old-fashioned kiss. As I left she busied herself with a crochet needle and an old-fashioned work box and I inferred that some useful garment was in preparation for the newest baby in the block.

MY FIRST BEATING

By MAXIM GORKY

I was fascinated by the ease with which the grown-up people changed the color of different materials; they took something yellow, steeped it in black dye, and it came out dark blue. They laid a piece of grey stuff in reddish water and it was dyed mauve. It was quite simple, yet to me it was inexplicable. I longed to dye something myself, and I confided my desire to Sascha Yaakov, a thoughtful boy, always in favor with his elders, always good-natured, obliging and ready to wait upon everyone.

The adults praised him highly for his obedience and his cleverness, but grandfather looked on him with no favorable eye, and used to say:

"An artful beggar that!"

Hearing of my desire to learn the process of dyeing, he advised me to take one of the best white tablecloths from the cupboard and dye it blue.

"White always takes the color better, I know," he said very seriously.

I dragged out a heavy tablecloth and ran with it to the yard, but I had no more than lowered the hem of it into the vat of dark-blue dye when Tsiganok, the young, broad-shouldered foreman of the dye works, flew at me from somewhere, rescued the cloth, and wringing it out with his rough hands, cried to

my cousin, who had been looking on at my work from a safe place:

"Call your grandmother quickly."

And shaking his black, dishevelled head ominously, he said to me:

"You'll catch it for this."

Grandmother came running on to the scene, wailing, and even weeping, at the sight, and scolded me in her ludicrous fashion:

"Oh, you young pickle! I hope you will be spanked for this."

Afterwards, however, she said to Tsiganok: "You needn't say anything about this to grandfather, Vanka. I'll manage to keep it from him. Let us hope that something will happen to take up his attention."

Vanka replied in a preoccupied manner, drying his hands on his multi-colored apron:

"Me? I shan't tell: but you had better see that that Sascha doesn't go and tell tales."

"I will give him something to keep him quiet," said grandmother, leading me into the house.

On Saturday, before vespers, I was called into the kitchen, where it was all dark and still. I remember the closely shut doors of the shed and of the room, and the grey mist of an autumn evening, and the heavy patter of rain. Sitting in front of the stove on a narrow bench, looking cross and quite unlike himself, was Tsiganok; grandfather, standing in the chimney corner, was taking long rods out of a pail of water, measuring them, putting them together, and flourishing them in the air with a shrill whistling sound. Grandmother, somewhere in the shadows, was taking snuff noisily and muttering:

"Now you are in your element, tyrant!"

Sascha Yaakov was sitting in a chair in the middle of the kitchen, rubbing his eyes with his knuckles, and whining like an old beggar in a voice quite unlike his usual voice:

"Forgive me, for Christ's sake . . .!"

Standing by the chair, shoulder to shoulder, like

wooden figures, stood the children of Uncle Michael, brother and sister.

"When I have flogged you I will forgive you," said grandfather, drawing a long, damp rod across his knuckles.

"Now then . . . take down your breeches!"

He spoke very calmly, and neither the sound of his voice nor the noise made by the boy as he moved on the squeaky chair, nor the scraping of grandmother's feet, broke the memorable stillness of that almost dark kitchen, under the low, blackened ceiling.

Sascha stood up, undid his trousers, letting them down as far as his knees, then bending and holding them up with his hands, he stumbled to the bench. It was painful to look at him, and my legs also began to tremble.

But worse was to come, when he submissively lay down on the bench face downwards, and Vanka, tying him to it by means of a wide towel placed under his arms and round his neck, bent under him and with black hands seized his legs by the ankles.

"Lexei!" grandfather called to me. "Come nearer! Come! Don't you hear me speaking to you? Look and see what a flogging is. . . One!"

With a mild flourish he brought the rod down on the naked flesh, and Sascha set up a howl.

"Rubbish!" said grandfather. "That's nothing! . . . But here's something to make you smart."

And he dealt such blows that the flesh was soon in a state of inflammation and covered with great red weals, and my cousin gave a prolonged howl.

"Isn't it nice?" asked grandfather, as his hand rose and fell. "You don't like it? . . . That's for the thimble!"

When he raised his hand with a flourish my heart seemed to rise too, and when he let his hand fall something within me seemed to sink.

"I won't do it again," squealed Sascha, in a dreadfully thin, weak voice, unpleasant to hear. "Didn't I tell—didn't I tell about the tablecloth?"

Grandfather answered clamly, as if he were reading the Psalter:

"Tale-bearing is no justification. The informer gets whipped first, so take that for the tablecloth."

Grandmother threw herself upon me and seized my hand, crying: "I won't allow Lexei to be touched! I won't allow it, you monster!" And she began to kick the door, calling to my mother: "Varia! Varvara!"

Grandfather darted across to her, threw her down, seized me and carried me to the bench. I struck at him with my fists, pulled his sandy beard, and bit his fingers. He bellowed and held me as in a vice. In the end, throwing me down on the bench, he struck me on the face.

I shall never forget his savage cry: "Tie him up! I'm going to kill him!" nor my mother's white face and great eyes as she ran along up and down beside the bench, shrieking:

"Father! You mustn't! Let me have him!"

Grandfather flogged me till I lost consciousness, and I was unwell for some days, tossing about, face downwards, on a wide, stuffy bed, in a little room with one window and a lamp which was always kept burning before the case of icons in the corner. Those dark days had been the greatest in my life. In the course of them I had developed wonderfully, and I was conscious of a peculiar difference in myself. I began to experience a new solicitude for others, and I became so keenly alive to their sufferings and my own that it was almost as if my heart had been lacerated, and thus rendered sensitive.

For this reason the quarrel between my mother and grandmother came as a great shock to me—when grandmother, looking so dark and big in the narrow room, flew into a rage, and pushing my mother into the corner where the icons were, hissed:

"Why didn't you take him away?"

"I was afraid."

"A strong, healthy creature like you! You ought

to be ashamed of yourself, Varvara! I am an old woman and I am not afraid. For shame!"

"Do leave off, mother; I am sick of the whole business."

"No, you don't love him! You have no pity for the poor orphan!"

"I have been an orphan all my life," said my mother, speaking loudly and sadly.

After that they both cried for a long time, seated on a box in a corner, and then my mother said:

"If it were not for Alexei, I would leave this place—and go right away. I can't go on living in this hell, mother, I can't! I haven't the strength."

"Oh! My own flesh and blood!" whispered grandmother.

Very soon after this, as suddenly as if he had fallen from the ceiling, grandfather appeared, and sitting on the bed, laid his ice-cold hands on my head.

"How do you do, young gentleman? Come! answer me. Don't sulk! Well? What have you to say?"

I had a great mind to kick away his legs, but it hurt me to move. His head, sandier than ever, shook from side to side uneasily; his bright eyes seemed to be looking for something on the wall as he pulled out of his pocket a gingerbread goat, a horn made of sugar, an apple and a cluster of purple raisins, which he placed on the pillow under my very nose.

"There you are! There's a present for you."

And he stooped and kissed me on the forehead. Then, stroking my head with those small, cruel hands, yellow-stained about the crooked, claw-like nails, he began to speak.

"I left my mark on you then, my friend. You were very angry. You bit me and scratched me, and then I lost my temper too. However, it will do you no harm to have been punished more severely than you deserved. It will go towards next time. You must learn not to mind when people of your own family beat you. It is part of your training. It would be

different if it came from an outsider, but from one of us it does not count. You must not allow outsiders to lay hands on you, but it is nothing coming from one of your own family. I suppose you think I was never flogged? Oleysha! I was flogged harder than you could ever imagine even in a bad dream. I was flogged so cruelly that God Himself might have shed tears to see it. And what was the result? I—an orphan, the son of a poor mother—have risen to my present position—the head of a guild, and a master workman.”

He stayed with me and told me stories until it was almost dark, and when, after an affectionate farewell, he left me, I had learned that he was neither malevolent nor formidable. It brought the tears into my eyes to remember that it was he who had so cruelly beaten me, but I could not forget it.

This visit of my grandfather opened the door to others, and from morning till night there was always somebody sitting on my bed, trying to amuse me; I remember that this was not always either cheering or pleasant.

Oftener than any of them came my grandmother, who slept in the same bed with me. But it was Tsiganok who left the clearest impression on me in those days. He used to appear in the evenings—square-built, broad-chested, curly-headed, dressed in his best clothes—a gold-embroidered shirt, plush breeches, boots squeaking like a harmonium. His hair was glossy, his squinting, merry eyes gleamed under his thick eyebrows, and his white teeth under the shadow of his young mustache; his shirt glowed softly as if reflecting the red light of the image-lamp.

“Look here!” he said, turning up his sleeve and displaying his bare arm to the elbow. It was covered with red scars. “Look how swollen it is; and it was worse yesterday—it was very painful. When your grandfather flew into a rage and I saw that he was going to flog you, I put my arm in the way, thinking that the rod would break, and then while

he was looking for another your grandmother or your mother could take you away and hide you. I am an old bird at the game, my child."

He laughed gently and kindly, and glancing again at the swollen arm, went on:

"I was so sorry for you that I thought I should choke. It seemed such a shame! . . . But he lashed away at you!"

Snorting and tossing his head like a horse, he went on speaking about the affair. This childish simplicity seemed to draw him closer to me. I told him that I loved him very much, and he answered with a simplicity which always lives in my memory.

"And I love you too! That is why I let myself be hurt—because I love you. Do you think I would have done it for anyone else? I should be making a fool of myself."

Later on he gave me whispered instructions, glancing frequently at the door. "Next time he beats you don't try to get away from him, and don't struggle. It hurts twice as much if you resist. If you let yourself go he will deal lightly with you. Be limp and soft, and don't scowl at him. Try and remember this; it is good advice."

"Surely he won't whip me again!" I exclaimed.

"Why, of course!" replied Tsiganok calmly. "Of course he will whip you again, and often too!"

"But why?"

"Because grandfather is on the watch for you." And again he cautiously advised me: "When he whips you he brings the rod straight down. Well, if you lie there quietly he may possibly hold the rod lower so that it won't break your skin. . . . Now, do you understand? Move your body towards him and the rod, and it will be all the better for you."

Winking at me with his dark, squinting eyes, he added: "I know more about such matters than a policeman even. I have been beaten on my bare shoulders till the skin came off, my boy!"

DICKENS AND THE WOODEN LEG

By VERNON RENDALL

Of all authors Dickens is the most inclined to the grotesque and the abnormal, but is there anywhere, one asks, a freak of any kind so predominant in his writings as to suggest that it was an obsession with him? I think there is such an obsession, though no one, so far as I am aware, has hitherto noticed it. Reading within a year all the well known books of Dickens, I have come to regard Wegg as the triumphant climax of a persistent series of wooden legs. These references do not pretend to be complete—there may be others—but the legs I have gathered form a *corpus* of evidence not easily upset.

I proceed to the evidence in the novels. The *Sketches by Boz*, in which Dickens hardly found himself, contain no wooden leg, but the introduction of Sam Weller in Chapter X of *Pickwick* starts the series:

“Well, you are a nice young ’ooman for a musical party, you are,” said the boot-cleaner. “Look at these here boots—eleven pairs o’ boots; and one shoe as b’longs to number six, with the wooden leg.”

Later Sam repeated the information that there was “a wooden leg in number six.” Chapter XXXIII of *Pickwick* records the meeting of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association. The report of converts to the cause includes the following case:

Thomas Burton is purveyor of cats’ meat to the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and several members of the Common Council (the announcement of the gentleman’s name was received with breathless interest). Has a wooden leg; finds a wooden leg expensive going over the stones; used to wear second-hand wooden legs, and drink a glass of hot gin and water regularly every night—sometimes two (deep sighs). Found the second-hand wooden legs split and rot very quickly; is firmly persuaded that their constitution was undermined by the gin and water

(prolonged cheering). Buys new wooden legs now, and drinks nothing but water and weak tea. The new legs last twice as long as the others used to do, and he attributes this solely to his temperate habits (triumphant cheers).

Here the wooden leg is emphasized; it is casual in *Oliver Twist* where (Chapter V) Noah Claypole's father is mentioned as a "drunken soldier, discharged with a wooden leg." In *Nicholas Nickleby* Dickens has a curious fancy, or piece of observation, which shows a special study of the theme. Miss Knag (Chapter XVII) boasts of an uncle who has such small feet that they were no bigger than those which are usually joined to wooden legs. Miss Knag is probably romancing, but had her creator any authority for the idea that wooden legs have anything like feet joined to them? Or does he in his obsession conceive the artificial leg as so natural that it must end in feet?

Barnaby Rudge is interesting as bringing together the idea of a wooden leg and a horribly acute blind man, two phenomena which the reader will remember in *Treasure Island*. In Chapter VIII Mr. Tappertit is seen as a captain of 'prentices served in a cellar by Stagg, the blind man. Dropping on one knee, Stagg gently smoothes the ineffective calves of the captain's legs:

"That I had but eyes," he cried, "to behold my captain's symmetrical proportions! That I had but eyes, to look upon these twin invaders of domestic peace."

"Get out!" said Mr. Tappertit, glancing downward at his favorite limbs. "Go along, will you, Stagg!"

"When I touch my own afterwards," cried the host, smiting them reproachfully, "I hate 'em. Comparatively speaking, they've no more shape than wooden legs beside these models of my noble captain's."

"Yours!" exclaimed Mr. Tappertit. "No, I should think not. Don't talk about those precious old toothpicks in the same breath with mine; that's rather too much."

This passage suggests that thus early in the book

Dickens had in his mind the suitable penalty for Mr. Tappertit. Both his legs were mangled, and the last chapter of the book informs us that

Mr. Simon Tappertit, being removed from a hospital to prison, and then to his place of trial, was discharged by proclamation, on two wooden legs. Shorn of his graceful limbs, and brought down from his high estate to circumstances of utter destitution, and the deepest misery, he made shift to stump back to his old master and beg for some relief.

Dickens adds yet another touch. He explains that Mr. Tappertit turned shoeblack and married the widow of an eminent bone and rag collector, formerly of Millbank. When domestic storms arose

Mr. Tappertit would, in the assertion of his prerogative, so far forget himself as to correct his lady with a brush, or boot or shoe; while she (but only in extreme cases) would retaliate by taking off his legs, and leaving him exposed to the derision of those urchins who delight in mischief.

Thus does Dickens pleasantly dwell on this example of his theme; but he is not content with it alone; he had previously noted, at the end of Chapter LXXVII, that among those hanged at Bloomsbury Square for their part in the Riots "were two cripples—both mere boys—one with a leg of wood."

This, of course, may be an historical fact; but, whether fact or fiction, it shows Dickens's zeal for a detail concerning a wooden leg. In the *Old Curiosity Shop* (Chapter XV) the old cottager who entertains Nell and her grandfather speaks of a son who 'listed "for a so'jer—he come back home though, for all he had but one poor leg." The other was presumably wooden, but the real article is mentioned by one of the curious entertainers who assemble at the Jolly Sandboys in Chapter XIX. Mr. Vuffin explains that giants should be kept from the public view:

"Once make a giant common and giants will never draw again. Look at wooden legs. If there was only

one man with a wooden leg what a property he'd be!"

"So he would!" observed the landlord and Short together. "That's very true."

"Instead of which," pursued Mr. Vuffin, "if you was to advertise Shakespeare played entirely by wooden legs, it's my belief you wouldn't draw a sixpence."

One cannot forget also in Chapter L Mr. Swiveller's lament over the former Sophy Wackles:

"Her name is Cheggs now, Sophy Cheggs. Yet loved I as man never loved that hadn't wooden legs, and my heart, my heart is breaking for the love of Sophy Cheggs."

Mr. Swiveller, like Mr. Wegg, dropped into verse occasionally. He was spurred thereto, however, not by friendliness but by emotion. The reference might be regarded as merely providing an easy rhyme and an agreeable fancy, if there were not so many others of a similar sort.

Chapter IX of *Martin Chuzzlewit* reveals Mr. Pecksniff "took very poorly" at Mrs. Todgers's party, falling into the fireplace, and finally carried upstairs to his bed. But shortly afterwards he reappeared at the top landing, strangely attired, and delivered himself of those improving sentiments which might have been expected from so eminent a moralist.

"To bed," said Mr. Pecksniff. "Bed! 'Tis the voice of the sluggard; I heard him complain; you have woke me too soon; I must slumber again. If any young orphan will repeat the remainder of that simple piece from Doctor Watts's collection, an eligible opportunity now offers."

Nobody volunteered.

"This is very soothing," said Mr. Pecksniff, after a pause. "Extremely so. Cool and refreshing; particularly to the legs! The legs of the human subject, my friends, are a beautiful production. Compare them with wooden legs, and observe the difference between the anatomy of nature and the anatomy of art. Do you know," said Mr. Pecksniff, leaning over the banisters, with an odd recollection of his familiar manner among new pupils

at home, "that I should very much like to see Mrs. Todgers's notion of a wooden leg, if perfectly agreeable to herself!"

Orphans are mentioned two or three times by Mr. Pecksniff at this crisis; his minds runs on them naturally as making excellent architectural pupils free from the searching inquiries of parents; but there seems no particular reason for his final remarks. He was not an anatomist like Mr. Venus. He was not so much exhibiting his own character as following the lead of Dickens's fancy.

Chapter XIX of *Martin Chuzzlewit* introduces Mrs. Gamp, who, when entering a house of mourning, feels it safe to say, "Ah! Poor dear," and continues:

"Ah, dear! When Gamp was sommonsed to his long home, and I see him a-lying in Guy's Hospital with a penny piece on each eye, and his wooden leg under his left arm, I thought I should have fainted away. But I bore up."

I have always thought that the late Mr. Gamp must have resembled Mr. Silas Wegg in his gifts and habits.

In *Dombey* (Chapter XLI) Cousin Feenix drives down with Mr. Dombey to Brighton, and checks off his acquaintances aloud as he meets them, including "man with cork leg from White's." But there is another allusion in Chapter LVII which is more marked. Walter Gay and Florence Dombey are married in a dusty old city church:

There is no bridesmaid, unless Susan Nipper is one; and no better father than Captain Cuttle. A man with a wooden leg, chewing a faint apple and carrying a blue bag in his hand, looks in to see what is going on; but, finding it nothing entertaining, stumps off again, and pegs his way among the echoes out of doors.

Why should he turn up at that particular moment? His appearance is casual and has nothing to do with the story.

No research is needed to discover the ligneous limb in *David Copperfield*. Most readers will re-

member Salem House, Mr. Creakle, and an "obstinate barbarian" with a wooden leg who was his creature, Mr. Tungay. It may be noted, however, that Tungay's name is not given till late in the narrative. Dickens seems to enjoy calling him "the man with the wooden leg," as if he wished to emphasize that feature and feared the reader might forget it.

In *Bleak House* the gay and discursive Skimpole provides the inevitable reference. Chapter XXXVIII explains how he met Esther Summerson at The Deadlock Arms, and, after hearing of her recovery, felt that he appreciated health the more when somebody else was ill; didn't know but what it might be in the scheme of things that A should squint to make B. happier in looking straight, or that C. should carry a wooden leg, to make D. better satisfied with the flesh and blood in a silk stocking.

Hard Times and *Little Dorrit* have each an example which shows how curiously the fancy of Dickens played round the wooden leg. For most people that striking alteration of the human figure would be sufficiently odd in itself; it would not be a universal and familiar object like a human face, the distortion of which is readily perceived in things totally different. For Dickens it is otherwise. Coketown (*Hard Times*, Chapters V and XVI) possessed a number of chapels which were severely "workful" and resembled pious warehouses.

The solitary exception was the New Church; a stuccoed edifice with a square steeple over the door, terminating in four short pinnacles like florid wooden legs.

The comparison is surely extraordinary; the pinnacle of a church has not the stark, straight outline of the wooden leg, and no one would conceive of it in that light unless he had a vision of such legs before him which insisted on being regarded as the basis of normal observation.

In *Little Dorrit* (Book II, Chapter VII) the Dorrits move from Venice to Rome, and the heroine is confused by the new conditions of life:

Here it seemed to Little Dorrit that a change came over the Marshalsea spirit of their society, and that Prunes and Prism got the upper hand. Everybody was walking about St. Peter's and the Vatican on somebody else's cork legs, and straining every visible object through somebody else's sieve.

A strange fancy indeed! See also Book I, Chapter XXIII, for four wooden legs mentioned at once.

In *Great Expectations* (Chapter XXX) Herbert Pocket reveals to Pip his engagement to Clara, daughter of Bill Barley, a retired purser who is never seen, but is heard in his room: "He makes tremendous rows, roars, and pegs at the floor with some frightful instrument." Mr. Barley had the gout, and a habit of coming down on his back. One might almost suppose that he was hampered with a wooden leg. At any rate, Dickens uses that to explain his violence. In Chapter XLVI when old Barley was growling upstairs,

Suddenly the growl swelled into a roar again, and a frightful bumping noise was heard above, as if a giant with a wooden leg were trying to bore it through the ceiling to come at us.

In *Our Mutual Friend* who knows not "the literary man with a wooden leg?" Yet Dickens is not content with Wegg. Forgetting that he has introduced a wooden leg into the marriage of the young couple in *Dombey*, he introduces a Chelsea pensioner with two into the marriage of John Rokesmith and Bella (Book IV, Chapter IV)!

Edwin Drood, the last book, has no leg of the kind, but, after all, it is incomplete.

Adventures are not dealt out fairly in this world; some have them frequently, others never. Had Dickens a positive gift for meeting wooden legs, just as others have a gift for picking up lost things of value? It must be remembered that he spent an immense amount of time in walking about the streets; he traveled for the firm of Human Interest more than any man of his time.

LACEDAEMON

By MAURICE HEWLETT

I saw Helen between two men,
Sleek and aware as a schooled hen
Of the man on either side
Stalking by her: the one blue-eyed,
A silent, proud and kingly head
That dared not show his fever of dread
Of what was lost that had been won,
Golden-haired, afire in the sun.

The other was dark, with a flusht face
And smiling eyes, a foreign grace
In all his bearing of glancing eye,
Quick hands and courtesy.
Paris was he, to whose wild mood
Woman's body was drink and food,
And women's tears a whet to the meat.

She bent her eyes towards her feet,
Keeping her round face grave and pure;
Yet askances peered, most sure
How over her their fierce looks met,
One possessing, and one to get.

All my eyes were for this feat,
Thin, still woman whose body sweet,
Willowy-slim and dainty-small,
Should hold the world ten years in thrall,
And all men patient to possess,
Like leopards watching a leopardess.
She lookt the emblem of constancy,
Whose eyes were like the blue of the sea,
Far-set, full of dream,
Ringed with dark. But I saw the gleam
Of quick fancy come and go
Like fires on the sea which the waves throw
Suddenly and then drown in the night;
And I knew her huntress of dear delight
And high desire beyond our ken,
Not to be sated by love of men.

And thus they past, and glimmer'd small
Under Taygetus, like a wall
Flung by giants to shut God up
In Lacedaemon, the grass-green cup.

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