

ADVENTURES
IN
LIFE AND LETTERS

BY
MICHAEL MONAHAN

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AND LETTERS

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IN
LIFE AND LETTERS

BY
MICHAEL MONAHAN



New York & London
MITCHELL KENNERLEY
1912

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To

ROBERT MITCHELL FLOYD

and

ISOBEL HENDERSON FLOYD

*With Oeil de Perdrix,
Dear Colonel, and thee,
I'd tarry for aye and a day;
While the red bubbles up
In the crystalline cup,
And we like two kings in a play.
There's that other poor wight,
All in motley bedight,
Who has kept me so long company,—
Ah, the years are two score!
But I'll know him no more,
When merry with Oeil de Perdrix.*

*With Oeil de Perdrix,
Dear Colonel, and thee,
I'd not deem an age over-long;
Let the fools have their thinking,
While we sit here drinking
And losing the world for a song.
Hark! that wail rising nigh—
'Tis the hounds in full cry
That Care on her minion lets free:
They shall track me in vain
While this goblet I drain
And mock them in Oeil de Perdrix.*

*With Oeil de Perdrix,
Dear Colonel, and thee,
No weariness e'er should I feel,
The lights should burn on
Till the heralds of dawn
On our merriment slyly would steal.
Our joy should not fail,
Nor our laughter grow stale,
Nor the jest and the smile less agree,
While glorious we'd sit,
Mixing wine with our wit,
In bumpers of Oeil de Perdrix.*

*With Oeil de Perdrix,
Dear Colonel, and thee,
I gather the laurels once lost,
And the prizes of fame
Seem too easy to claim,
Though the world deem so bitter the cost.
I incline like a god,
Bidding all with a nod,
Love, Glory and Wealth, those bright Three:
Ah, let me dream on—
I shall waken anon
To a morn without Oeil de Perdrix!*

—M. M.

New York, November, 1911

CONTENTS

	PAGE
A LOST POET	7
THE TIME OF LOUIS THE GRAND	14
THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK	17
MEMORIES	39
CLAUDE TILLIER	48
GEORGE MOORE, LOVER	58
BROTHER ELIAS	68
GUY DE MAUPASSANT	77
KNIGHTS OF THE ROAD	87
MARY	98
LOST	105
OLD BOOK MEN	111
THE UNKNOWN MASTERPIECE	117
THE BELOVED (With apologies to Koheleth)	123
PECCAVI	128
DEATH AND THE DOCTOR	133
THE WOMAN	142
COMTE AND CLOTILDE	153
BILL	158
THE CALL OF THE SEA	162
EXIT BILL	169
THE OTHER FACE	174
LILITH	182
TO A LITERARY CHARACTER	187

	PAGE
POTPOURRI	189
DICKENS: A REVERIE	211
A LITTLE DINNER WITH EGERIA	225
TO THE SHADE OF LAMB	233
SLEEP	239
FORTY YEAR	245
THE LOST GOD: A FABLE OF TO-DAY	254
A NOTE ON OSCAR WILDE	260
MY RELIGION	268
THE DEVIL	274
VOLTAIRE	282
A MATHEMATICAL MYSTIC	289
BEING HAPPY THOUGH RICH	294
THE PEOPLE	301
CELLINI	304
THE SABINE FARM	316
AT POE'S COTTAGE	319
LITERARY AMENITIES	327
CONSULE PLANCO	336
HENRIETTE RENAN	338
BALLADE OF POOR SOULS	352
IN THE SHADOW	354
EASTER	359
THE TALISMAN	363
AN OLD BOY	368

ADVENTURES IN LIFE
AND LETTERS

*LITTLE Book, I mean you to be my refuge
from the carking world; my sanctuary of
the inner mind; my magic tent o' night,
wherein the soul shall whisper messages forbidden
to the common day; an isle of rest in my hard pil-
grimage that mayhap shall keep green and fair
some little space when the hands that tended it are
dust.*

ADVENTURES IN LIFE AND LETTERS

A LOST POET

TO almost every man blessed or cursed with the instinct of self-expression—blessed in so far as the instinct is gratified, cursed in so far as it is balked and frustrated—there comes a time, the heyday of youth being past, when the vanity of his hope presses upon him with a cruel insistence. Even the successful artist is not exempt from this trial—we know how it embittered the last days of Robert Louis Stevenson, in spite of every testimony of esteem, every suffrage of recognition that an applauding world could shower upon him. How grievous, then, must it be in the case of a man who has but merely demonstrated the artistic temperament by such slight works as are commonly accepted only as an earnest of riper and better performance! It is then that such a man, having neither secured nor deserved from the world that sustaining grace of public approval which is called success, begins to see with fatal clearness the *via*

dolorosa of the artistic spirit stretching away before his lamentable vision, and ever dropping lower unto the sad twilight of age. Oh, the bitterness of that first foretaste of inevitable defeat! No sentence of the world, however severe, could affect his courage like this, for, alas! this comes from within—the man is judged by that inner self from whose decrees there is no appeal. Not so had he promised himself in his first sanguine elation at hearing the poet's voice within his breast; nor can he endure to look forward to an old age lacking what must be for him its chief honor and garland:

Latoe, dones et—precor—integra
Cum mente nec turpem senectam
Degere nec cithara carentem!

Alas! what hope is there for him of an old age rejoiced with the lyre, since now, ere youth be yet entirely past, he is tasting that death of the spirit which foretokens decay and eternal silence? This, in truth, is the supreme agony of such a mind—worse, far worse, than a hundred deaths of the body: yea, worse than the "second death" of Christian reprobation. To pass away in the course of nature were nothing; a thousand generations preach the trite moral of flesh that is reaped like grass—any fool's grinning skull will make a jest of this brief-lived humanity. But to feel now, when it is too late, that he had a voice and did not speak;

that he forfeited the most precious of all birth-rights; that he *was* a poet—yes, by God!—and yet failed to make good his divine title, and must now remain forever silent, losing his place in the immortal company of those who cannot die from out the grateful memory of men—oh, what a thought is this for a man to bear with him to his grave!

But the world, incredulous of such a soul, is ready to cry out upon the recreant: Why, if he had a true voice, did he not speak—nay, how could he help speaking? Who was there to bid him be silent? Of marvellous worth, truly, was this poem of his, always seeking form and melody in his brain, which could never get itself written—this message always rising to his lips, which could never get itself spoken!

Let all the accidents of time and fate plead for him. Think you that none was deemed worthy in the Olympic strife save him who barely snatched the victor's wreath?

What of the many agonists, nameless now forever, who lost the prize, yet made the victor earn his triumph dear? Only less than his was their skill, their strength, their endurance—nay, it may well be that in all things they stood equal to him, but the strumpet Fortune turned the scale. Even as he, had they prepared for the stern trial, with labor and sweat and vigil; and victors they stood in their own high hope until the last decisive moment. Hail to the vanquished!

Deeper, less remediable grief than was theirs who lost the olive crown, is the portion of the disfranchised poet. And though most ills of body and soul now freely render themselves to the scalpel of the surgeon or the probe of the psychologist, not easily shall you approach this wounded spirit, stricken of the gods themselves for the sin of recreancy to their high gift.

Yet have I known such a poet, by a strange privilege; and without the least treason, I am permitted to write his fateful story here. In doing so I betray no living confidence, for the man, though he still breathes the vital air, is as no longer of this earth, having lost that which was the true essence and motive of his being. Reluctantly enough I venture to look into the soul of this unfortunate.

The god in his bosom is dead. The burning hopes of his ardent youth, when the night was all too short for its dreams of glory, have fallen back upon his heart in cold and bitter ashes. Alas, how have the years cheated him! Always he was putting off the clamant voice within his breast until he should have gathered more knowledge of his art—should have become wiser, stronger, purer. Life detained him from his appointed task with its manifold surprises. "Wait!" it said: "thou dost not yet know me well enough to write of me. Abide still a little longer, and no poet will have learned so much."

Then was he taken in the sweet coil of young passion, and his nights were turned to ecstasy, his days to waking dreams; so that the beauty of a woman's white body seemed to him the only poem betwixt the heaven and the earth. And this happened in the first City of Desire.

Long was he held by this strong coil, but at last, shamed by the accusation of his pure early dream, he broke the guilty fetter and was again free. But not yet to write; not yet. For he said, "Alas! I have done hurt to my soul, and until her peace shall be restored, I am unworthy the sacred name of poet."

Then, after a long season of self-torment, resisting bravely the phantoms of his late evil experience in the first City of Desire, yet knowing himself the weaker for every victory, he at length set himself to write. But not yet was it to be, for a better Love came and took the pen from his hand, saying: "Thou hast learned all too dearly what is evil in love. Now shalt thou learn what is good; and then indeed mayst thou prove thyself a poet."

So he married this better Love, even in the way of men, though not, if he had wiser known, in the way of poets. And much joy, for a season, was his, and the ghosts of bad delights fell away and ceased to reproach or entice him. But ere long, when he sought to take up the pen, he found that this better Love was implacably jealous of the poet

in his breast. "Look at me!" she cried. "Am I not more desirable than the fiction of thy brain? Is it for this I am beautiful—nay, is it for this I gave myself to thee, that thou shouldst leave me for thy thoughts, or that even when present, thou shouldst not see me for the working of thy fancy?"

And then would she weep till the poor, distracted poet would take her to his heart, learning how much easier it is to comfort a loving woman than to write an immortal poem.

Thus, again, the pen was laid aside, and the unhappy poet was, perforce, content to read the poems of other poets to his wife—which she graciously permitted—instead of writing any of his own. And the neighbors called him a model husband, for a literary man; all the time wondering when he would produce his great work.

So the years passed, each in its flight vainly challenging him; and children came, adding to his burden of care, and forcing him to double-lock the door of that secret chamber of his soul where he still kept his white dream of poesy. At long intervals, however, he went in there stealthily, drawing the bolts with fearful precaution, lest the wife of his bosom should hear him; and often he came from thence weeping.

But at length the ardor of his wife's love for him was appeased, or it was divided between him and their children; so that one day she cried to him in

shrill reproach: "Did I not marry a poet long ago, and why hast thou made nothing of thy gifts? Cannot a man be a poet and yet love his wife? Cannot he get works of his mind as well as lawful children of his body?"

To which the lost poet, whom she had so well trained, made no answer, only looking at her with lamentable eyes.

Then she bustled about and found the pen so long laid aside, and put it in his hand, saying: "Come, thou art not so young as thou wast when I married and reclaimed thee from evil; but there is yet time. Write!"

The poor poet was stricken with wonder and even doubted if he heard aright, so that a moment he stood gazing at her in pitiful uncertainty. Then he saw that this woman to whom he had yielded up the glory of his youth and the hope of his genius, was in earnest. And he said:

"What now shall I write, an it please thee?—mine own epitaph! . . ."

THE TIME OF LOUIS THE GRAND

O *FOR the time of Louis the Grand,
 The rare old time, the fine old time,
 When the world danced to the King's
 command,
 The Great King, the Sublime!
 When La Montespan or La Maintenon
 Held her place in the royal heart,
 And the poet might sing, if his venal song
 Had the trick of the courtier's art.*

*O the lips that lied with a perfect grace,
 And the eyes' unfathomed smile,
 The masque of powder and scent and lace,
 With its gay and gracious guile.
 What if Honor lived as a strumpet thing,
 Yea, mocked for her flaunting shame,—
 Was she not the favored of court and King?—
 And the King could bear no blame!*

*O the perjured oaths, the broken lives,
 And the land's unheeded cry,
 The pimp or quean that in favor thrives,
 While the sinless serf must die:*

*The wars that draw out the nation's blood,
Too oft for a trivial thing—
My faith! such talk were not understood
When Louis the Grand was King.*

*O the pomp and pride of the highborn priest,
Yea, the stern, un-Christlike pride,
That sate with Dives at his loaded feast,
Nor the blackest robe could hide.
And the barren word of his haughty dole
To the Shepherd's chosen poor,
Who, starved in body and mind and soul,
Would yet their ills endure.*

*O those wretched poor!—how they bowed the head,
And clung to their bitter lot,
Nor ceased to pray, tho the tears they shed
Were of God and man forgot.
And fearful the wage that time did hold
For the dread atoning day
When the serf should mock at a bribe of gold,
And the master's blood must pay!*

* * *

*Yes, I like to think of the rare old time
When Louis the Grand was King,
And here am I moved to say in rhyme
What his poets might not sing.*

*The masque of powder and scent and lace,
The court with its splendor gay,
The sly intrigues, with their wicked grace,
And the King's own part in the play:—*

*O merry sport 'tis to make them live
In memory's antic page,
Whilst the Prompter waiteth his call to give,
Ere the Furies leap the stage!
For when I am weary and sick of heart
At the mimic lying scene,
I close mine eyes till the Shades depart—
And rises the Guillotine!*

THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK

TRUTH travels like the tortoise. Fiction wears the seven-league boots of fable.

This, you will say, was true a hundred or a thousand years ago, but is it so to-day when a newspaper every hour is the symbol of civilization, when we have the telegraph, the ocean cable, and even Wireless? . . .

Excellent reader, yes: these wonderful devices for transmitting intelligence have not changed human nature, nor brought the Kingdom of Heaven nearer to us, nor removed the disparity betwixt the ill-matched pair referred to. Nay, are they not, after all, with due respect to science, the mere modern equivalent of the ancient Rumor painted full of Tongues? In other words, these ingenious contrivances have taken from Fiction no part of her old advantage and from Truth no part of her old handicap. Relatively, then, both are to-day not merely as they were in the stage-coach era, but as they were in the epoch of the Ptolemies.

The reason for this lies deep in the constitution of the human mind. Something is *there* which inclines us to the love of Fiction and makes us averse to her more virtuous but less favored sister.

That preference persists in spite of all our boasted enlightenment; in spite, too, of the marvellous inventions which science has brought—as the phrase goes—to the aid and service of Truth. She, poor lady, must strive as hard as ever to win from us even a small portion of that smiling favor which we instantly and in plentitude accord to her charming rival. And like many another of her sex, the more faithful and the more devoted she, and the more unwearied in her efforts to please, the slower are we to respond and the greater is our unkindness.

Certainly she has never had a harder task, and few longer ones (where there was any hope at all of success) than that of trying to tell us the truth about the Man in the Iron Mask. At length and at last she has got it told, but how long do you think it will take for the world to accept the truth? I fancy she has not been over-thanked for her pains, and I have no doubt at all that the world still prefers the old or false story and would like to go on preferring it. For that is the immemorial way of the world, as none knew better than the great writer who started the popular legend of the masked Prisoner of the Bastille.

Clio, muse of history, played a sly trick upon her good friend Voltaire when she nudged him to set up the false version of the Man in the Iron Mask. I mean, of course—as there have been many false versions—that which has obtained the widest cur-

rency and possessed the popular imagination for over two hundred years. To impute no malicious or conscious invention to Voltaire, were to save his character at the expense of his acumen. That the arch-demolisher of myth and legend should himself have put up the most astounding myth of his age, which has thence persisted even unto our own, is surely an ironical circumstance. Candide in his garden would not have failed to point it with a pithy reflection upon the uncertainty of all human evidence. It need not indeed discredit Voltaire that he should have been unable to learn the real facts about the Secret Prisoner of Louis XIV—though the scent of them was gotten even in his time—but why did he invent or at least give sanction to an elaborate and false hypothesis? That is a question which may not easily be answered in full candor without a note of censure upon Voltaire. It must be said, however, that he liked the tale so well that in the end he came himself fully to believe in it. No uncommon delusion that, as Candide might have told him.

Voltaire's legend of the Mask being the universally current one and that which was dramatized by Dumas in his *Vicomte de Bragelonne*, thereby gaining a fresh lease of life and an added romantic glamour, I here offer a condensed version of the same.

In his *Anecdotes of the Reign of Louis XIV*, Voltaire relates that some months after the death of Cardinal Mazarin, "an unknown prisoner of majestic height, young, of a graceful and noble figure, was sent with the utmost secrecy to the castle on St. Margaret's Island in the Sea of Provence." The account continues:

"The prisoner on the road wore a mask, the chin of which was composed of steel springs, which gave him liberty to eat with his mask on. Orders were given to kill him if he discovered himself. He remained on the island till an officer of tried fidelity named Saint-Mars, governor of Pignerol, was made governor of the Bastille in 1690. He went to the island of St. Margaret and brought him to the Bastille, with his mask on all the way. The Marquis de Louvois went to see him on that island before his departure, and spoke to him with great respect, without sitting down. This prisoner was brought to the Bastille and lodged as well as he could be in that castle. He was refused nothing that he desired. His greatest pleasure was in extraordinary fine linen and laces. He played on the guitar. He was much caressed and the governor seldom sat down in his presence. An old physician of the Bastille, who had frequently attended this strange gentleman in his illness, declared that he never saw his face, though he had frequently examined his tongue, etc. . . . he never complained of his situation and never disclosed who he was. This stranger died in 1704 and was buried at night in the parish of St. Paul."

After some further particulars tending to indicate that the mysterious prisoner was of high rank, Voltaire says:

“M. Chamillard was the last person who knew anything of this strange secret. The second Marshal de Feuillade, his son-in-law, told me that at the death of his father-in-law he conjured him on his knees to tell him who that person was who was never known but by the name of the Man with the Iron Mask. Chamillard answered that it was a secret of state and that he had taken an oath never to reveal it.”

Voltaire impressively concludes:

“In fine, there are many of my contemporaries who will attest the truth of what I advance; *nor do I know any one fact so extraordinary and so well supported.*”

Elsewhere and at a later period Voltaire gave his guess as to the identity of the masked Prisoner, naming him as an elder brother of Louis XIV, born to the Queen-Mother Anne of Austria illegitimately in wedlock, the fact being hidden from the French Court, with the connivance of Richelieu. Voltaire did not venture to name the father of this royal bastard—he left that delicate matter open to speculation. Others were not so chary, and the paternity of the Mask was commonly imputed to the Duke of Buckingham or to Cardinal Mazarin. Poor Anne of Austria's reputation was not con-

sidered in the least, and strange it is to reflect that the cruelty of Louis caused his mother's name to be soiled by the tongue of scandal for so many years.

The Mask a brother of the Great King! This addition to the legend, with its purple shame and mystery involving Queen and Cardinal, gave it the crowning touch of interest and romance. Whatever we may think of Voltaire the historian, there is writ plain in this bold invention the hand of Voltaire the Artist!

The fable just recited, with its several variants, is easily proved to be as baseless in fact, as ridiculous in conception as any that the great skeptic himself ever punctured in his long war against religious imposture. But he seems to have uttered it in good faith, and in his latter years he rejected a rumor of the truth with scorn, saying: "Why, they have now given him an Italian name!"

An Italian indeed he was, as in our time the work of one or two patient investigators has established beyond question.

Victim he was of his own double-dealing, of a Great King's wounded pride and implacable hatred.

The secret despatches of Louis XIV, of his ministers and agents, together with a page or two, from the register of the Bastille, have revealed the whole story.

Voltaire's "iron mask" that was never removed,

not even for the physician attending the Prisoner, was a pure figment; likewise a physical impossibility, as regards the Prisoner's endurance. Actually the mask was a simple domino of black velvet covering the upper half of the face, such as was commonly affected at the Italian carnivals. There is no proof that the Prisoner was obliged to wear it constantly, and his doing so may well have been voluntary.

Voltaire's account is grossly inaccurate where it is not sheer invention. Saint-Mars and the Mask came to the Bastille in 1698, not in 1690. The Prisoner died in 1703, not in 1704.

The guitar, the fine laces, the extraordinary consideration for the Prisoner evinced by Louvois and the gaolers of high and low degree, existed only in the fancy of Voltaire.

So Truth has her inning at last. The mystery of the Man in the Iron Mask is cleared away, and with it the many foolish or fantastic conjectures of several generations of theorists. Seldom has there been such a brushing down and sweeping out of cobwebs. Or, to change the figure, the most remarkable "paper chase" in history has ended with complete and undreamed of success. The enigma which so long puzzled kings and courts, sages and statesmen, the truth which Michelet despaired of finding out, which teased the great Napoleon and puzzled the honest nightcap of Louis Philippe, is at last made plain to all save the great multitude

who prefer fable to fact. The riddle has been solved and the Sphinx has destroyed herself. Romance has lost much, and yet the bare truth is so cruel, so pathetic, that it can never lose its power to move the pity and anger of men. There is no entry in the Book of Kings; that scarlet chronicle of blood and tears, which burns the heart with a fiercer indignation; none which more piercingly cries to Heaven for justice. And while there shall remain one absolute King in the world, or any remnant of the ancient superstition of royalty, the terrible Witness of the Mask shall continue to be summoned against that king or that superstition, in the sacred name of humanity.

Clio having had her merry jest on Monsieur de Voltaire, and Truth having been hopelessly outstripped in this famous double-century race with Fiction, who then really was the Man in the Iron Mask? . . . Voilà the story!

He was a certain Count Mattioli, born in 1640 at Bologna, and belonging to an ancient and distinguished family of lawyers. He was deeply versed, we are told, in civil and canonical law, and while still a young man held a chair in the University of Bologna. Fate reserved this profound student of law to be one of the chief victims in history of that lawlessness which is the prerogative of kings.

Mattioli was a true Italian of his age, restless,

ingratiating, pliant, scheming, and ambitious. He soon gave up his chair of law and, having married well in his native town, went to try his fortune at Mantua. His alert abilities pleased the reigning Duke Charles III, whose favor and confidence he gained to such a degree that he was ultimately appointed Secretary of State. Upon the accession of Charles IV, Mattioli was confirmed in his dignities and created, in addition, Supernumerary Senator of Mantua, an office carrying with it the title of Count. He was not, however, Secretary of State at the time of his taking in hand certain negotiations which have given him a sinister immortality.

Fortune now went arm-in-arm with Mattioli, and often he must have thanked his stars that he had left Bologna and her dusty pandects behind him. If ever a shadow fell across his heart in beautiful Mantua, where he walked with princes and basked in the sunshine of ducal favor, be sure it was not the shadow of a dungeon. . . .

I can trace here only in barest outline the fatal business which resulted in giving to history the Man in the Iron Mask. Long a web of perplexities and contradictions, it is now made clear as to every essential detail. It is ludicrous that during all the guessing and romancing and mare's-nesting which taskēd so many ingenious minds for several generations, there lay papers in the French Foreign Office that told the whole story. . . .

France had once possessed Piedmont and Savoy in Italy. Richelieu, in furtherance of his far-seeing diplomacy, had restored them, keeping only the stronghold of Pignerol which might, upon occasion, serve as a gate into Northern Italy.

Casale, an important fortified place, swept by the Po, lying some fifteen leagues to the east of Turin, belonged to the Duchy of Charles IV of Mantua, the liege lord and patron of Mattioli. Louis XIV of France, the *Grand Monarque*, coveted Casale for its strategical advantages, as did also the Government of Turin. Possessed of Casale and Pignerol, Louis would hold the keys to Lombardy, since from Pignerol in the southwest the passage of the Alps lay open to him, while Casale would enable him to command the marches to Milan.

Spain, the great House of Austria, the House of Savoy, the Republic of Venice, and the rest of the Italian States, were all opposed to France getting any further foothold in Northern Italy. It was a difficult, perilous game, worthy the craft and ambition of even so great a king as Louis. On the narrow chess-board to which the play was necessarily confined, it scarcely seems that a move could have been made without attracting the notice or awakening the suspicions of one or other of the interested parties. But diplomacy in those days, if not a finer, was at least a more furtive art than as now

practised. It was also far less subject to considerations of honor and humanity. The Seventeenth Century diplomatist would not balk at deeds more questionable than merely lying for his country's good. His conscience was in the keeping of his king, and there his concern ended.

The young Duke Charles of Mantua, gambler, rake and spendthrift, as history depicts him, was lord of Casale. He was both venal and vicious, and he wanted money for his pleasures. Could he be induced to sell Casale and admit a French garrison into the coveted stronghold? No, assuredly, if wind of the negotiation were to reach Spanish or Italian ears. Also the matter had to be kept from the Duchess Dowager of Mantua, mother of the young Duke Charles, who headed his council and was entirely given over to the Spanish interests.

The Abbé d'Estrades, minister for Louis at the capital of the Venetian Republic, was charged with the affair. The Great King, who chose his servants well and was well served by them, could not have made a happier choice. The Abbé was a typical French diplomat of the Seventeenth Century, suave and secretive, polished and polite, unyielding and unscrupulous. Bred to the Church, he was of that order of functionaries, half priests, half men of affairs, whose peculiar training had rendered them exquisitely competent and delicately dangerous.

A pity that Mattioli did not mark this, and something of a wonder, too, since an own uncle of his was a Jesuit father of renown. And had not Mattioli himself dipped into canon law? But 'tis an old adage that the Fates blind us for their own purposes.

Let us now make short work of the plot that has been unravelled in our time with so much skill and patience by Monsieur Topin and Monsieur Funck-Brentano.

D'Estrades found sure means—one Giuliani—to approach Mattioli, then high in the confidence and the councils of Charles, on the subject of Casale and the Duke. The Italian took the bait readily and promised his best efforts to advance the Great King's purpose. The Great King assured him, in a letter written by the royal hand, of his august appreciation. Mattioli opened the matter to Charles, who by this time was in desperate case, being unable to raise more money from his good friends the Jews. Charles promptly agreed to sell and named a price that was cut down more than one-half as a result of further dickering. Mattioli always acting as a go-between, the Duke went to Venice to meet d'Estrades during carnival time, and both, closely masked, held a midnight conference in the street (a true Seventeenth Century detail that would have enchanted Dumas). Charles wanted the Great King

to send an army into Italy and to appoint him Generalissimo—a puerile conceit of the little man, which almost imparts a gleam of humor to the stern story. After many delays and waverings—the French playing for time and a convenient opportunity, the Duke harassed at once by his need of money and his fear of the Spanish—Mattioli was sent to Paris and a treaty was finally concluded.

No doubt Mattioli was overwhelmed with the splendor and magnificence of the Great King, which he so well knew how to temper with royal graciousness. Louis admitted him to secret audience, gave him a ring and a sum of money, promised that his son should be a king's page and that his brother, who was in the Church, should receive preferment.

This was the only meeting, and most fittingly a *secret* one, of the enormously unequal pair who were soon to become and many long years to remain Gaoler and Prisoner!

Mattioli had sold his country. He now returned home to betray the Great King. Within brief time Spain, Austria and the principal Italian States were apprised of the whole negotiation, and the project of Louis was perforce abandoned.*

“Never was seen so signal a piece of perfidy,” said the French minister Pomponne. Suspicion at once fastened upon Mattioli as the sole author of

* Within two years from this fiasco the negotiation was resumed and Casale admitted a French garrison.

the disclosure. In the worst misfortunes of men, a woman is usually found to bear a part. Louis soon had proof positive of the Italian's treachery, for the Duchess of Savoy, to whom Mattioli had shown the incriminating papers, made and forwarded copies of them to the Great King.

At this distance of time, and with our very different ethical predilections, it is hard to understand why Mattioli should have committed either the one treason or the other. It may be urged, in extenuation of the first, that he was chiefly moved by the desire to please a kind but weak master—his own reward appears to have been small. Granted that the apology is a weak one, it is at least within the rules of human charity. But the second treason, the betrayal of Louis, can fairly be vindicated on the ground of patriotism. It was the only satisfactory atonement that he could make for the great sin into which he had fallen. It is not known that he asked or received a penny or a promise for his complete disclosure of the plot to the several Powers. And why was his conduct not justifiable by the diplomatic ethics of the time? What had happened save only that the corrupter had been corrupted, the biter bitten, and the betrayer betrayed?

The Great King's pride was wounded in its most sensitive seat. He, *le Roi Soleil, le Grand Monarque*, to be tricked and gulled by a petty Italian ad-

venturer, himself the servant of a beggarly rake whose whole sovereignty was not worth the stakes of one night's play at the card tables of Versailles! To be made the laughing stock of every Court in Europe! The thing was as monstrous and unbearable as an insult to God upon his Throne—that God, *bien entendu*, whom Louis regarded as his Cousin and whose familiar acquaintance he enjoyed, together with a large share of His authority. Quickly he meditated and promptly he executed his vengeance.

On the second of May, 1679, the Abbé d'Estrades, accompanied by a cousin, the Abbé de Montesquieu, met the Count Mattioli by appointment at a church on the outskirts of Turin. With these pious and pleasant gentlemen the Count proceeded unsuspectingly to the frontier where it was understood a rendezvous had been arranged with General Catinat, who would supply him with money—for as yet he was ignorant that the French suspected his treacherous proceedings, and believed that he was still tricking them. This extraordinary lack of wariness on the part of Mattioli, with his feet set among traps and snares, is one of the strangest things in the story. No doubt it is to be referred wholly to the skill and address of his good friend the Abbé d'Estrades.

Catinat and a few soldiers arrested Mattioli at the place appointed and he was presently under lock

and key in the dungeon of Pignerol. The sun rose on another day—and the Man in the Mask had begun his long captivity!

D'Estrades it was who had proposed the kidnapping of Mattioli, for through him his sovereign master had been fooled, and the priest in him, we may not uncharitably suppose, yearned for a delicate revenge. Louis sanctioned the abduction, and "*look to it,*" ran the closing words of the King's warrant, "*that no one knows what becomes of this man.*" Saint-Mars, the governor of Pignerol, was ordered to "*guard him in such a manner that not only may he have no communication with anyone, but that he may have cause to repent his conduct, and that no one may know you have a new prisoner.*"

These orders were carried out during a period of twenty-four years with a rigor and exactitude of obedience which are unexampled in history. Mattioli was seized alive out of the living world and instantly became as one dead—nay, actual death had been a far more merciful punishment. His family never learned his fate and his name itself perished, his wife dying in a convent while he was still a prisoner.

The pride of the Great King was saved—the petty creature who had betrayed his serene and magnificent confidence, the chief witness of his humiliation

and the only one ever likely to talk, was silent in a living grave.*

Mattioli was shut up fifteen years in the dungeon of Pignerol in Piedmont, four years in the fortress on St. Margaret's Island in the Sea of Provence (the modern Riviera), and five years in the Paris Bastille. His confinement was solitary in the strictest sense, without respite, alleviation or occupation—most horrible of all!—save in some slight degree for the last three years of that long period. In the twenty-third year of his sufferings, the affair of Casale being forgotten and the Great King no longer concerned with Italy, Mattioli was degraded from his sinister importance as a State Prisoner, and had to share his cell with common offenders. His gaoler at all three prisons, from the first to the last hour of his captivity, excepting a brief interval, was the terrible Saint-Mars, the very type of rigorous obedience and unsleeping watchfulness. Of this man it was said that his conception of duty made him as one of his own prisoners.

During the far greater term of his imprisonment, Mattioli was doubtless forgotten of all the world, save the vengeance of Louis. The persistence of the Great King's hatred of the unfortunate man, his vigilant cruel thought of him which the slow passing

* Under threat of torture and death, Mattioli subsequently revealed the hiding place of the documents emanating from Versailles and these were recovered by the agents of Louis.

years seemed not to temper or soften in the least, his ever keen and unsated malignity regarding him, strike us as a distorted invention rather than a cold precise narrative of fact. One is forced to cite the very words of the Great King in order to keep oneself in countenance.

Louvois wrote Saint-Mars shortly after Mattioli's arrest: "*It is not the intention of the King that the Sieur de Lestang*" (a name invented for Mattioli) "*should be well treated or that, except the absolute necessaries of life, you should give him anything to soften his captivity.*" A little later: "*You must keep Lestang in the rigorous confinement which I enjoined in my former letters.*"

In eight months Mattioli became mad, not unnaturally, and Saint-Mars informs the Minister that he complains of being treated as a man of his quality and the minister of a great prince ought not to be; also that he tells Saint-Mars of his daily conversations with God and the Angels; also that he claims to be nearly related to the Great King and wishes to lay his grievances before him.

These piteous recitals only seemed to harden the Great King's heart the more, and Saint-Mars is rebuked for his "patience" in dealing with the Prisoner and admonished "*to treat such a rascal as he deserves.*"

Mattioli presently recovered his reason—at any rate, we hear no more of disturbances in that lonely

brain. It is likely enough that his mind sank into a stupor, from disuse of its faculties, which lasted until the end.

At the end of fifteen silent, spectral years in Pignerol, the French were driven to give up their foothold in Piedmont and the Prisoner was taken to the Isles of Saint Margaret. With his autocracy disputed, his armies repulsed, and his diplomacy checkmated, the jealous and angry Louis was more than ever concerned to bury in deepest mystery the chief witness to one of the most arbitrary acts of his lawless ambition, as well as to perhaps the most painful humiliation in his career of glory. The greatest precautions were taken in removing the Prisoner, and Saint-Mars is warned in a significant despatch from Versailles, "*to see that no one ever learns what your ancient prisoner has done.*"

Four years at the Isles and Saint-Mars the Great Turnkey of the Great King is appointed Governor of the Bastille in Paris. These words occur in his letter of instructions: "*You are to bring with you in all security your ancient prisoner.*"

The false name of Lestang had long been disused, perhaps forgotten by the King, his Ministers and his Gaoler.

A later despatch urges the importance of guarding the prisoner on the journey "*in such a manner that he shall be seen by no one.*"

Saint-Mars then traversed the whole of France

with his captive in a litter, accompanied by an escort of armed men. Stopping over night at his château of Palteau near Villeneuve in the central department of Yonne, the Prisoner was seen by the peasants; he wore a black mask and they noticed that his teeth and lips showed through; also that he was tall and had white hair. Such are the simple facts that afforded a basis for the still persisting legend of Villeneuve, where the Prisoner's dungeon is shown to wondering visitors—a legend which Villeneuve will be slow to abandon.

On the 18th day of September, 1698, Mattioli was lodged in the Bastille, that famous prison whose baffling enigma he was to become and whose gray walls had sheltered many a more illustrious but never a more ill-fated captive. The King's Lieutenant of the Bastille notes in his journal that "*the Prisoner's name is not mentioned and that he is always masked.*" Here he died on November 19, 1703, the register identifying him as "*the prisoner unknown, masked always with a mask of black velvet, whom M. de Saint-Mars the Governor brought with him from the Isles of Saint-Marguerite, and whom he had had for a long time.*" He was buried in the near-by churchyard of the parish of St. Paul.

History adds one more cruel and ironical touch to this true tale of the Man in the Mask. At the very hour of his unheeded death in the Bastille, his former lord and master, Duke Charles of Mantua,

arrived on a visit to Louis XIV. Monsieur Topin conjectures that they were perhaps feasting amid the riches of the Luxembourg Palace, scarce a bow-shot distant, when the body of their ancient intermediary, dupe and victim was being trailed in the dusk by two turnkeys to its obscure grave.

* * * * *

In the "Tale of Two Cities" Dickens imagines *his* prisoner of the Bastille to have written:

"If it had pleased God to put it in the hard heart of either of the brothers, in all these frightful years, to grant me any tidings of my dearest wife—so much as to let me know by a word whether alive or dead—I might have thought that he had not quite abandoned them. But now I believe that the mark of the red cross is fatal to them, and that they have no part in His mercies. And them and their descendants, to the last of their race, I, Alexandre Manette, unhappy prisoner, do this last night of the year 1767, in my unbearable agony, denounce to the times when all these things shall be answered for. I denounce them to Heaven and to earth!"

One cannot read the true story of the Man in the Iron Mask without recalling these solemn and prophetic words which Mattioli might, with little change, have addressed to his royal torturer. And this suggests a thought which leaves not wholly vain and unrecompensed that long crucifixion. The

vengeance of Louis was as exquisite and as perfectly contrived at all points as even so great a king could desire. But he enjoyed it only during his lifetime, while the just hatred and execration of humanity are henceforth everlastingly decreed unto the memory of the vindictive and most Christian King.

MEMORIES

THERE are women whose lot it is to bear many children and yet to know little enough of love; to suffer much pain and sorrow, heart-hunger and bitterness, and to die ere age may come to them, bringing its wan flowers of consolation.

How shall God feed those famishing mother souls denied the banquet of love for which they had endured so much? How shall He satisfy their vast yearning for the little hands and faces which they cannot forget? Can there be a greater anguish than that of the poor mother, lonely and sorrowful in Heaven, who cries out, "My children live and grow and are happy, but they have forgotten me!"

It is of such a mother that I would trace a few slight memories—they are only too slight, for she died when I was under seven years, and I have never seen a picture of her, save that which I carry in my heart. She was of a loving, joyous nature, as I judge by certain tokens in myself; a nature that underwent a life-long starvation, for through all her hard years she had little enough of love and joy. Brought up in the old stern faith that held

child-bearing as a Divine chastisement for the Sin of the Woman, she meekly accepted her portion. Thirteen children came to her, of whom I was the last born. I adore her memory and there is none in all the world of the dead whom I would rather see. Nay, you will not blame me if I say that I would rather see a picture of my mother in her youth than of Mary the mother of Jesus.

My very earliest recollection of her is mingled with that of a long white ribbon of a road winding through a green Irish landscape. My mother is carrying me on her back, and the next youngest boy trudges along beside us. Lovingly I cling to her, my head resting on her shoulder; I was a small child and no heavy burden. My memory of her is all of kindness; harsh word from her mouth or blow from her hand I do not recall. She is chatting to us, but the words will not come back to me, though I have never lost the tones of her voice. How sweet and fresh the air is! for it is morning and I can see the dew on the roadside grass. As we pass along, we meet now and then a wayfaring man who salutes my mother, and the words I remember with perfect clearness.

“Good morrow, ma’am.”

“Good morrow, kindly, sir.”

So we trudge on through the wonderful green world, whilst more and more people say good mor-

row to us. How happy am I to be carried so high and far by my gay, strong young mother! She has not put me down once, and the little fellow beside her wants to be carried, too. Ah, but is she indeed gay? for I heard a sob just now, and I strive to look into her face to see if she be weeping. . . . Dear mother, what was thy sorrow and whither wert thou going that far off morn? . . .

There is an old gypsy fortune-telling man in the house, and we children are looking at him, awe-stricken. My mother gives him something to eat and also a few small coins, to get him to tell our fortunes. He is a very hairy red-faced old man and makes strange noises in eating, which keeps us from crowding round him. Soon he finishes and in dumb show asks for a slate and pencil, for he cannot speak. Then he writes out my fortune, all the time making even more alarming noises, accompanied with fearful grimaces which send us young ones cowering into corners. My mother takes the slate from him and frowns as if she does not like my fortune at all. She will have no more fortunes told and she sends the gypsy packing. My mother was long dead before I learned what the uncouth seer had scribbled. I was to lead a gay life, clink my glass, and have a christening before a wedding!

The fortune being judged an evil one (though worse things have happened to me) was never for-

gotten in the family, and on account of the last clause especially, my elder sisters always regarded me with prejudice. Howbeit, that part of the prediction at least was happily falsified: the wedding came in due time, and the christening followed at the proper interval. . . .

My memories grow more distinct. We have left the house where the gypsy man came, and the village too, where I used to see many small and fearfully stubborn donkeys drawing immense loads—once hanging on behind a cart that was driven by an old drunken couple, I got my foot caught somehow and my cries failing to attract their notice, a man released me by running into the road and stunning the donkey with a club. And I forgot my pain with my mother's arms about me. . . .

For many days we live in a big ship and sail over a great water; then we land somewhere and go to live in a house quite as before, only there are no donkeys, and there are more people in the place and very much more noise, such as screaming of whistles and ringing of bells, and the people are not so kind and nice as those who used to say good morrow to my mother. The boys are very rude and they call me "bub" or "greenhorn," which I do not like at all. . . .

I am going to the sisters' school, which is in a large building near the church. Some of the sisters are kind and gentle and have lovely faces framed

in their snow-white linen caps. But the one who teaches my class (I think they called her Sister Dolores) fills me with terror. She has angry black eyes and I never see her smile. Her heavy brows make a straight black line across her nose, and there is the same line, only not so heavy, on her lip. She is very harsh toward the little boys of her class; her discipline, like her religion, is one wholly of fear; the mere rustling of her sombre robe and the clink of her rosaries and cross carry terror unto us all.

It is winter and there is a huge wood furnace in the school room. The roaring fire offers a congenial text to Sister Dolores, for she is always telling us about the place where bad boys go to when they die. Sometimes, when she wants to make the lesson very strong or to make an example of somebody, she has a couple of big boys come in from another room and hold a little fellow up to the blazing open door of the furnace. Awful is the terror of the child and his screams drive the whole school into a panic. Sister Dolores is not in the least disturbed, but a more than ordinary paleness brings out the black line on her lip. I am glad she has never had this thing done to me. (No doubt the deep-rooted hatred I have toward the grim doctrine of Hell dates from this early and practical illustration.)

But I know the sister does not like me, for once

when she was punishing me with the ruler, the priest came suddenly into the school room and bade her leave me alone. She turned very white and afterwards I saw tears in her black eyes—I fear they were not such tears as the angels weep. Sister Dolores had her revenge on me, all in due time; but I do not mind it now, since it gave me so strong a memory of my mother. . . .

I have been playing truant a week or more and the sister finds it out—there are boys who tell her everything and whom she never punishes. I know she is glad of the chance and that I will get all that is coming to me. I do. Sister Dolores gives me fifty blows with a heavy ruler on each hand. It is hard work, but she does not flinch, and she sheds no tears as when the priest rebuked her. He does not come now to save me, and the tears are all mine. I fall to my knees, but still I have to hold out my hand, and the full count is given.

I said nothing to my mother that night, for I feared my father and knew he would side with Sister Dolores. But next morning both hands were so swollen that I could not hold a tea cup, and I suffered great pain. My mother soon had the truth. She wept with pity and flamed with anger alternately—dear mother! I doubt me much if any pain of mine has ever drawn tears from other eyes than yours. . . .

Ah, how she gave it to Sister Dolores that very

day, with me beside her! I was not so young but that I tasted a bit of satisfaction, for the saintly Dolores did not enjoy the interview. One thing that I remember of the duel betwixt the loving and the loveless woman still amuses me. My mother demanded why she had punished me so inhumanly, and showing my tortured hands, asked why Dolores had not taken down my clothes and chastised me in a proper fashion. Whereat the good sister hid her face with cloistral modesty. . . . I never went back to her gentle teaching.

Peace to Dolores, her moustache and her memory! I forgive her and I can even think kindly of her, because she unwittingly helped me, though but a child, to prize the loving mother-heart that I was soon to lose.

Too soon, alas! For it was only a short time thereafter, and in my childish memory hardly seems a week, when going into my mother's room one morning, I found her strangely silent. Yet her blue eyes were wide open, and I wondered why she did not speak to me. My mother was dead. . . .

I, her last born, am now about as old as she was when she left us, but there is never a day that I do not think of her, and my longing to see her is keen and fresh as that of a child. This devotion goes not without recompense (if a skeptic may say so much), for some years ago, at the crisis of a serious illness, when indeed I had been given up

by doctors and family, I was acutely conscious of her presence in my room. And sometimes, though not often, I waken from a dream filled with a sense of great and inexplicable joy, and languorous as with the breath of lilies, of which I remember nothing at all definite, as though some Power had bidden me to forget, . . . with this word trembling on my lips—"Mother!"

* * *

My heart it is a ruin'd place
That Time and Sorrow have laid bare;
A garden void of every trace
Of beauty once that linger'd there.

And yet not so,—for still there spring
Roses of rare and wondrous hue,
That tempt a jaded heart to sing—
And one that breathes of *you!*

I AM glad of my friends and I am equally glad of my enemies—but hush! not a word to the latter, for then they might want to be my friends, which really would not do at all! For I could not be what I am without both friends and foes—both are necessary to the inner me. I went wrong about this for many years, but now I am wiser—I know!

CLAUDE TILLIER

HUMANITY has its roll of saints as well as the One True Church, but seldom does a name appear on both rosters of the canonized. The Devil's Advocate has his chance to plead against the one as against the other. To make the parallel complete, the faithful of the One True Church pray to their saints; the believers in the larger creed of humanity invoke those shining names upon the course of liberty and progress.

It is of one among the humblest and least known of the saints of humanity that I am about to write. No better proof of the high worth of such a soul could be required than this impulse, strong upon me, to pay some tribute, not altogether unworthy I may hope, to the virtues summoned in the name and fame of Claude Tillier. Both name and fame are little known to us, while we are deafened and overwhelmed with the petty trumpeting, the vulgar insistence of the mediocre. In the clamor of these baser voices many precious messages are lost—nothing more precious, we may believe, than the gospel of such a life.

“I fell into this world,” writes Tillier, “like a

leaf that the storm shakes from the tree and rolls along the highway." He was a child of the Revolution, born in the ninth year of the Republic, 1801, at Clamécy, a small town in the Department of Nievère. But one of his few biographers bids us take note that his birthplace was in the centre of ancient Gaul, near the Loire, in the true home of the Gallic spirit, on the boundary line between Troubadour and Trouvère. Never was a man of true genius condemned to a more adverse fate. He, a son of the Revolution, poet, thinker, philosopher, often felt the sharp tooth of hunger; clung always to the ragged skirts of want; died at last in early manhood as poor as he had lived. Ah, but this is not all! For he tells us: "I did not lose courage—I always hoped that out of the wings of some bird sweeping the skies, a quill would fall down fitted to my fingers, and I have not been disappointed."

With this quill he wrote, "My Uncle Benjamin," his masterpiece—indeed, his one book. Happy among the sons of Cadmus is he who writes but one book and that a great one! Long will his fame be preserved after the mighty tribe of the voluminous shall have littered the shores of oblivion. Decay, death and silence are written against the fecund, past and present. Hugo produced as much prose, poetry and drama as though gifted with power to multiply himself by fifty. Time may be when enough shall not remain for one. Scott slumbers a

lethal sleep, crushed under his folios. Most of the Elizabethans and their imitators are dead, save Shakespeare, and even *his* best makes no more than one good book. The same is true of many later scribblers, more or less famous, who worked out their poor brains, and having made, as they thought, a monument for themselves, fell asleep under it

. *it is a tale*
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

To this favor must the present literary tribe come, whose name is legion, in constant parturition at the behest of the publishers. Good apothecary, give me an ounce of civet to sweeten my imagination!—and let me take into my loving hands the precious thin volume of Elia and this cherished souvenir of Tillier. . . .

A formal criticism of "My Uncle Benjamin" I shall not attempt to write. The book is a message straight from the heart of a true man. Could more be said? Fine as is its literary art, fresh its sympathy of touch as the breath of the morning, keen its irony and brilliant its analysis of motive,—all these are subordinate to the deep note of humanity, without which art is void and dead. The beginnings of a story, somewhere observes Mr. Howells, are often obscure. Doubtless this is true of the

Frenchman's charming work. What is not obscure, however, is the vital genius of the book, the living force of the man behind it, stirring the heart, thrilling the pulse, though the brain which wrought the spell has been dust for sixty years.

We know that Tillier wrote it for the feuilleton of a provincial newspaper, where it long lay hidden before a real publisher was found. We know also that recognition in due measure never came to him during his life; that it is only within a few years the world has taken note of him. These are the marks of the true Immortal! We would not have it otherwise now, rightly appraising the legacy he left us. One can say nothing that is not trite on this subject of neglected genius breaking its bonds after infinite struggle, rising above the vapors of ignorance and envy, and conquering from beyond the grave. And yet if aught should move the depths within us, it is this. O death, where is thy victory! O true soul, intent on thy God-marked course, scorning all petty human accidents! O lover of liberty, keeping thy faith without a stain amid a sordid world! O gentle hero, hard was thy sufferance, great shall be thy guerdon. To thee humanity offers its love and tears. Thy name is a shrine, thy memory an abiding place where the just and true shall pause awhile to gather strength for the future that shall yet be won! . . .

It would be easy to point out certain mechanical

defects in Tillier's charming story. There is very little action, no plot at all, and the end is inconsequential. Mr. Stevenson observes that the blow from Rawdon Crawley's fist, delivered upon the noble features of my Lord Steyne, made "Vanity Fair" a work of art. So it might be said that the enforced osculation of Dr. Benjamin Rathery upon the anatomy of the Marquis de Cambyse is the epical incident of Tillier's novel. But who cares for plots, intrigues and "such gear" in the presence of manifest genius? Let us leave all that to the penny dreadfuls of the hour. It has no place in the estimation of such a writer as Tillier.

And yet the story, even as a story, is as excellent of its kind as Goldsmith's delightful tale. It is marked by the same unstrained simplicity, with a deeper philosophy, a keener insight into human nature, and perhaps a finer literary art than we may ascribe to the more famous Irishman. What a merry company is that to which Tillier introduces us!—Machecourt and Page and Millet-Rataut, the poet; Arthus and Rapin and Dr. Minxit, with his amazing theory of physic; and the prince of good drinkers, the incomparable Uncle Benjamin. If you have not read how that jovial giant impersonated the Wandering Jew for the simple folk of Moulot, you have skipped as good a thing as you shall find in Rabelais or Le Sage. Say also that you have missed the Doctor's exquisite revenge on

the illustrious Marquis de Cambyse, and I am sorry for you indeed. . . .

Tillier suffers under the reproach of having been a provincial. Paris never made him her own, though once he walked her pavements a dejected lad; and the Academy of the Immortals knew nothing of him. A drudging schoolmaster, an unwilling conscript in a cause which his soul abhorred—the cause of the Holy Alliance; a poor pamphleteer, an obscure journalist, waging war all too brilliant against the bigoted clergy, the stupid bourgeoisie of his native district, now and then with the instinct of genius turning to higher themes;—in all this, you will say, there was little to give promise of an immortal reputation. Yet, oh marvellous power of truth and genius, see now after sixty years the name of this humble man shedding a clear light upon his native place, which all the world may see; adding its distinct ray even to the rich literary glory of his race. Many a pilgrim has found his way to the sunken grave at Nevers where rests this son of nature, this apostle of liberty, whose free forehead was never shamed with a lie. The treasure of his thought is no longer locked up in his own language; it is now a precious part of the literature of many tongues and stranger peoples. The seed of the humble sower has sprung up a hundred-fold, and the harvest is now and forever! . . .

I have called Tillier one of the saints of human-

ity. Let me add a word to prove that the characterization is neither forced nor unworthy. A German translator says of him truly that "unselfishness was his virtue and human dignity his religion." The human saintship of the man may easily be established who, in his own phrase, "always took the part of the weak against the strong, always lived beneath the tattered tents of the conquered and slept by their hard bivouacs." So absolutely true and free was this man who, again in his own words, "took his daily bread out of God's hand, without asking for more,"—that we may divine at once the creed of such a nature. "I do not pray," he says, "for the reason that God knows better than I what He must do, nor do I adore Him because He does not need adoration, and the worship which the masses offer Him is nothing but the flattery of selfish creatures who want to enter Paradise. But if I have a penny to spare, I give it to the poor."

In drawing the lineaments of a liberal saint, it is likely enough that many pious people will find a resemblance to the Devil. Tillier's life was embittered by some polemics unworthy of his genius. He incurred the anathema of the Nevers clergy by scoffing at the alleged thighbone of Saint Flavia, and the good Catholics of the place believed that his early death was due to the vengeance of the outraged virgin. One must regret that such talents as his were diverted from their high and proper use

by this petty warfare. The same remark applies to his long war with Monsieur Dupin, the official big-wig of the district. But Tillier saw no difference between bigotry in the abstract and bigotry in the concrete; between the official charlatanism which had the nation for its stage and a reduced copy of the same at home. In this, also, dropping the question of his literary reputation, he was acting the part of a true man.

My reading has found nothing more beautiful and pathetic than the closing scene in the life of Claude Tillier. It is drawn for us by his own hand. His very soul speaks to us—scarcely does the vesture of clay intervene. With death near to claim him, he turned once more to the world which had scorned him, and his genius attained a higher and purer eloquence than it had ever known. Never from the soul of man has come a message more sweet and tender, searching the heart with a deeper pathos, than this in which he shaped his farewell to life:

“I die a few days before my schoolmates, but I die at that age when youth is nearing its end and life is but a long decay. Unimpaired I return to God the gifts with which he entrusted me; free, my thought still soars through space. . . . I am like the tree that is cut down and still bears fruit on the old trunk amidst the young shoots that come after. Pale, beautiful Autumn! this year thou hast not seen me on thy paths that are fringed

with fading flowers. Thy mild sun, thy spicy air have refreshed me only through my window; but we depart together. With the last leaf of the poplar, with the last flower of the meadow, with the last song of the birds, I wish to die,—aye, with all that is beautiful in the space of a year. May the first breath of frost call me away. Happy he who dies young and need not grow old!" . . .

Dear Master, Friend, Poet, our yearning love and regret may not heal the sorrows which were thy earthly portion; but thy spirit lives on to guide us. It is enough: hail and farewell!

THERE is a wine sweeter than any sung
By Omar's cunning wine-enchanted tongue;
It is the subtle honey of your mouth,
For which e'en he the grape away had flung.

"A loaf of bread, a jug of wine and thou"—
So sang the bard of ages past and Now;
No lover he—a glutton rather say:
Your kisses would alone suffice, I trow.

GEORGE MOORE, LOVER

“Another pretty day passed, a day of meditation on art and women—and what else is there to meditate about? To-morrow will haply be the same as to-day, and the day after that I shall be occupied with what I once heard dear old M’Cormac, Bishop of Galway, describe in his sermon as “the degrading passion of ‘loave.’”

THIS is the frankness of George Moore than which nothing more frank is to be had from English literature as made nowadays. And it is but fair to add, nothing more delightful.

Mr. Moore does not overstate the matter in his naïve confession—love is the burden of his song, love that Byron called “a fearful and a lovely thing,” in his latest as in his earliest book. It made up the bulk of his confessions as a youngster, and it is the sum of his reminiscences as an oldster (if he will pardon so convenient a word). A terribly old theme, to be sure, as old as life, and as young also; one that forever interests us, it must be said, in spite of the Bishop of Galway.

Although he cast off his ancestral faith early in life, the confessional habit has persisted in Mr. Moore—is it not a bit curious that he overlooks

this in his copious self-revelations? Thus, he has given us two books, one in youth and one in middle age (sad euphemism!), dealing for the most part with the good times and *les bonnes fortunes* of George Moore. From first to last he has become one of the finest literary artists in the world (shall we ever forget how, in the days of "awful Emma," he lammed the British Philistine and exposed the domination of the Villa?)—yet even more than his charming books one must envy his good times. His life is mostly a pæan of pleasure and satisfaction; exquisitely organized and with a rare artistic sense, he was wise enough to make a thrifty use of such means and opportunities as do not commonly fall to the literary man. Hear him:

"I can never look upon this city without strong emotion; it has been all my life to me. I came here in my youth, I relinquished myself to Paris, . . . and Paris has made me. How much of my mind do I owe to Paris! And by thus acquiring a fatherland more ideal than the one fate had arrogantly imposed, I have doubled my span of life. Do I not exist in two countries? Have I not furnished myself with two sets of thoughts and sensations? Ah! the delicate delight of owning *un pays amie*—a country where you may go when weary to madness of the routine of life, sure of finding there all the sensations of home, plus those of irresponsible caprice. The pleasure of a literature that is yours, without being wholly your own, a literature that is like an exquisite

mistress, in whom you find consolation for all the commonplaces of life."

It was said of Maupassant that he hated to be identified with any of his stories and especially resented the intimation that his personal adventures had formed the ground-work of "Bel Ami." George Moore, on the contrary, is his own declared and, in fact, only successful hero. Early in his literary career he made himself and saw that the work was good. And with this auto-creation he has been mainly content—for what is Oliver Gogarty but George again under a priest's cassock? Lovers of literature have no right to complain, for the entertainment has been rich and unremitting.

Of course, the Moral Censor has something to say, George Moore being a notorious offender in point of freedom. In truth it must be allowed that the two books about himself ("Confessions of a Young Man" and "Memoirs of My Deead Life") are full of fornication—like flies crossing in the air, as Wordsworth said of Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister." Moore justifies himself incidentally with the blushing truism that "art owes a great deal to adultery;" and these few words define his attitude more validly than the entire elaborate "Apologia" prefixed to the memoirs.

But the man is *too Irish* (much as he would hate the attribution) to fall into sensualism of the grosser kind—there is little of that among a peo-

ple who have chastised their natural instincts during a thousand years. He is also too much of a poet, of too fine a grain, to offer us the piggery of certain French writers and their English women imitators. Indeed I think he seems often afraid of real passion, which is perhaps only another way of saying that he is too selfish—we cannot doubt that he loves George Moore better than any of the little blonde women by the Seine whom he pursued, captured, enjoyed and abandoned. Many inadvertent hints point to this, artfully as he has drawn his literary portrait; but the thing which proves it beyond a doubt is the absence from both books of memoirs of anything like a real man-friendship. Marshall in the earlier book is the best he can or will do for us . . . and you remember what he did to Marshall when he had no further use for him! What need to write?—"Everything conspired to enable me to gratify my body and my brain; and do you think this would have been so if I had been a good man? If you do you are a fool; good intentions and bold greed go to the wall, *but subtle selfishness, with a dash of unscrupulousness, pulls more plums out of life's pie than the seven deadly virtues.*"

I suspect Mr. Moore has always been a bit of a snob and a cad—think of an Irishman hating Ireland but not forgetting to mention his English valet!—and snobs are incapable of friendship.

Furthermore, I cannot bring myself to believe that the Perfect Lover (such as George Moore would have us believe that he is or has been) is he who loves only himself and women; or he who wrote as a young man (with a smirk) that "the real genius for love lies not in getting into but in getting out of love"; or he who stopped to record as a middle-aged man (with a sneer) that "it is only with scent and silk and artifices that we raise love from an instinct to a passion." The greater depths, the higher sublimities of love are not for either of these, as they have not been (perhaps) for George Moore.

But how fascinating he is, *néanmoins*, with his cool man-friendships and elegant passions depending so much on lace and heliotrope! We are sure that he would never sacrifice his ease or comfort, not to speak of profounder things, for man or woman. To do him strict justice, he never pretends that he would—the greater generousities were left out of George. Even in his early days in Paris, at an age when young men form Theban friendships and share each other's purses, we can be sure that George did nothing of the sort. And greatly as I admire his art, I have never wholly liked the man since he told us (in his first book) that he "could not recall a case of man or woman who ever occupied any considerable part of his thoughts and did not contribute largely to his moral or physical welfare."

Admirable economist! excellent philosopher! shrewd assayer of human nature! what wonder that he has never had a real friendship for a brother man, never a true passion for a woman—aye! that with all his fine gifts, he has never quite succeeded in fusing Life and Art in the terms of his adored master, Balzac!

But all criticism is partial at best, and this which I have just written is no exception. I suspect that George Moore's cool selfishness and light o' love fickleness and mobility are more than half assumed, like his un-Irishism, and his clamant hatred of the Christian, especially the Irish Catholic, religion, which he would typify by his friend, the Bishop of Galway. Of one thing at least we can be sure—he is too much of the artist to let us see the *real* George Moore. The latter is a nebulous person, yet I fancy he could make himself at home, if need were, at Ballyglass as in Paris. . . .

But what has this to do with "The Lovers of Orelay"? Nothing, i' faith, and yet it was of them I meant to write and not of Mr. George Moore, author. Clearly I cannot now say as much as I intended to say of this, the wickedest and most delightful chapter in the "Memoirs." But not to say something were to argue a literary ineptitude in oneself which I should hate to be imputed to me.

In the "Lovers of Orelay," then, we have the pleasantest and least sinful bit of sin and sensual-

ism that Mr. Moore has ever given us. In the preface to the "Memoirs" he accepts as true the imputation that there is a Messianic strain in his work. At any rate, one is tempted to believe that if George Moore were to re-write the Beatitudes, his very first would be—

"BLESSED ARE THEY WHO COME BY THEIR DESIRE."

That was, after a hundred pages or so, the fortune of these lovers of Orelay, and seeing that the strict moralist cannot approve either the tale or its termination, one dare not speak of the rare but dangerous delight it affords in the reading. Three brief quotations will suffice to show Mr. Moore's complete mastery of the difficult art of suggestion.

"Tell a woman that she is a nymph and she must not expect any more from you than she would from a faun, that all you know is the joy of the sunlight, that you have no dreams beyond the worship of the perfect circle of her breast, and the desire to gather grapes for her, and she will give herself to you, unconscious of sin." . . .

"And what was the image that rose up in my mind? the sensuous gratification of the image of a woman bathing at the edge of a summer wood—the intoxication of the odor of her breasts."

"You spoke, didn't you, of going for a drive?"

"We were speaking of happiness—but if you'd

like to go for a drive. There's no happiness like driving."

"Isn't there?"

She pinched my arm and with a choking sensation in my throat I asked her to send for a carriage. . . .

"The room will look better," Doris said, "when fires have been lighted, and when our bags are unpacked. A skirt thrown over the arm of a chair furnishes a room." . . .

The leisurely yet absorbing progress of the little love-plot makes every reader *participis criminis*, a lover and a seducer. Here, as always, the advantage is overwhelmingly with Mr. Moore, since he is both the hero and the narrator of the story. One is half inclined to hate him for being so good to himself. Doris indeed! With her mane of rich gold hair growing as luxuriously as the meadows in June. And her lovely mouth, weak and beautiful as a flower. And her long hands curved like lilies. A glutton he for delights for which there is nothing to pay!

If Mr. George Moore be not the Perfect Lover (as I have ventured to hold, in spite of the vast amount of literary evidence he offers us to the point), he is, at least, in view of this exquisite assignation, the Lover of Wondrous Fortune. For surely it falls to the lot of few men to gather such roses without thorns, to have such pleasures without pain or penalty, and to taste such happiness

without remorse. But whether the tale of these lovers of Orelay be true or feigned, it is set forth with such delicate art and enticement that, reading it absorbedly, one comes almost to forget the warning of his Grace of Galway.

IBSEN wondered why the best thoughts are given to the biggest blackguards. Perhaps to keep down pride in the clergy.

BROTHER ELIAS

LEAVING the Grand Central Station, the train was well filled with passengers; it stopped to take on more at 125th street. Among the new arrivals I noticed a pale priestly appearing man whose expression of mingled humility and hardihood thrilled an old memory in my breast. The man came toward me slowly, looking about for a seat, while I puzzled over something familiar in his mien and gait. He threw a sheathed glance at me, and I knew that falcon eye, little dimmed by the flight of full twenty-five years. With an old imperious instinct of obedience I was on my feet instantly, offering him the place beside me, from which I hastily removed my coat and newspapers. He gravely accepted it, looking at me still more sheathedly, with a faint indication of surprise at my promptitude. But he did not recognize me—ah! I might well be sure of that; and I turned my face toward the window as the speed of the train quickened, saying breathlessly to myself: Brother Elias!

Yes, it was full twenty-five years since I had seen him. I was then a boy of ten, and it was that boy

who now identified him—the man had nothing to do with it. No mistaking the eagle eye, still bright, though a little sunken with time; the high pale forehead over which the sparse black hair had turned to gray; the bold strong curve of the nose, with the whole face, suggesting an effigy on an old Roman coin; and above all, that strange mixture of deference and pride—the priest and the warrior in battle—which impressed me as a child, when I could not have given it a name. Yes, it was Brother Elias. As our train sped through the smiling country I marvelled at the chance which had again brought us into contact. A chance of which he was all unconscious, sitting beside me with veiled glance and the instinctive aloofness of the priest. . . .

Elias was a Christian Brother, that is to say, a member of a religious order in the Catholic Church which makes a smaller figure to-day than formerly. The Order of Christian Brothers, like some older and similar fraternities, was founded with a view to gratifying the common man's craving for the life religious. In Catholic countries it is not easy to prevent the church from being overcrowded with ecclesiastics—one cannot see the altar for the priests! This is notoriously the case in Italy and Spain and, to a less degree, in France and Ireland. Now while it cannot be admitted that the Lord would call too many to His service, it is clear that without some provision for the overflow, the regu-

lar ministry in those countries would be swamped. Hence the Christian Brothers, which in a sense may be called a "peasant order," and which was largely recruited from Ireland where, up to a few years ago, (if not to-day) religion was the chief industry and the overwhelming concern of the common people.

The Church took the strong young peasant and made a lay brother of him, giving peace to his soul and using his strength in the manual labors of the monastery. She took his apter, better educated fellow and made a teacher of him. She endowed both with the religious character that they coveted. Economically it would have been wiser perhaps to leave both where they were, but this consideration never has much weight in a Catholic country. Perhaps I should use the past tense, for the tendency of late years has been to reduce the Orders and keep an eye on the budget. Of this tendency the Christian Brothers are an example, being to-day, as I have said, far less important than they were a brief generation ago.

The Order was perhaps at its height when, a few years after my mother's death, my elder sisters placed me in the large institution over which Elias ruled as Brother Director. It was in a crowded manufacturing town on the Hudson river, and the place was half asylum, half boarding school. There were about three hundred boys under the charge of

the Brothers, as I judge now; the majority of whom were orphans or regular boarders. Also there was a contingent of day-scholars from the city whom we inmates passionately envied each night that the gates closed after them. The distinction between orphans and boarders was that the city or county paid something for the former, and the latter (of whom I was one) were paid for by their relations. The tariff was higher for the boarders, of course; but we took our meals at separate tables and our fare was better than the orphans', though nothing too fine at that.

There were twenty-five or thirty Christian Brothers, teachers and lay-brothers, as I remember. They were mostly a stalwart lot of men, with no sort of squeamishness as to corporal punishment by any handy or effective method, fist, foot or ferule. Wild and unruly as was that horde of boys, untrained for the most part, or with the vicious schooling that the streets give in a large factory town, the Brothers maintained over them the discipline of a Roman camp. With the strong right arm they did it, and though the memory makes me wince, I am not prepared to say that it could have been better or otherwise done—at least in that day and with that particular brand of boy.

Brother Elias, a Frenchman from France and not a Canuck like many of the order, was of an ascetic, intellectual type. He did not often punish—there

were inferiors to relieve him of that function, though I do not think it was especially disagreeable to him. Generally he reserved himself for grand occasions of chastisement when a public, sacrificial example was to be made of somebody. At such times his dignity as Brother Director lent an additional solemnity to the affair, and the punishment took place in the large assembly room. Here all the inmates, boarders and regulars were gathered and kept in order by a squad of the Brothers, while Elias with impassive face and unsparing arm attended to the "example" in a central space. Had the reverend Brother been stone deaf, he could not have paid less heed to the agonized shrieks and prayers of his victim than he invariably did on these edifying occasions.

One of these punitive incidents I recall as vividly as if it was yesterday.

There was a handsome lad named Russell, an orphan, several years older than myself, of whom I was very fond. He petted and protected me—no small thing in that place where the weaker was always underneath—and in return I loved him. Russell was old enough to work in the shoe-factory connected with the institution and which may have aided to support it. At any rate, though the "shoemakers" were looked after sharply enough, they had better food than the rest of the regulars, and enjoyed certain privileges.

Russell hated the place bitterly and often talked to me in the big dormitory at night, where my cot was near his, of running away. The thing didn't seem so hard to manage, for the gates were open during the day or until the day-scholars went home. But I hoped he wouldn't try, for in the Brothers' eyes that was the Deadly Sin, the worst thing a boy could do, and the occasion of the most terrifying "examples" in the Assembly Room. I had seen the punishment of one runaway, a scared-eyed lad named Gilligan, shortly after my coming to the place, and I did not care to see another. So, while I admired Russell's courage, I told him he would better not, and out of my selfish love for him, I hoped he wouldn't get the chance.

He did though, very soon thereafter, and was gone a week before they caught him. I heard of his capture with a great fear and a childish wish to do something desperate in order to save him.

Russell, as I have said, was a "shoe-maker," a bread-winner, which made his offense doubly bad, since it took something from the institution and reflected on its character. Moreover, for some obscure reason, Elias disliked the handsome, spirited lad.

On the evening of the day he was brought back, the Brother Director made a fearful "example" of him before the largest crowd I had ever seen in the Assembly Room. The least details of that pain-

ful scene are as vividly before my eyes now as then: the blanched and tearful faces of the on-looking boys, for Russell was with most of them a hero and a favorite; the grave, hushed manner of the Brothers stationed about like janizaries to keep order; the stern impassiveness of Brother Elias as in the place of punishment he rehearsed the boy's offense; and lastly, the unflinching courage of the victim from whose set lips the utmost strength and savagery of his torturer drew but one smothered cry.

Elias wielded a blue and supple rawhide, ribbed and elastic, easy to handle and a terrible punisher. He cut the boy to ribbons, in the zealous desire to make him beg for mercy before the school; but this he was unable to do and to this extent the "example" was a failure. It was, however, a perfect success in the way of impressing at least one young witness with its inhuman cruelty and injustice.

I engaged Brother Elias in chat, telling him I was one of his old boys. He was but slightly moved and did not even ask my name—there had been so many!

With my mind full of the burning recollections set forth above, I led him to the subject of corporal punishment and, admitting that it was sometimes justifiable in a ruder day, asked him if it had not well approved itself as the parent of worse vices than those it sought to cure.

Elias looked at me with a flash of the old fire. "You have made a strange use of the education we gave you," he said. "But I forget . . . you were not with us long! On the contrary, I see nothing to blame in what you call the old system." He smiled grimly. "It will always be the new system where I have anything to say." Adding reflectively, "But I am becoming an old man."

Suddenly he broke out: "You may call it what hard names you please, but it was, and is, needed to get the devil out of many boys. It cured them utterly, or at least saved them from becoming worse men, enemies of society. Above all, it held them to the Faith—those who have weakened or fallen away (with a glance at me) had perhaps missed that saving discipline. Without it there would have been no enforcing the salutary rule of obedience. I myself have obeyed all my life," said Brother Elias.

I could not but feel that there was something austere grand and simple in his manner of saying this. I thought of his barren, dreary, devoted life, empty of nearly all those joys which console ordinary humanity, and lacking the supreme consolation of love. Of the doleful tale of years, one as like another as the beads of his rosary, passed in either inferno, the asylum or the schoolroom. Of the blank misery of such a life wasted in a veritable bear-garden, especially to this man in whom

there was a touch of the visionary and the scholar. Of the strong faith which had urged and made good his great renunciation. And though I marched no longer with Brother Elias and was, as he would believe, of the lost, I could not forbear bowing to him in silent homage.

Then a thought came to me.

“You are no longer Brother Director at T——?” I asked, mentioning the institution of which I have spoken above.

“Oh dear, no,” he replied calmly; “I have not been there in many years. We must go wherever we are sent,” he said, “so that one may not count on forming ties.”

After a pause, he added with a smile in which there was a note of the old mingled humility and disdain:

“And I am not now a Brother Director, nor have I been for a long time. I am what you call reduced to the ranks—a private. But, believe me, I am quite content. God’s work is to be done in every station. And I have long since learned to serve,” said Brother Elias.

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

THE recent publication, in French, of some posthumous fragments of Guy de Maupassant's is not without a mournful interest for the admirers of that singularly gifted and unfortunate genius. And this is the best word that can be said for the enterprise of Maupassant's editors and publishers. Their too obvious motive is to make capital out of the morbid curiosity which the fate of this writer has evoked—a curiosity that seeks to pursue him beyond the grave. The editors have much to say as to the importance of disclosing the artistic processes of so great a writer. It is a specious plea, but the true lover of Maupassant will do wisely to avoid these fragments, the declared purpose of which is to show him the secrets of the Master's workshop.

I have read these things and I am unfeignedly sorry for it. One who wishes to love his mistress should not inquire too anxiously into the details of her toilet. The artistic motive was so dominant in Maupassant's work—the sole god indeed of his idolatry—that one might conceive such a publication inflicting upon him the pangs of a second death.

And all that we should know of Maupassant's "artistic processes" he has himself told us in the famous preface to *Pierre et Jean*, written at the height of his powers. It may be worth while to recall briefly the guiding rules of Maupassant's fine art, for the benefit of those who regard good writing as an easeful occupation.

People who read Maupassant in the current translations usually think of him as a man who had a perverted talent for writing indecent stories and whose own personal immoralities brought upon him a judgment in the shape of paresis and an untimely death. The latter part of this view is probably well founded, though the physiologist might have something to say in the way of rebuttal or, at least, qualification. The matter of heredity would have to be taken into account; it being clear that a man is often punished in his venial sins for the graver transgressions of an ancestor who had dodged the reckoning in his own person.

Maupassant, it must be allowed, was an immoral man in his relations with women—perhaps not more so than many a man who leaves the penalty of his vices to a future generation.

As an artist, however, Maupassant has the highest claims to our respect, and we must combat the ignorant English idea that he was merely a writer of indecent stories. Whatever we may think of his choice of subjects, we shall not be able to dispute

his literary pre-eminence. For example, we are always comparing the adjective "great," as between Mr. Kipling and some one else, usually to some one else's disparagement. Well, Maupassant was nearly always a greater artist than Kipling, though his view of life was neither so many-sided nor so wholesome as the Englishman's. It must in truth be admitted that, literary ethics apart, the body of Maupassant's work is marked by the note of what we are now calling degeneracy. This, however, does not impair its value as a human document, or as a piece of consummate artistry. Nothing could more sharply accentuate the note of degeneracy in Maupassant's work than the little story of "Paul's Mistress" (*La Femme de Paul*) in the volume—untranslated, so far as I know—bearing the title *La Maison Tellier*.* Yet, revolting as is the *motif* of the story, so powerfully and graphically is it told, so terribly convincing the picture of moral infamy it draws, that *La Femme de Paul* is raised by sheer art to the dignity of a classic. So at the end its unspeakable revelation offends the literary appreciation no more than does Horace's frankness in charging his old mistress with *libido equarum*. Now as the school-men have placed the charming lines to Lydia in the hands of the "ingenuous youth" of all nations, it would seem that, in the last result,

* This was first written about 1895. There have been many translations since.

the question of art is superior to the question of morals.

Few English writers have satisfied the demands of the artistic conscience as rigorously as did Maupassant. In the preface to *Pierre et Jean*, already cited, he says: "After so many masters of nature so varied, of genius so manifold, what remains to do, which has not been done, what remains to say, which has not been said? Who can boast, among us, of having written a page, a phrase, which is not already, almost the same, to be found elsewhere?" Now the man who seeks only to amuse his public, continues Maupassant, by means already known and familiar, writes with confidence, his work being intended for the ignorant and idle crowd. But—and here is a truth, oh ye professors of literature!—those upon whom weigh all the past cycles of literature, those whom nothing satisfies, whom everything disgusts, because they dream better, to whom everything seems already deflowered, whose work gives them always the impression of a labor useless and common—they arrive at length to judge the literary art as a thing unseizable and mysterious, which even the greatest masters have scarcely unveiled. What remains then, he asks, for us who are simply conscientious and persevering workers? Why, we can maintain our struggle against invincible discouragement only by continuous effort—*par la continuité de l'effort*.

Let the young English literary aspirant read the story of Maupassant's seven years' apprenticeship to Flaubert—it will be worth more to him than the learned lucubrations of Prof. Barrett Wendell or many volumes of Kipling. "I know not," said the master to his disciple, at their first meeting, "whether you have talent. What you have shown me proves a certain intelligence. But do not forget this, young man, that genius, according to Buffon, is only a long patience." From the author of *Madame Bovary*, Maupassant derived the chief canon of his artistic faith and practice, which may profitably be set down here:

"Whatever may be the thing one wishes to say, there is only one phrase to express it, only one verb to animate it, and only one adjective to qualify it. One must seek then until one finds *this phrase, this verb and this adjective*; and one must never be content with less, never have recourse to even happy frauds (*supercheries*) or clowneries of language, in order to avoid the difficulty."

The literal observance of this rule made a greater artist of the disciple than of the master. It gave Maupassant an almost unique distinction in an epoch and a nation peculiarly fertile in great writers. He was, and is, the unchallenged master of the *conte* or short story. In English we have no one to compare with him, except Edgar Poe and Rudyard Kipling, both of whom he outclasses by virtue of

pure artistry. The Frenchman owes his superiority not merely to the perfection of the phrase, but to the variety of his invention and his abnormal power of making the reader partake of his impressions. Poe studiously cultivated the horrible, but in tales of this order he achieved an unquestioned artistic success only in the *Cask of Amontillado*. I should like to see what Maupassant would have done with this story, had it come fresh to his hand. Yet he has a score of such, if not so dramatic in conception as Poe's masterpiece, certainly less peccable in other artistic respects. *L'Apparition* is the most convincing ghost story ever written; Corsican revenge has never been depicted so briefly and powerfully as in his tale of the old woman's vendetta; *Pierre et Jean* is a triumph of art applied to the psychology of moral guilt. *La Petite Roque* is as terribly distinctive a success—we can easily imagine how Poe's twiddling detective instinct would have spoiled these stories for him; *Allouma* is the last word of a sensualism that is as flagrantly frank as it is splendidly poetical; *L'Héritage*, in its politely suppressed irony and demure analysis of motive, rivals Balzac's veritistic etching of Parisian manners.

But what shall I say of *Bel-Ami*, the perfect pink of cynical scoundrelism, with the profoundly immoral, yet strictly true, lesson of the wicked hero's success? Oh, Sandford and Merton! what a con-

trast is here to the smug hypocrisy of the British Philistia! The man who wrote this book is surely damned—but if you do not admire it, pudent reader, you shall not escape artistic damnation. Talk of the satire of “Vanity Fair”—a book without a man in it! Look, I pray you, at the victorious *Monsieur Georges Duroy*—pardon! I should say, *Du Roy*—see how this plenary profligate makes his smiling way; conquering and deserting women at every turn; putting always money in his purse; guilty of everything except a blush of shame or a pang of remorse. What “green probationers in mischief” he makes your stock literary villains appear! The fellow is irresistible, too; has such an air that the more women he conquers, the more pursue him, ladies of approved and matronly virtue as well as *flaneuses* of the *pavé*. How grandly he goes on from success to success, until the church itself puts the capstone on his triumphal career and *le beau monde* of Paris acclaims his crowning rascality!

If the true victory of the artist be to have made himself unforgettable in his work, then we may well pause at the name of De Maupassant. The copy of life which he has given us is one of unique interest,—terrible, fascinating, yet repellent. No writer moves us to keener curiosity regarding his mental processes or the formative influences which went to the making of his style and talent. For his rare and sinister distinction he paid, as we know, a fear-

ful price—the man sacrificed himself to the artist. This would have appeared to Maupassant a perfectly logical act, involving neither heroism nor madness, since he held to no commandments save those of Art.

The artistic value of that poignant sacrifice, the literary value of that deeply etched transcript of life, remains and will remain. Tolstoy characterizes Maupassant as the most powerful of modern French writers of fiction. There is, by the way, between these two masters, otherwise so strongly contrasted, no slight kinship in point of artistic methods. Maupassant is perhaps the only Frenchman who could conceivably have written *Ivan Ilytch*, that most pitiless yet authentic study of disease and death. Perhaps, had Maupassant lived to his full maturity—we must not forget that he died a young man—he would have come, like Tolstoy, to see life with a less morbid and troubled vision. He perished to the strains of that *Kreutzer Sonata* which the Russian has long survived and which it is now difficult to associate with his name. . . .

I have cited from memory only a few of the more famous *contes*—there are twenty-five volumes of them, not including the novels and other literary efforts. An immense quantity of the most strenuously artistic production; nothing bad or inept, at least in the English degree, shall you find in all these books. Maupassant burned the essays made during

his long apprenticeship to Flaubert. The French people have a rigorous artistic sense and do not take kindly to the English practice of collecting the first amateurish effusions of their authors: they wait until the bird has learned to sing.

If the fruits of Maupassant's devotion to his beloved art were less real and apparent, one might take more seriously the legend that imputes to him an exclusive cult of lubricity. The sins of the artist are always exaggerated. In the case of Maupassant, exaggeration was the easier that the artist belonged to a race which is remarkable neither for continence nor discretion. It is true he confessed that "women were his only vice"; but, mindful of his thirty volumes, many of them masterpieces, and his premature death, we can allow him a larger measure of charity than he claims. This much is certain—Maupassant was *not* his own most celebrated hero, as Byron liked to have people think *he* was his own *Don Juan*. Perhaps the creator of *Georges Duroy* would have relished the rôle himself—if there were not books to write and, especially, if Flaubert had not laid on him so inflexible a rule of art! I suspect that the most tragic phase of Maupassant's life-tragedy consists in the fearful penalty he paid for an indulgence which is not so unusual as the world tries to make itself believe.

*Bold Turpin once on Hounslow Heath
His black mare Bess bestrode-er;
Wen there he seed the Bishop's coach
A-coming along the road-er.*

*So he gallops close to the 'orse's legs,
And he claps his head within;
And the Bishop says, "Sure as eggs is eggs,
This here's the bold Turpin!"*

—Sam Weller's Song.

KNIGHTS OF THE ROAD

TURNING over a rubbishy lot of old pamphlets in a second-hand book stall on Fourteenth street, New York, lately (a thing I am apter to be doing at five o' the afternoon than any other), I made a find that literally took my breath away. Nothing less than a miracle happened to me at that moment in the grimy old book shop, under the dealer's careless yet observant eye. From an oldster of some forty odd I became in a flash a boy of eleven, and stood there tingling and trembling at sight of what had been my earliest introduction to Romance.

What was the marvel? Only a parcel of dusty, shelf-worn paper novels, long out of print, so far as I know, and certainly never looked on by these eyes of mine since the gates of boyhood closed behind me.

But, O Memory! when didst thou ever mistake the lost treasures of youth! Thirty years vanished at sight of the tall paper books, their very form and pressure conveying instant affirmation, even without the bold testimony of the titles in staring black and the quaintly symbolic design of interwoven masks and handcuffs on the cover. These insignia of the

Road and the Police waking in my heart an exquisite thrill of boyhood (through them I first felt the power of Art), would alone have certified to me the Adventures of Claude Duval, with the accompanying and more or less related histories of Dick Turpin, Tom King, and Sixteen-String Jack. The sight of Aladdin's Lamp or the Slaves of the Ring could not have moved me more—nay, not so much, for Hounslow Heath laid a stronger toil upon my young fancy than any scene of Arabian enchantment: I was, and ever have remained, a child of the Occident.

Of Life and Literature I knew nothing when I brought a boy's mind to these books—the dearer, too, that they were forbidden and had to be tasted with fear and precaution, sometimes by a furtive candle in my little room; or, as Tom Pinch sought to master the violin at Pecksniff's, under the bed-clothes; or with desperate hardihood, betwixt the covers of a school book, in full family circle about the evening lamp. Heaven, what tremors and palpitations, what cold sweats and hot flushes, when the paternal Eye was bent too curiously upon me, and the paternal Voice interrogated me concerning my task! What hair-breadth 'scapes! what unlooked for deliverances from imminent peril and detection! Ah! the child is father to the man indeed, for my mind misgives me that, early and late, I have so purchased my dearest joys.

I have just said that I knew nothing of Life and Literature when these picturesque old chapbooks, with their deadly designs of prison and gibbet, fell into my young hands. Truly I may add that Life and Literature, in such small measure as I have since come to know them, have stamped upon my mind no impressions more vivid and enduring. Taking up one book from the lot, I hold it in hands that tremble a little, wishing and yet fearing to turn the page and read.

The spell will not be there, I say to myself, and the Boy I once knew alone has rights in this province—no trespassing, sir! I am still debating the question (as nice a one as you shall propose to yourself), always gazing at the quaint old novel with its pictured legends, appropriate foliage of Tyburn Tree, but not turning a leaf, when an eager shrill young voice seems to speak to me from its pages out of the Past. . . .

Yes, they're the very books. I guess I ought to know—I had over twenty of 'em hidden away from Dad in an old box in my room. Printed in London, they was, for it said Price One Shilling on the cover. That meant twenty-five cents of our money, a whole lot to me. I was quite reckless in raising the price, however (as somebody has always been for anything he wanted badly). I don't remember now how I got it all—over twenty books cost a heap.

Mother helped me a lot, I expect. She didn't care, but jiminy! if Dad had ever found them! He used to burn up everything that looked like a Beadle's Dime and I never could keep a full set of Deadwood Dick. Said he never read a novel in his life, which Ma said was the reason I felt that I had to read so many.

I read a heap of 'em, you bet. Some boys at my Dad's school (he was a teacher, which naturally set him against novels or anything good to read) used to pay me to tell stories out of them. I liked to tell the Claude Duval stories the best, but it took an awful long while 'cause I couldn't keep right at it, o' course. But Dad didn't really bother me much—he was an absent-minded sort of man, even though he had never read any novels about injuns an' highwaymen and knew all about books with figures and diagrams in them that I knew I should never learn to draw, let alone understand.

Why, say, there was a boy by the name of Jim Rabbitt, the grocer's son, with his pockets always full of spending money, who made a contract with me to tell him all the Claude Duval stories I had read, and kept his end of it faithful. It took about three months, for Jim's father was anxious for him to get along in his studies, and Dad looked after *him* particular. Still, Dad was that absent-minded he never got on to the trick we was playing. We made believe to be doing examples out of Robinson's

'rithmetic while I would be pumping the Claude Duval stuff into Jim. When Dad would come near our desk I would sing out to Jim from the 'rithmetic —10—4—16—8—, being the top line of some compound numbers to add, and Jim would take them down on his slate. Then Dad would pat us on the back and walk away, quite satisfied. I wasn't always quite satisfied myself, but I liked to show off my stories and Jim could give me more money than ever I could get any other way. . . .

You see Claude Duval was my favorite hero, 'cause he was so grand and handsome and wore a three-cornered hat and a fancy coat with ruffles at the wrist, and a sword at his side and pistols in his pockets. He looked like a regular nobleman, sure, and the ladies were all sweet on him, but he had no time for that sort of truck, being so busy rescuing imprisoned heiresses and punishing villains, and robbing from the rich to give to the poor. My! what bully times they had, Claude and Dick Turpin and Sixteen-String Jack, and the other fellows, riding around the country, or hovering in the borders of Epping Forest; making coaches stand and deliver, scaring guards and postilyuns half to death, while the rich passengers tried to hide their watches, rings and money and the lovely ladies in tears somehow couldn't keep their eyes off Claude; stopping at the finest inns, calling the terrified landlord "sirrah," and ordering him to bring the best in the house

(would he? oh, I guess rather!); always being tracked by the police and always giving them the slip just in time; getting more swag than they could carry in summer, and in winter spending it with the loveliest ladies in London—maybe that wasn't being something like a Knight of the Road!

Claude used to play off being a real Count in London and had pages and flunkies hisself and went around with the swells of the Court and was made love to by Duchesses and Marchionesses and defended poor and oppressed and beeyutiful ladies against the best of them. But Adele was the only one he ever loved—maybe I didn't cry with her when at last he was betrayed and brought to Tyburn Tree! Even Jim Rabbitt, who wanted me to skip everything 'cept the robbings and shootings, looked kind of sad then and purty near forgot to sing out 10—4—16—8 when Dad came behind us.

I liked to tell about Dick Turpin, too, with his Bonny Black Bess (O Romance, show me such another pair as these!). Say, there wasn't her match in England for beauty and speed. Black every inch of her and fleet as the wind. When the coachies caught sight of her, they just hollered, "O Lord! It's Dick Turpin and his Bonny Black Bess," and told everybody they'd better fork over quiet and peaceful. But, say, did you ever hear of anything like that ride to York—one hundred and fifty miles, without stopping once, to save her master and then

dropped dead as he cleared himself from the stirrups. There was a picture in my book showing the gallant steed stretched lifeless in the road, with Dick Turpin bending sorrowful-like over her. Oh, my Bonny Black Bess! (I have lived to see many a famous picture by some of the world's great artists, but none that pierced my heart with such sorrow as that old wood-cut in the story of Dick Turpin.)

Well, as you might expect, Turpin's heart broke with the loss of his Bonnie Black Bess, and what with the big reward, I forget how many pounds, on his head, and people not fearing him so much, it didn't take long to fetch *him* to Tyburn Tree. In fact, to that queer old tree they all came sooner or later, escorted by the rabble of London and with lovely ladies weeping and carrying on as had helped to bring them there.

After Claude Duval and Dick Turpin, I guess Jack Sheppard was my favorite hero. But he didn't come in those long novels with the handcuffs strung around the cover. His was a smaller book with a colored picture on the outside showing Jonathan Wilde in a red coat and a cocked hat and a ferocious sneer, looking through the bars of a cell at Jack Sheppard. Oh, how I hated that Jonathan Wilde, and how I loved Blueskin for cutting his throat, though he didn't make a perfect job of it!

Say, do you know that Jack Sheppard could open the heaviest lock in Newgate with nothing but a

rusty nail? Do you know that he escaped again and again and that the only way that they could keep him; and him only a boy, was to chain him down to the floor with two hundred weight of iron? But even then Jack got clear somehow and baffled Jonathan Wilde the thief-taker, who was always pursooing him. And I guess that only for those lovely London ladies Jack would never in his turn have come to Tyburn Tree. Somehow they figured in the finish of every one of my heroes. Why them lovely ladies should have brought such bad luck to the Knights of the Road, I don't know, but that's the way the story always ends. If ever Jim Rabbitt and me grows up to be Highwaymen (he hates the grocery business) we've made up our minds to steer clear of lovely ladies.

The young voice stops and at the same instant I end the debate above referred to by deciding not to read again in the Boy's book of enchantment. The risk, I feel, is too great. So I put the old chap-book back in its place, to the manifest disappointment of the dealer, and leave the shop with the hesitant step of a man in a day-dream; attended and escorted by a visionary cavalcade of Knights of the Road, among whom I readily identify and exchange familiar greeting with Claude Duval, Jack Sheppard, Dick Turpin, Tom King and Sixteen-String Jack.

That night at home I take down my Macaulay (a choice that maturity enforces on me) and read under the head of "State of England in 1685":

"Whatever might be the way in which a journey was performed, the travellers, unless they were numerous and well-armed, ran considerable risk of being stabbed and plundered. The mounted highwayman, a marauder known to our generation only from books, was to be found on every main road. The waste tracts which lay on the great routes near London were especially haunted by plunderers of this class. Hounslow Heath, on the Great Western Road, and Finchley Common, on the Great Northern Road, were perhaps the most celebrated of these spots. . . . It was necessary to the success and even to the safety of the highwayman that he should be a bold and skilful rider and that his manner and appearance should be such as suited the master of a fine horse. He therefore held an aristocratical position in the community of thieves, appeared at fashionable coffee houses and gaming houses, and betted with men of quality on the race ground. Sometimes, indeed, he was a man of good family and education. . . . It was related how Claude Duval, the French page of the Duke of Richmond, took the road, became captain of a formidable gang, and had the honor to be named first in a royal proclamation against notorious offenders; how at the head of his troop he stopped a lady's coach in which there was a booty of four hundred pounds; how he took only one hundred and suffered the fair owner to ransom the rest by dancing a coranto with him on the heath; how his vivacious

gallantry stole away the hearts of the women; how his dexterity at sword and pistol made him a terror to all men; how at length in the year 1670, he was seized when overcome by wine; how dames of high rank visited him in prison and with tears interceded for his life; how the King would have granted a pardon but for the interference of Judge Morton, the terror of highwaymen, who threatened to resign his office unless the law were carried into full effect; and how, after the execution, the corpse lay in state with all the pomp of scutcheons, wax lights, black hangings and mutes, till the same cruel judge who had intercepted the mercy of the crown, sent officers to disturb the obsequies."

So the vivacious and not unromantic Macaulay. But, O Memory! ever faithful to the earliest dawns of Romance, ever returning with unsated appetite to the first draught of enchantment, thou wilt not blame me if I carry the Boy's version with me to the end.

GENIUS makes its way by hook or crook, and the world looks on in wonder, but nobody is quite comfortable until, like a daring trapeze performer, it has rolled up its apparatus and bowed itself out.

MARY

I WAS sitting in my brother's house, in a far Western city. And well content was I to be there. We had not seen each other in more than twenty-five years. When he left our home in the East I was a lad of thirteen, he a young man of twenty-two. He was now a powerful man of fifty, deep-chested and iron-muscled. The vigorous outdoor life of the West had kept him strong and young; the seasoning he had received in shine and storm, in blow and snow, as logger, plainsman, cowboy, miner, railroad engineer, was written in every line of his bronzed face, in his powerful, supple movements, in his keen and steady vision, in the rugged health that seemed to guarantee him for another half-century.

When we met at the station an hour before, he looked at me with a doubtful smile, trying to recall his little brother—the "kiddy" of a large family—in one who will never see forty again. I knew him at once, yet, strange to say, not as the handsome, dare-devil young man whom my childish heart had worshipped. It seemed rather as if our dead father stood before me. As writings traced

in invisible ink will after a lapse of time steal out in a strong light, so the years effect imperceptibly the most startling family resemblances. Thus I knew my brother, whose younger face I had all but lost, from his likeness to our father, though he himself was quite unconscious of it.

And then the tender mother, so long gone, had her will when these two gray-haired men were clasped in each other's arms, forgetful of onlookers and heedless of their tears.

So now we were sitting in his neat home, with his wife and children about us. The first fervid welcomes had been said, the first eager questions regarding each other asked and answered. Our hearts had been eased of the first tense emotion, yet neither of us felt the self-possession we feigned, and we still looked at each other between smiles and tears. It seemed as if the dead were striving to speak through us and it was only by a mighty effort that we controlled ourselves. From time to time, as I turned to speak to one of the children, I felt my brother's intent gaze upon me, seeking to bridge the years between us, searching for those proofs of race and blood at which the heart leaps up in rapture.

Then came a pause in the talk and my mind reverted to an awful calamity which had befallen this father and mother.

The sunlight of a perfect June day in Iowa stole

softened through the shaded windows, filling the modest room with patterns of golden light and shining in the happy eyes of the children. And I marked how one glorious vivid ray encircled the beautiful head of a young girl in a large portrait, whose smiling eyes seemed to challenge speech and whose lips were parted as with innocent laughter.

Instinctively I turned to the mother, meeting the pensive glance of her dark blue Irish eyes, which by the same instinct were fixed upon mine.

"How old would Mary be?" I faltered. . . . It was the first mention of her name.

"Twenty-four," she answered, with a rush of tears and a pathetic look at the bright face in the picture.

Then they told me anew, sitting in the smile and bright presence of Mary, the sad story which I had learned long before from their letters, but which I now truly felt for the first time. And as they told it, the tears of all fell; but the bright smile of Mary never darkened an instant and seemed to include us all in its radiant blessing.

It was a simple yet terrible nature-tragedy of the West, such as the wires so often bring us. In that beautiful country, with its wide expanses of unsheltered plain, the play of the elements often passes into rage uncontrolled and suddenly changes all to terror, death and desolation. A cloud-burst or tornado in summer, a blizzard from the frozen heart

of Montana or Dakota in winter, will in a moment sweep away the frail defences of human life and scatter ruin and dismay over hundreds of miles, drowning, burying or uprooting whole villages, destroying railroads, stations and bridges, carrying death far and near. Often the work of destruction is wrought within an incredibly brief space of time, leaving havoc that years of labor cannot undo and wounds in the heart that only eternity can heal.

At this time—some twelve years ago—Mary's mother was employed as telegraph operator at a small remote station on the Iowa prairie. The family lived in a little house close by, on the bank of a shallow stream which the spring freshets sometimes raised to a threatening height. There were, besides Mary the eldest, three younger girls, mere tots with no more than a year's difference between them, and twin girl babies. Mary was a little mother to the rest, as her mamma's duties kept her long hours at the station. She was as apt as willing—a true Western girl—and besides helping her mother at house-work, she had learned the telegraph code and would soon be able to relieve her at the station. Dear, brave young heart, that labor was never to be required of her.

One night, when the father was many miles away on his train, there came up a terrible storm accompanied by a cloud-burst, that scourge of nature which is almost peculiar to the great Northwest. With

fearful suddenness the little creek rose to a headlong, dangerous torrent, menacing the house and the station. Great as the peril was, the mother would not leave her post at the "key" until she was relieved, and in this way precious time was lost. Yet nobody about the place was quick to feel alarm or to suggest prompt action, so familiar is the spectacle of storm and peril in that wild country. Mary was the bravest of them all, reassuring her mother, and laughing fearlessly at the few railroad men who had hurried to the rescue of the little family.

But the storm ever growing fiercer and the flood ever rising—it was now black midnight—the water entered the lower floor and in a moment was waist-deep in the house. Then, at length, the mother was prevailed upon to seek safety with her babes and children at the station, which seemed to be less exposed to the fury of the storm and the force of the torrent. Alas! had they remained in the little house, this story would never have been written and I should have been greeted on my so-long deferred visit to Iowa by the original of Mary's smile.

In the awful darkness and panic of the storm, unnerved by the wailing of the children, it was but too easy for the few rescuers to make a mistake. They made but one—and that one was fatal. For it chanced that some obstruction in the path of the flood, just above the house, split unequally the brunt

of the freshet. The water rose no higher in the house—not a clapboard of it was loosened—while the angry torrent leaped with redoubled fury at the frail wooden station. Hardly had the rescuers, with their helpless charges, taken shelter there, when the foundations began to swim under them. In a moment the black water was about them and the structure parted like a house of cards. Then, and not until then, did Mary cry out with the fear of her young heart, while the frantic mother strove to enfold all her children in her arms. A brave young fellow, who might easily have saved himself—one of those humble, obscure heroes whose deeds glorify the common stuff of humanity—caught the terrified girl in his arms and lifted her to his shoulder.

“Don’t cry, Mary,” the mother in her divided anguish and terror heard him say—“I’ll save you!”

Then there came a great rushing wave and they passed away from the mother’s sight—she with her fair head still resting on his shoulder.

So they were found, two weeks afterward, miles from that place, when the waters had subsided. Corruption had not touched this sweet wildflower of the prairie. The bloom was still on her cheek and the smile in her eyes.

The twin babes and one other of the girls perished. The mother, sorely wounded, never knew how her own life was saved: nay, perhaps, still won-

ders why. For the joy of her heart is buried with Mary. . . .

A story without art and too sad to be told, perhaps—especially as it is true, every word, and the telling has not been easy for one akin to the poor victims.

But I made up my mind to try to tell it, sitting there before her picture and marking the love and grief of her dear ones, and the longing in her mother's eyes which one thing alone can ever satisfy. And—was it mere fancy?—when I looked up again, there seemed a tenderer light in the eyes and a rarer smile on the lips of Mary.

LOST

I WAS born without the sense of orientation. I can honestly say (with a great man of letters), that were the sun to rise in the West some fine morning before a gaping world, I should be quite unmoved. I never was able to learn geography and to this hour do not understand the Cardinal Points—which are to me rather the Cardinal Terrors. I cannot form the smallest idea of the geographical situation of a place without calling up in mind the old school-book picture of a Boy with arms extended to East and West, his face to the North and his back to the South. Should I ever utterly lose that Boy, God help me!—he is my only compass through this wilderness of a world.

Nevertheless, I have lived in many towns and have moved about with a recklessness akin to that of people who venture into water without knowing how to swim. Of all these towns there was but one that the Boy fitted—I mean where I was sure of the Points; for I cannot possibly get my bearing without placing myself mentally in the position of the Boy. Even now, whenever I think of that town, involuntarily my right hand points to the East, my left hand to the West, my face to the North, and

my back to the South. It is noon and I am standing gracefully on a Meridian, an imaginary line, but not so easy a feat to an imaginative person.

Now, as I have said, to only one of these towns did the Boy have any kind of logical application. I couldn't somehow adjust him to the others; his East was their West, his South was their North, and I couldn't make it come out right, though I turned him this way and that, pointing his hands every which way and abusing him like a clothing-store dummy.

At this moment I, a man of liberal education, of sound and disposing reason, will and memory, am unable to give the simplest geographical description of the town in which I have lived three years. I don't know East from North or West from South—for that is the perverted way in which I couple them. I can't bound my own house. I don't know the North from the South end of the cat. I am as ignorant of the compass as of the Fourth Dimension.

This may seem funny to you, but it has a very serious side for me. For instance: I was out late one night not long ago and when I started for home the streets were deserted. Not even a watchman or policeman in sight. Not a homeward reeling drunk. Not a single prowling night hack. Nobody and nothing.

I shivered a little, feeling an old sense of "lost-

ness" come over me. A film seemed to cover my sight, shrouding things as with a veil. I stopped to reason with myself, to fight off this terrible illusion, knowing well from old experience what threatened me. I told myself firmly, but quietly and reassuringly, that the town was only about a mile wide, that I had come directly across it and that at this very moment I could not be more than four and a half blocks from my own house. A veiled moon was shining softly: in spite of my natural difficulty of navigating, it did not seem possible that I could miss my way.

Lightened and cheerful, I went on and even plucked up courage to whistle a bit. But the silence of the lifeless streets rebuked me and I soon desisted. I walked rapidly and the sound of my footsteps echoed far. From time to time I turned to look behind me, anxious for some token of human companionship. But I saw nobody; nothing.

Then I perceived that I had been walking a long time and must have covered a far greater distance than should have brought me home. I stopped in terror—ah, whoever has felt that thrill of desolation will know how to pity me!

The houses were all strange and seemed to repudiate me with closed and frowning eyes. They were the houses of the rich, too, and who does not fear to approach them at unlawful times? But I must find out where I am and how I may get home.

. . . I am stung with anguish at the thought of Somebody's weary waiting for me . . . for oh, my God, I can no longer conceal the truth from myself—I am lost!

Then I select a house standing back the depth of its lawn from the street and make up my mind to ask there. First I study it carefully—it is like all the houses on this unfamiliar street, massive and rich. Its bearing is instinct with distrust, like an enemy holding his breath. I peer a long time—not a straw of light from any chink or crevice. I strain my ears a long time—not the smallest atom of sound.

I set my foot on the gravel path and at once, like a growling watchdog, a hostile wind comes down to meet me from some dark old trees beside the house. I go on until I stand at the heavy door, double-locked and chained. Cursing the necessity, I pull the bell: it startles me terribly and a strong impulse moves me to flee. But I hold my ground.

After a few moments a window is opened over my head and a man's angry voice says: "What the devil do you want?"

"Pardon me, sir, I am lost and want to find my way home."

"Oh, the devil!—you're drunk. Be off or I'll have the dogs set on you."

And the window closed with a bang. And the house was as before, silent and menacing.

I walked a little further along until I had recovered from the fright which the angry man had caused me. Soon I brought myself back to the point that I was lost, lost, lost! and must move heaven and earth to get home. Oh, voiceless, threatening houses! some of you have the secret and I shall wrest it from you!

I tried another with bolder hand. At least I pressed an electric button hard, but there was no ring in the house or the heavy doors kept the sound from me. I waited a little while and pressed it again. Was the house empty or were they dead within? Were Death and Life in a conspiracy against me? . . .

Angrily I left the porch and strode without a fear to the next house. I rang, and after no long interval, rang again. Then I heard a muffled sound of voices, and slippers descending a staircase. Bolts were shot back; the door opened about six inches on a chain. I caught a quick glimpse of a man in a dressing gown and a woman in night clothes leaning over the staircase.

"What do you want?" The tone was brusque but not angry or menacing. But the faint moonlight striking through the partly opened door caught a silvery gleam from something that he held against his side in the folds of his dress.

"I beg your pardon, sir, for disturbing you, but I am lost and trying to find my way home."

"Well, how can I help you?" said the man, not unkindly, while the woman strained above us in the darkness to hear.

"It is most humiliating, sir, but I must ask you to direct me to my house—I live at Number blank, Dash street."

The man whistled with comic surprise. "Something has put you to the queer all right, old fellow," he said, "though you hardly look it. Well, I'll take a chance on you. Your little home is not so far away that you can't get there before the milkman. Just three blocks East and two due North will fetch you to Mamma. Good night, son!"

He grinned pleasantly and shut the door in my face. I could dare his revolver but not his ridicule. How could I tell him that his directions conveyed nothing to my bewildered sense? How explain to him my preposterous need of the Boy, or the fatal handicap under which I labored? . . .

With a sinking heart I turned away. Lost! Lost!

OLD BOOK MEN

I LOVE an old book—an old book shop—an old book man. Who ever sucked wisdom or any manner of profit from a Best Seller or the smug counter wight offering the same? Dost thou pretend to the love of books? Then tell me whence thou didst fill thy shelves? I shall soon know if thy name be Elect or Legion!

As for me, my darlingest, best-loved books are the treasure trove of old book stalls, out-of-the-way places in the neglected corners and crannies of trade, musty, dusty and cobwebby, but not the less, guileless reader, intent on a fair commerce. The point is worth noting. Your true old book man, he that is verily "called" to the gentle traffic, like Matthew from the receipt of custom, loseth naught by his politic tolerance of dust and dimness. Nay, the spider abhorrent to cleanly commerce is for him a benign Arachne weaving webs to ensnare his customers.

In any other sort of shop who would tamely suffer dust and grime, exasperating half-light, shin-breaking stools and giddy ladders climbing into realms of darkness threatening life and limb? In

any other who would not rather have the clerk look for the thing wanted instead of seeking it oneself, with manifold inconvenience? Behind this is there not a delicious, half guilty expectation of chancing upon some treasure that even the dealer wots not of, or has mayhap forgotten? Oh, you mean to pay for it, of course, but then the satisfaction of producing it (after first settling for the ostensibly sought and negligible thing) and saying with an air,—“Look here, old Black-letter, how is this for a find? Why did you never tell me you had this edition?” . . . Be sure the worthy man will not fail to propose a price that shall cover his chagrin and moderate your triumph.

'Tis a delightful trade and confers a specious air of learning upon all engaged in it. Ye old book man has nothing to fear from the insolence of patrons—his dignity subdueth the haughtiest; immune as the son of Thetis, he keepeth behind his shelves. His gentle traffic partners with the most seductive of human vanities, whence I have observed that old book men seldom fail, commercially, be they of the true genus. Nor do they often become rich—a decent station betwixt a mere competency and wealth, somewhat like the factitious twilight of their shops, is the utmost they may commonly hope for. 'Tis perhaps the only business in which a man can be both poor and happy. I fancy this is in no small degree because the old book man enjoyeth the prestige

above touched upon, together with a liberal license to contradict the public. . . .

There were great men and memorable in the old book trade before the father of Samuel Johnson, but 'tis not now my intent to call the roll of them. I will say, however, that the finest and memorablest old book man I ever knew, one lacking no essential virtue of the ancient guild and indeed overtopping his fellows in several respects, was, and thank the fates, still is, my old friend Joseph McDonough of Albany, N. Y. Joe (as our long-standing affection warrants me in calling him) knew more about books inside and out than any man of or alien to the trade whom I have ever known. He was the heroic type of old book man, whom Johnson or Goldsmith or Lamb would have delighted to talk with. In default of these great personages, he talked much with me, often in his shop amid his books (they were *his*, reader, in a sense deeper than the commercial one), or, not infrequently, at some neat neighboring snuggerly where we might quench the thirst induced by learned conversation. There was a species of ropiness incident to these delightful sessions, as 'twere the dust of old books, that made such refreshment peculiarly warrantable.

On such occasions Joe was magnificent, my deference to him as his junior, together with my respect for his various knowledge, eliciting the fullest display of his powers. I candidly believe that a record

of his talk would make an important addition to the curiosities of literature, especially to the illumination of those neglected or forgotten by-paths of learning which bear a certain resemblance to the dim and dusty alcoves of old book shops. Unluckily I failed to put down Joe's talk while it was fresh in my memory; perhaps also my negligence was abetted by my efforts to keep even with him in the matter of irrigation. In which respect, owing to a weak head and stomach, I usually came tardy off, though God knows I tried my best. . . .

Joe was an Irishman (by way of Liverpool) and like most old book men, a strong free thinker. But such was the genial charm of the man, a charm made up of kindness, cleverness and good humor, that he had none but friends in a large church-going community. He was a man of ruddy complexion, with an abundance of yellow curling whiskers which earned for him, among his bookish cronies, the sobriquet of the Bonnie Briar Brush, given in affection, I need not say. He had animal spirits equal to his learning and his occasionally Gargantuan appetite. All in all, he was the heartiest, jolliest pagan I have ever known, with a philosophy of life which, if limited on the spiritual side, offered him the most solid satisfaction. In public as in private, he talked with tremendous vim, noise and authority, and laughed at his own jokes with a simple and uproarious appreciation that made you love him for that

alone. He was one of the best talkers I have ever heard, on his feet or across the table—solid, meaty, brilliant, resourceful and diverting. In a public station he would have speedily become marked and celebrated, but he was content to live and will die—many years hence I hope—an old book man.

In one of the Roundabout papers Thackeray says that the ablest, most talented persons he had known did not prove their talents by writing or any other form of self-exhibition. (I do not quote, but this is the thought.) I never recall this observation of the great writer but that I think of Joe McDonough, man of genius, whose rare worth was known only to a few intimates, and who was content to give to an old book shop what was meant for mankind.

GOD *He knows who has seen full well
How I stumbled thro the Year,
If better or worse, or Heaven or Hell
Hath drawn my soul anear.*

*For I veered to left and I veered to right,
And seldom my course led true;
Yet aye in the depth of my darkest night
One Star rose that was You!*

*What grace may I then of this New Year ask,
For guerdon or gift or prize?—
Nay, only to cleave to my one true task,
And see your Star still rise.*

THE UNKNOWN MASTERPIECE

ONE of the great and original conceptions of Balzac is his "Unknown Masterpiece." There is hardly another work of equal brevity in modern literature which has been the object of so much artistic envy and admiration. It is not merely the most finished single piece of that often turbulent and prodigally careless genius,—it is also a profound reading of the very heart of life.

The Unknown Masterpiece of Balzac! It stands in a small chapel, apart from the immense galleries of the Human Comedy, with their enormous hum and bustle of life, their incessant agitation of plot and counterplot. This chapel is dimly lighted even at noonday, the stained glass windows being unusually opaque and of sombre colors. One at the head of the chapel, giving light to the apse, is of somewhat brighter hues than the rest, and from this there falls a violet penumbra which, with a certain trembling at the heart, warns us of the presence of the divine Masterpiece and marks its precise location. There is a faint odor of incense, but no priest or acolyte is visible. The silence is absolute, breathing of that profound mystery which enfolds the higher conceptions alike of Religion and Art.

Here never enter the restless and impatient crowds that stamp about in the galleries of the Comedy. The chapel is known only of the few who have purchased by some measure of artistic thought and travail a right to partake in the august consolations of the place. It is, in short, a Retreat for the elect souls of art, where they may purify themselves from contamination with aught that degrades their noble calling; whence they may go forth, with faith and courage renewed, to the higher victory.

The story is of an artist who gave up his whole life to the painting of a single picture, the portrait of a beautiful woman. On this picture he lavished all the treasures of his genius, all the cunning of his art, all the ardor of his ambition, all the zeal and devotion of which the human spirit is capable. He worked in secret, in an attic studio difficult of access, as if each day's task were an assignation; jealously resenting inquiry as to the subject of his labors; never permitting anyone to look upon his beloved creation. In time he came to fancy, like Pygmalion with his Galatea, that his picture was really alive, a woman of flesh and blood; and he went in to see her with the quickened pulse of a lover and the awakened desires of a voluptuary. Ah, the trances of joy and possession in which hours flew by like moments! Often, when busy about the picture, he would fancy that he felt a light breath on his cheek or in his hair;

and not seldom he would have sworn that a hand was laid on his shoulder—the mere touch of a rose-leaf, but it thrilled him like the embrace of the Christ-statue in the legend of the adoring saint.

But even when he was not under the spell of this strange nympholepsy, he loved the picture with an idolatrous passion and firmly believed that in it he had achieved the flawless Masterpiece of the world.

So the years passed, as ever they must both for the loveless and the loving; but no long time ever elapsed without his working at the adored picture; touching here, retouching there, adding a little color in this place, giving that line more grace and this more freedom, freshening the flowers in her bosom, retracing the curious pattern of her robe of figured byssus and gold,—in short, never wearying of those little artistic coquetries the sum of which (said the great Angelo) makes perfection. And less than Perfection he never aimed at for this picture; less than Perfection he was sure the world would not deem it. But yet he could not bring himself even to contemplate the exposing of his picture to public gaze and curiosity.

Being old at length, and always stubborn in his contentions, he one day engaged in dispute with two other painters touching a favorite artistic hobby of his; and the prudence of years falling away from him in a moment, he offered, the better to win them to his view, to show them his Masterpiece. Now,

when with trembling hands he had drawn aside the curtain from the idol of his life and the triumph of his art, and had begun to point out its excelling beauties, the painters saw, to their great wonder, that there was actually no figure on the canvas at all!—only a confused mass of lines and colors. The old artist, so passionate for perfection, had in the end labored his great work into nothingness and all human semblance out of his adored Master-piece! . . .

What man but has painted year by year on the intangible canvas of his soul such a picture as that of Balzac's devoted artist? The woman we long for constantly and ever in vain, the Ideal Woman of our dreams, whom we desire the more that possession of her rivals of the flesh repels and disenchants us,—is she not the "Unknown Masterpiece" enshrined in many a heart? And the jealous fear of the painter lest any other should invade his delight or penetrate his secret, is it not the same feeling that we have with regard to *Her*, the idol of our private worship, the hidden consoler and comforter, the object and inspirer of visions that we never disclose? Ah, the years we spend touching and retouching the dear Fantasy; lavishing upon her all our treasures of love and tenderness and admiration; making her ever the more beautiful in order to love her the more; ever remoulding her nearer to the heart's de-

sire! How well we keep the secret, too!—hearts that beat very near our own, aye, and sometimes wake to watch and listen, never fathom the true cause of our mysterious devotion or find the clue to the sacred inner chamber of the soul where our Unknown Masterpiece stands enshrined. There all is holy calm and silence, there is perfect worship, there the violet penumbra faintly lights that adorable Vision of Beauty and Desire which belongs to us alone, which none may take from us, and which never can be realized save only for our very selves!

For we do hope until the end, and in spite of the long disappointment of the years, that some day we shall find the Living Image of her whom the longing of our soul has created. And when comes that blessed day and hour, shall we not kneel before *Her*, and kiss her hands and feet, and beg leave to show her this marvellous picture, her very self in all save breath and motion? Shall we not weep tears of joy, telling her of our long and weary waiting and of our unfaltering faith that she would come at last? Shall we not reveal to her all the lovely dreams of which she was the inspiration,—and ah! shall we not prove to her that she will now be loved and worshipped as never woman was before?

Alas! such realization is granted to but few. The Master fabled aright,—for the many the dream remains unto the end—an Unknown Masterpiece.

ONCE when I was a very little boy,
With a hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
I longed to be a man for joy,—
And the rain it raineth every day.

But when I had got three hairs to my chin,
With a hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
Sweet woman was ever my darling sin,—
And the rain it raineth every day.

I'll shed no tears o'er youth that's gone,
With a hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
For I made my hay while the merry sun shone,—
And the rain it raineth every day.

So, lads and lassies, have your fun,
With a hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
May you smile like me when your sport's aye done,
Tho the rain it raineth every day.

THE BELOVED

(With apologies to Koheleth.)

*I am come into my garden,
My sister, my spouse.*

TELL me now how this wonder cometh that
I am full of love.

For I said to myself: the time of love
for thee is past, yea, the season of love is over, and
thy heart is no longer in the green leaf.

Something hast thou known of love and much of
the trouble that cometh of woman. Be thou glad
that thou hast had thy portion of that which none
born of woman may put by. Be thou glad and go
thy ways like a wise man.

I hearkened to this voice in myself, I gave heed
to its counsel, and like a wise man I went my ways.

Desire was no longer as a lance in my side and my
sleep was untroubled by woman.

Yea, the fever and the unrest of young love fell
off from me, as the day cools when the shadows
lengthen.

My heart knew no longing and that old pain of
love which I drew from the mother that bore me
pained me no more.

So I went my ways careless of women; yea, saying unto myself that I should behold the face of Wisdom.

Now I pray ye tell me how this wonder cometh that I am full of love?

Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?

My Beloved hath vanquished me with a glance of her eye; with a kiss of her mouth hath she led me captive.

Pity me, all ye that have felt the cruel might of love.

Lo, the weakness of youth is upon me and old desire prevaieth like a strong enemy in the night.

Peace there is none for me, nor any respite from longing. *I sleep but my heart waketh.*

Like a fox in the snare am I caught; like a bird in the hand of the fowler.

She hath kissed me with the kisses of her mouth, and I am drunk with the honey thereof. With the kisses of her mouth hath she kissed me until my soul hath swooned with the rapture thereof:—oh Wisdom, how hast thou forsaken thy child!

Unto my sweet enemy am I delivered. Where now is my vaunted strength and the way of the wise that lay before me?

Pity me, all ye that have felt the cruel might of

love, for I am become as a fox in the snare, as a bird in the hand of the fowler.

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet.

Fair and sweet is my Beloved as any ever wrought by the cunning Maker of women. Fair and framed for all manner of sweet enticement.

Young is she and her form as a maiden's that knoweth not love. Fresh and young is she, but wise in the terrible lore of women.

Delicate is the head of my Beloved, comely and delicate even that her mother might bear her without pain. Rich her hair and fragrant as the sweet-smelling hyacinth. Oh my Beloved! how easily dost thou hold me captive with but one of thy hairs!

My Beloved hath blue eyes like the early violet, but theirs is the lure of deep waters—my soul is drawn into the depths thereof. Her two breasts are as twin pomegranates and their smell as of myrrh or spikenard.

Her mouth is love's own rose and the honey under her tongue is sweeter than rich wine. Her kisses pluck me like strong drink that both allayeth and increaseth thirst—a thousand leave me still unsatisfied.

Her white body is fashioned for love's rarest mystery and delight; fragrant is she even as myrrh or frankincense.

Fair and sweet is my Beloved as any ever wrought

by the cunning Maker of women. Fair and framed for all manner of sweet enticement.

I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine.

Pity me, all ye who have felt the mighty power of love, but do not, I pray you, seek to deliver me.

Be it unto life or death, still will I gladly go where she leadeth.

For my bondage is sweet and I am enamored of my captivity.

Tame am I as a kid by its dam, as a foal that scarce knoweth the pasture.

Yea, now I see that my ancient folly was wisdom, since that cannot be wrong which a man taketh from the mother that bore him.

My Beloved is mine and I am hers—she hath lain on my breast and our hearts have said that which cannot be unspoken. My Beloved is mine and I am hers.

Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm, for our love is stronger than death.

My Beloved is mine and I am hers:—Wisdom, go thy ways!

COME, winds of March, with bluster,
Hide, April sun, or shine:
You shall not daunt or sadden
This deep-thrilled heart of mine.

*For Love a kinder climate
Around my walks hath spread,
With magic airs all breathing
And sunlight overhead.*

*Soft voices murmur near me,
Light hands are on me laid:
Ah, fetters I had broken,
How are you thus new made?*

*Fain would I know the reason
For this unwonted thing—
Love in my bosom whispers,
“It is thy second Spring!”*

PECCAVI

MAN-like I have sinned enough in my time, and I may confess to you, Madame, that my holiest seasons were when I was physically incapable of sinning. If youth and health were to continue always, I fear there would be little repentance and less religion in the world. Looking back now on some youthful follies that are held to be sinful, I can truly say that when I sinned most I was most virtuous—that is, I had least thought of evil, but was only concerned with the pleasure I could give and receive—and by pleasure I mean good. This is a point, Madame, which the gloomy moralists of the church have strangely distorted—they call that evil which is the good of us poor sinners: hence we never really come to an understanding with them.

Well, I have agreed to forgive myself these pleasant transgressions, in deference to morality, and to recognize only as evil the good I did myself and others. Still, I can not say on conscience that I am truly sorry for the sins of my youth; for to be truly sorry for something you have had and enjoyed very much, is, as you know, Madame, the sole condition

of repentance and the chief hypocrisy which religion enters into with human nature. You remember the heart-cry of the good St. Augustine, "Give me chastity—but not yet!" (I have always envied him that beloved mistress who went weeping back to Africa, swearing that she would never know another man—more than his theology!) . . .

But in confessing to you, Madame, I may tell the whole truth, sure as I am of your kind absolution. Then I do not repent of nor am I sorry for the sweet sins of my youth. What?—sorry for youth? for passion and the first sweetness of love? for strength and desire that matched the glowing Poem of Life in its blending of soul and sense? for that eager thirst which would have drained to the dregs the Enchanted Cup? for those young raptures which knew nor care nor consequence? Ah, *mais non*, Madame!—but to you I will confess that I am most contritely sorry that for me all this fine madness of youth is gone forever.

When I say "all," you understand that I refer particularly to the poetry, the illusion, which indeed are the greater and better part of it. And since, Madame, I have not yet reached that period of age and decrepitude when virtue becomes entirely practicable, it may be that I shall fall again—oh, I shall be very circumspect! But should the thing occur, through the malice of the Evil One's presenting that temptation which is at once so terribly old and so

provokingly new, I shall be able to forgive myself—if the sin recall something of the splendid folly of my youth. . . .

Have you ever reflected, Madame, how such sinning by old men is merely from a pathetic desire to recover their lost youth, and so they go in quest of the Enchanted Fountain which was sought for many years before the days of Ponce de Leon? Always, too, they seek it from young women, and for this there is Scriptural warrant, as we read that the wise physicians of Israel, when all other remedies had failed, prescribed a blooming virgin to sleep in the holy King David's bosom,—with the result that he died soon afterward, but happy . . . and I have heard, Madame, that such young women, loved by old men, have strange tales to tell. . . .

You ask me, because of something I wrote in pique long since, if I am a woman-hater. A woman-hater, forsooth? Dear lady, since I came to years of indiscretion (a long while ago), I have surely never lived a conscious hour without the thought of woman. I have never been out of love for as much as a week at a time, and as a virtuous man, I have often had great ado to avoid plural passions,—they are so dreadfully easy to take on! Forty years has not brought me wisdom in this respect: I am as susceptible as ever, to such a degree, indeed, that I sometimes fear for myself an incipient softening of

the brain. But no, it is simply a disposition which I imbibed with my mother's milk—(she was a very loving woman, Madame, and as a proof gave to the world thirteen of us, of whom I was the last born). And God forbend that I should ever lose it—that is to say, love the less; the same being the worst terror that old age could have in store for me. I was much comforted lately by reading in an Italian novelist that men of the poetical temperament are never really too old to love.

So you see, Madame, how unmerited was the reproach you would have put upon me, and all because of a bit of satirical writing which very carelessly masked my deeper thought.

And if this avowal should not content you, I could show you proofs—joys that have been mine in the pursuit of love, joys that it is ever a new joy to recall—and wounds, dear lady, that are even more convincing. . . .

Ah, Madame! I see you now believe me.

LO, April's here, with all her saucy train,
(I was born of an April day)
Ah, well I know her by my heart's sweet
 pain,—
 And the rain it raineth every day.

*Weeping and smiling she comes as of old,
 With a hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
Wakening desire like the flower in the mold,—
 And the rain it raineth every day.*

*Aye, many's the time hath she piped for me,
 With a hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
Yet ever I long for her minstrelsy,—
 And the rain it raineth every day.*

*Soon will she pour for me the old mad wine,
 With a hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
And bid me love,—me and this heart of mine
 (I was born of an April day!)*

DEATH AND THE DOCTOR

AS a rule, people do not talk or think much about their health until they have lost it, and it would therefore seem that the majority of Americans are far from well. Few of us indeed are really robust, excepting those socially aspiring ladies who, as Oscar Wilde said, affect illness as a form of refinement.

No doubt we are put together on the most admirable scientific principles, but it would seem as though the good Lord had troubled himself to find room for too many things inside of us. However, if we were less complex, we should not have the amusing literature of Mr. Upton Sinclair. For it is one of the curious facts of human experience, that our ailments often become in the long run a comfort to us and may even conduce to our length of days!

Now and then a heretic like the terrible G. B. Shaw (there are unfortunately very few *strictly* like him) raises his voice to deny that medicine is an exact science; yet I have lately read an article in a medical journal in which about three hundred symptoms of disease are enumerated from an urinary analysis. If the patient should exhibit any of these

symptoms, he is in a bad way; and on the other hand, if none at all appear, his case may be grave indeed!

Medicine, like theology, is much of a guess—the only convinced and certain experimenters are those who have passed beyond. Unfortunately, we can not avail ourselves of their discoveries. If the dead were suffered to return, there would be an end at once of the Problem of the Hereafter and of guess-work in medicine. It is possible also that next day there might be missing two important Professions from the world.

Under present conditions, about all we know for a surety is that, flatter the phagocyte as we please, butter the opsonin how we may, every mother's son of us is up against a losing game. However boldly and skillfully we may play our part, however undauntedly we may bear ourselves, victory in the end goes to the Noseless One. The bravest fight that ever was fought, as well as the cravenest, is foredoomed to this. There is no other way.

This truism renders almost comic the universal anxiety among persons of all ages to escape the inescapable. Whether it be a merciful provision or not—(it is quite possible to regard it as a masterpiece of ironic cruelty!)—no man can fully take to his bosom the thought of death until his very minutes of life are numbered.

We talk about the zest of life in youth: zest it is,

but an ignorant zest that reckons not wisely of the precious and perishable stuff of life. Youth knows no desire of life like age foreseeing with fatal certainty the end and letting go of each hour with an agony of renunciation. Nature often out of kindness for her favorites drops a lethal sleep upon the eyelids of the young, and this is the meaning of the ancient wisdom which held such to be the beloved of the gods. But her summons to fearful and reluctant age is like the grim office of those mute executioners of the Roman arena who slew with clubs such victims as had survived the torture.

There are three things that no young man can be expected to prize like an old man—money, and health, and life.

The human race has been trying to learn the lesson of death for countless thousands of years, and all this accumulated experience is not of the slightest value to the man who dies to-day.

It is, therefore, much better to hang on to the cheerful habit of living. Also, I would give this counsel to my friends: Be not too much concerned about your health, nor over-curious touching your internal economy—there are more things there than it would be useful or even decent for you to know.

I greatly admire the courage of Mr. Sinclair in leaving the primrose path of the successful novelist, in order to point the way of relief to over-eating humanity. In one respect at least his example

ought to be imitated by the doctors generally and especially commended to the vivisectors,—I mean his trying things on himself. This is heroism of a type too rare. But I am not immoderately fascinated by a so-called scientific diet system. I don't see how Mr. Sinclair can enjoy his dinner, while he is carefully counting up the calories, dispassionately subtracting the proteids, calmly estimating the bacteria and maybe sometimes forgetting to carry one. Of course, he may tell me that a man, correctly speaking, ought not to enjoy his dinner, and so help me, I have seen but few scientific "foodists" who looked as if they did. This is, I presume, in accordance with the fitness of things. Better than mere animal satisfaction, the peace of hands folded over a paunch replete, the delicious and all-suffusing content of one's gastric juices, the beatific swan-song of the liver, the voiceless hymn of praise arising from the whole internal man—higher and better than these, I dare say, is the assurance of having eaten, or at least put out of sight, a dietetically correct dinner. In his own case Mr. Sinclair has demonstrated that eating is rather a negligible function—I need not stop to point out how Art and Literature would benefit if struggling genius were only able to look at it in that way.

For a similar reason I dissent from even a greater authority than Mr. Sinclair, though not so interesting a writer—I refer to the illustrious Metchnikoff.

The bacillus *Bulgaricus* may be a good friend of mine, but why should I plant him in my cherished internal cosmos, my beloved and solitary colon, if I have to think of him increasing and multiplying there in numbers terrifying to the imagination? Is it pleasing for a man to think of his personal "midst" as a theatre of war and pillage, of mobilization and maneuvers, of frays and forays, of pursuit, capture and death? Heavens, what a thought to take to one's resting pillow!

I said just now that we should not fuss too much about our health or—which is much the same thing—about what is going on inside of us. The chances are that if you imagine some organ affected, symptoms will appear to confirm your morbid fancy, and you will pass the rest of your days between disease and the doctor. There is this much truth in Christian Science—the mind primarily causes a good half of our maladies. Mr. Sinclair tells us that people do not die of starvation in four or five days—*they die of fear*. No doubt he is right. I believe that death is a consenting; that, save by violence or casualty, no one dies without an act of volition. This, I believe, is Nature's truce with us, though so few understand it. And so I should define a natural death as one in which the person concerned agrees to die.

It would be a great work to banish fear from the world, and the thing might be done if so many peo-

ple did not foolishly or wickedly or piously believe that their worldly comfort or their eternal salvation or the good of others depended upon it.

Nothing is so universal as fear. We are all scared to death three-fourths of the time, about our bills, or our wives, or our health, or our business. Nothing is so contagious as fear of any kind; it works more miracles than faith and plays many a grisly jest.

I heard the other day of a man who had died of a withered pancreas. As I carefully take to myself the advice just given, I had no idea the pancreas was a vital organ, nor indeed any familiar acquaintance with it. But, as the newspapers commented widely upon the man's peculiar cause of death, I look to see the usual epidemic follow, and for some time to come shall expect to find the pancreas heavily charged in the bills of mortality.

To desire length of days is natural, and the Good Book promises this boon to the just; but it is by no means the noblest desire. Better it were to wish that, whatsoever our mortal term, it may not outspan our will and capacity to love and serve our kind. A selfish, useless life spent, like that of a Chinese god, in absorbed contemplation of one's navel—what grace or honor or worthiness can age bring to it?

Good sense will usually avail to keep a man in

this world as long as he shall care to stay—it is only an old woman here and there who would live forever in the chimney corner. Be a man and surrender without loss of dignity. Death is a respecter of courage, if not of persons—show a bold front and he will not come first to you. Always is he busiest where he sees the white flag of fear—he has so much to do, so much to do! that he likes to find his work easy.

Laugh at Death and the chances are that he will give you a meaning salute and pass by. Get into a panic and chase after Dr. Cure-all—you will presently have a surer physician on your trail. When the Fear is really at hand,—as once occurred to me, when though I called to it, it went away,—you will learn that it is no fear at all. For it is much easier to die than to live, and at the last Nature helps us to play our part. Indeed, I believe few of us know what true courage is until we come to die, though we talk of it so loosely.

After all, no task were possible did we not foresee the end of it from the beginning, and perhaps, with all our love of life, we should shrink from it with a thousand-fold terror, were there no certainty of death. Swift's conception of a tribe of human beings who could not die is justly voted the most horrible in literature.

The fear of death is largely a growth of superstition and it has especially been fostered by the

Christian faith, with its terribly uncertain award in the Hereafter. To the ancients it was utterly unknown in this dreadful aspect, and was indeed accepted with a natural firmness and resignation which "makes cowards of us all." But the last thing to be said is, that our modern fear of death is as foolish as it is futile and mocks itself. For why cling so desperately to this uneasy life which you are yet ever wishing an end of by discontent with the present living day or idle anticipation of the morrow? Do you remember when it was thrust upon you?—I doubt that you will be more conscious when it is at last taken away.

A little while ago I said that, in my humble belief, death is a consenting, and that no man, save by casualty, is called upon to yield up the gift of life without a supreme act of volition. Also I believe that when the final moment comes, Death holds for us a wonderful and most pleasant surprise; and when he shall offer us his strong arm, as he did to Will o' the Mill in Stevenson's charming parable, we shall not turn from him in terror and loathing, but rather resign ourselves to him with infinite trust as the great Deliverer and Friend!

A **LITTLE** romance in your heart, a little invention in your head, a little iron in your purpose,—these things will keep a man in the world as long as it is decent for him to stay.

THE WOMAN

TEACHER, please tell us why there is so much about love and marrying in English novels:—it seems to us very, very strange?”

Thus, once upon a time, innocently queried Lafcadio Hearn's Japanese pupils, young men ranging in age from nineteen to twenty-three.

Whereupon Lafcadio laid aside the work of fiction under discussion and boldly set out to elucidate the great Western Question of Sex for these naïve Orientals. At the end of three hours he was still talking; like Tristram Shandy narrating the momentous fact of his birth, he did everything except tell it. But the politeness of Japanese youth exceeds even their thirst for knowledge: Lafcadio's pupils looked long-eyed content with his explanation, and he was so well pleased with it himself that he embodied it in an essay and printed the same in a book. But even there he omitted to explain his explanation.

Now the best part of Prof. Hearn's elucidation of the Western Sex Problem was where he frankly told his class that the matter was one very difficult to elucidate,—there being nothing like a parallel to

it in the social life of the Far East. It is far from easy of explanation, even to us in the West, though we be witnesses of the Overwhelming Feminine on every hand. Whether it be a force for good or evil, for weakness or strength, the fact may not be disputed that it is more and more becoming the most peculiarly marked characteristic of Western civilization. Perhaps it is even more distinctive than our conventional Christianity, and as a cult it is unquestionably more popular. Whatever the East may or may not be, the West is THE WOMAN. There is here an universal preoccupation with sex or the feminine element, amounting at times to a veritable obsession or erotomania—an astounding paradox, by the way, in view of the long accepted, missionary-inculcated notions as to sexual morality in the East. Our thousand-tongued journalism proclaims it by a myriad devices and finds therein its chief profit and *raison d'être*. Our theatre is not alone hopelessly commercialized but also, as a consequence, feminized beyond hope of redemption, being given over to the frankest exploitation of the sexual motive. The "stars" are all women, the plays are made for them, and are specially designed to exhibit them by every resource of the dramatic *procureur*. A syndicate of the Sons of Sem is in control of the theatrical world and is held responsible, with how much justice I can not say, for the feminization here alluded to. I have heretofore pointed out that Sex

is the magic word in our drama as in our journalism.

As for our literature,—but the pen is only just warming in my hand, and this division of the subject asks a new paragraph.

Writing to a friend from Japan, Prof. Hearn amended his explanation as follows:

“The whole truth is always suggested to me by the (American) Sunday paper. We live in the musky atmosphere of desire in the West; an erotic perfume emanates from all that artificial life of ours; we keep the senses perpetually stimulated with a million ideas of the Eternal Feminine; and our very language reflects the strain. The Western civilization is using all its arts, its sciences, its philosophy in stimulating and exaggerating and exacerbating the thought of sex. * * * It pollutes literature, creates and fosters a hundred vices, accentuates the misery of those devoted by the law of life as the victims of lust. It turns art from Nature to sex. It cultivates one esthetic faculty at the expense of all the rest.”

From one who had practised literature and journalism in the West, and who is credited with unusual experiences, this is sufficiently thorough. But the subject is a large one, and Lafcadio has left me a few things to say.

Sex, by which I mean **THE WOMAN**, is written all

over the literature of the day and the hour. It is the staple of journalism, there being nothing else betwixt heaven and earth that is not regarded as purely negligible by comparison. This rule of our journalism authorizes a concentration of effort that yields not seldom fearful results. The majority of sexual crimes are, beyond question, due to newspaper suggestion;—you may easily convince yourself of this by noting how the journalistic exploitation of a crime of this sort is quickly and, as it were, responsively followed by others of like nature. And the most terribly alluring figure in the eye of our popular journalism is the Prostitute, the Phryne of the social heights or depths, by, for or through whom murder and crimes scarcely less dark are committed. About the shrine of this *Infama Dea* our journalists abase themselves, or march by in phallic procession;—she is also deeply considered in the calculations of the Business Office.

What I have called the Overwhelming Feminine is otherwise and variously borne witness to in our newspaper press. Sexual sin is, of course, the favorite theme, but if through some failure of the journalistic providence, this can not be had for the morning or evening edition, then anything about THE WOMAN, in order to save our circulation!

One might go on endlessly illustrating the Overwhelming Feminine, but that is the business of the newspapers. The terrible vision of Schopenhauer

—men rising up to crush by force of arms the attempted dominance of women—is not indeed fully justified by these exhibits of American journalism as reflecting the feminized sentiment of our civilization. Still, it makes Schopenhauer more readable, if not more acceptable as a social prophet.

Turn we now to literature as distinguished from journalism, the distinction often being no great matter. Lafcadio Hearn's Japanese pupils could not understand why Western young people should have so much trouble in the commonplace affair of marriage, the same being quite differently regulated in the Land of the Sunrise. Li Hung Chang once gave expression to this feeling of Oriental wonder and stupefaction when his carriage was held up on Fifth Avenue by a crowd besieging a spectacular wedding. "What!" exclaimed the Great Man of the East, "is all this mobbing and uproar because two young people are about to enter into sexual relations? By Confucius, but this is a marvellous country!" And to avoid seeing good rice abused, he gave orders to drive down a side street. . . .

This botheration of courtship and marriage and, often enough, a different kind of post-nuptial trouble, about which the novels have less to say, makes the staple of Western fiction. In its more repressed and conventional forms, it fills the so-called standard magazines, most of which give the feeling of having been written by the same contributors, edited

by the same editors, and illustrated by the same artists. There is always a picture of a woman—THE WOMAN—on the cover, and there may be many pictures of her, inside. Without the Pictorialized Feminine, success is judged to be impossible by the great men of the magazine trade.

One illustration of the Overwhelming Feminine gleaned from the magazines must suffice. The best known woman poet in America, a writer of strong passional impulse, not long ago wrote a poem denouncing War, that was as heartily praised as it was widely read and quoted. In this poem she urged women the world over *to stop bearing children until men shall make an end of War*. It needs no Solomon to point out that the effectual carrying out of this program might result in moral conditions quite as bad as those of any war could be; but women poets are not expected to be logical. Her argument, divested of poetry, was one very familiar to Eve and since to all her daughters: *Until you get what you want, don't give the man what he wants*.

But what a naïve disclosure of the Overwhelming Feminine! . . .

In books, especially books written by women, we get the fruit of super-feminism at its ripest and rankest. Such books may not be, certainly are not, literature in any solid or vital sense, but they are valuable for that petty observation in which women

writers usually excel, and they are interesting for their *unmorality* and their utter lack of reserve in treating of the sex relation. In this latter respect they make the most hardened male writer feel like a boy in his first pair of long pants. They find a new thrill for the most sated of us. They almost rediscover our lost innocence—only to take it away again! They know how the man feels as well as the woman: herein is their advantage—*no man ever knows how the woman feels*. Hence their success in writing novels of the erotic, passionate, super-feminine type. I shall never cease to marvel at the unchaste unchastity, the modest immodesty of literary women.

A good example is "The Helpmate," by May Sinclair, an English writer with several warm novels to her credit—with the fear of Comstock upon me, I pass by her sister aphrodisiaque, the author of "Three Weeks." Miss Sinclair is a true child of her era—she can see nothing in the world but sex. In her art it is the one thing needful, the one thing predominant, and it must be added, the one thing interesting. The story opens with the heroine in bed with her husband—they are in their honeymoon. Miss Sinclair indeed never strays far from the Bed—it is always handy at emotional crises and truly it is more entertaining and convincing than some of her sawdust puppets. Super-feminism is the note of this book—I have already said that. When the

heroine learns that her just-wedded husband has had an intrigue and a mistress, we read that

“she loathed her womanhood that was yesterday as sacred to her as her own soul. Through him she had conceived a thing hitherto unknown to her, a passionate consciousness of her body. She hated the hands that had held him, the feet that had gone with him, the lips that had touched him, the eyes that had looked at him to love him.”

Then follows a kind of estrangement between these two which irritates more than it convinces and which, if the author had only known her business, was, if credible at all, a mere effect of jealous passion. So a man writer would have treated it, but that is not the way of the super-feminist. There is, of course, the usual feminine facility of “fine writing” and even a vapid attempt at pietism (English High Church) here and there, with sex, sex, sex behind it all. But after a hundred pages or so of this kind of futility, Miss Sinclair seems to be overcome by a recollection of “Madame Bovary” (in which famous work there is also a remarkable Bed). Whatever the cause, with scarcely a note of warning, she disposes of the wife’s impracticable chastities and beguiles the unsuspecting reader into an ambush. And thus she does it:—

“He led her to her tree where she seated herself regally as before. He poured his sheaves of hya-

cinth as tribute into her lap. He stretched himself beside her and love stirred in her heart, unforbidden, as in a happy dream. He watched the movements of her delicate fingers, as they played with the tangled hyacinth bells. Her hands were wet with the thick streaming juice of the torn stalks; she stretched them out to him helplessly. He knelt before her and spread his handkerchief on his knees, and took her hands and wiped them. She let them rest in his for a moment and with a low, panting cry, he bowed his head and covered them with kisses. At his cry her lips parted. And as her soul had called to him across the spiritual ramparts, so her eyes said to him, "Come!"—and he knew that with all her body and soul she yearned to him and consented."

Somehow one thinks better of Flaubert after reading this and perhaps for the first time realizes the perfect art and truth of the great scene of Emma Bovary's woodland ride with her lover; whilst the magic words privileged to haunt the memory are not May Sinclair's—

"Something sweet seemed to come out of the trees!"

Now the value of the foregoing and other like scenes in Miss Sinclair's story—there are plenty of them and there is nearly always a Bed!—from the view-point of this article, is their being true to super-feminism, if not to nature. The book is really important as an unconscious revelation of the tyr-

anny which the sex idea exercises over women. Miss Sinclair's women can neither think nor talk of anything else. In their lives, as in the chronicle thereof, nothing else is vital, nothing else matters. We are told that *Majendie* goes to business, and Miss Sinclair condescends vaguely to tell us something about it. We are not conscious of having acquired any definite information, but feel sure that we could attend to it as well as *Majendie* himself, so exclusively bent is he, first upon thawing out his wife's frozen moralities, and, later on, in making love to a humble mistress whom he took to make up to him a natural deprivation. This book is another and needless proof of the feminine incapacity to make a true picture of life outside the realm of sexual emotion or love, which is pretty apt to be the same thing.

Therein, as I have sufficiently shown, Miss Sinclair spares neither effort nor frankness—she tells us all she knows, which is feminism, if not art. She glorifies her sex—THE WOMAN. As she depicts her, woman is the conqueror. She is the desire of the world, whether she will or no; she is its gratification—at her own sweet pleasure. Her body is a divine mystery which to regard physiologically were a sacrilege: if yielded to men at all, it should be given to them only upon conditions that shall make to them for righteousness. Man is a poor worm of the dust whom sovereign woman may or may

not of her gracious will save from despair and death. He could be managed all right (this is evidently Miss Sinclair's reasoning) if it were not for other weak women who out of sheer love and pity (God bless them!) give him what sterner female virtue denies. So it is woman herself, in the end, who interferes with the logically fatal outcome of super-feminism. Little as May Sinclair's hot-house fable teaches, it may help us to understand this by the contrasted types of the super-feminine *Anne* and the merely feminine *Maggie*. . . .

Always the world is lost and saved through woman! I am myself so far a child of my era that I can not forbear ending with this piece of super-feminine sentiment. *Tojourns la femme!* God help us all: we are delivered into her hand!

COMTE AND CLOTILDE

I HAVE been reading, not for the first time, the very curious romance of Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism and his affinity, Clotilde de Vaux. Doubtless many of my readers who are familiar enough with the name of Comte know nothing of the story referred to, and I may be pardoned for offering them a slight outline of it.

The great Comte had settled the whole duty of man and he had devised a religion vastly superior to any in existence; but one thing failed him—the love of a woman. A little thing, but there have been very few world-saviours and creed-founders who could do without it. I am not sure but it is the essential principle of religion, as of life itself.

The scene is at Paris in 1845. Comte had been during some years separated from his wife who, like the wives of some other great men, had failed utterly to inspire or do homage to his genius—an offence the lawyers call incompatibility. He meets Clotilde de Vaux, young, beautiful, sympathetic, with the spiritual beauty of one foredoomed to early decline. She, too, is married yet detached, for her husband is in prison as a defaulter. Comte at once sees in her a woman who—to borrow his own

scientifically correct language—is “necessary both for his personal happiness and the accomplishment of his social well-being.”

A young and lovely woman likes to be wooed in such terms, perhaps, but they do not induce quick action. During the single year the relation lasted, Comte wrote his affinity one hundred and eighty-two letters, but though he greatly desired a closer union, their relations never went beyond the platonic. Perhaps the number of Comte’s letters, seeing that it was only a step to the Rue Pavée, illustrates his deficiencies as a lover—he never grasped the “business” of the part.

Once indeed he was thrilled to his positivist marrow with hope, when she wrote him:

“Since my misfortunes my one dream has been that of motherhood, but I have always promised myself never to unite in this step with any man who was not exceptionally worthy to comprehend its significance. If you think that you can accept all the responsibilities belonging to family life, let me know, and I will consider it on my part.”

Comte replied with almost unphilosophic haste: “It was with the greatest effort, my Clotilde, that I was able to control myself yesterday from answering your divine letter as soon as I had re-read it upon my knees before your altar.”—He had built her an altar in his house and invoked her with prayers night and morning!

Clotilde would have been his probably had he, instead of acting like a philosopher and waiting until next day, gone instantly to the Rue Pavée and taken her in his arms. Verily, unto few men is it given to be great at once in love and philosophy. Two days afterward, Clotilde retracted her promise: "Pardon my impudence. I still feel that I am powerless to exceed the limits of affection." And to the insistent but somewhat geometrical entreaties of Comte, she continued to make but one reply: "I am not capable of giving myself without love. This is a demand you ought not to make of me."

This was in September, and she died in the following January of that pulmonary complaint which seems consecrated to French heroines. So far as we know, Comte never consoled himself in the usual way for her loss.

Comte dedicated a code of worship to Clotilde de Vaux. Morning, noon and night he ceased not during many years to say prayers before her "altar," intended to commemorate their everlasting love. Relics of her—a lock of her hair—a bouquet of artificial flowers and her letters—were exposed on the "altar" and became the objects of unstinted veneration by the devotees of the new faith. Each Wednesday Comte knelt at her tomb in the cemetery of Père Lachaise, and every year, about St. Clotilde's day, he read there a long "confession" of his public and private life.

We are told that, in Comte's view, these annual confessions formed a progressive systematization of public worship which he wished to consecrate to his Clotilde. These are his words:

"Since the third anniversary of thy death I have thus been able to celebrate at the same time both thine unalterable re-birth and my final purification. Our expansion in the future from year to year will specially consecrate our full identification with the result of the religious foundation in which thou hast rendered me such great assistance. Under these positive auspices, I have solemnly systematized during the last year thine irrevocable incorporation into the true 'Grand-Being' (Humanity). These successive preparations have brought me to-day to the point of finally establishing thine actual worship, to be henceforth inseparable from universal religion."

On the seventh or St. Clotilde's day, he inaugurated "her universal adoration"; on the tenth "her regular festival," etc. In obedience to their master's will, his disciples continued to honor in her the First Priestess of the Religion of Humanity, of which Comte was the Anointed High Priest. She was and remains to an ever-dwindling number of the faithful, the Positivist Virgin—for Comte's religious system is a composite plagiarism from all the creeds.

Destiny loves to mask itself in trifles. Had Auguste Comte gone hot-foot to the Rue Pavée on

receiving that first letter from Clotilde, he might have established a genuine world-creed in his Religion of Humanity, instead of a cult known only to the curious few. The world wants no barren Virgin—its worship is for the Madonna and the Child.

BILL

WE call him Bill, first, because that is not the name given him by his godfathers and godmothers, and second, because it seems to denote the bunch of qualities which have made him a Problem.

And this Problem is, what shall we do with Bill?

He is just turned fifteen, a larruping lad, well grown, with heavy chestnut hair, wide blue-gray eyes and solid white teeth like a young bull terrier's—good to look at, but hopeless as a Speculation. He is too strong to sit in school over his books and too weak—though he scorns the thought—to be put to work. His teachers finally solved their end of the Problem—they expelled Bill. But that did not help us a little bit—in fact, ever since they sent him home, Bill has become a more terrible Problem than before.

I think he smokes, but he denies it with an earnestness that makes me feel as if I were offering violence to the Spirit of Truth.

He goes to the Moving Pictures as often as he can raise the Price from his kind Mother—which is as often as she can spare it, and oftener.

He reads the Lurid Fiction in which his age delights—the only kind of mental exercise that appeals to him.

He cultivates tender relations with stray dogs, usually of the mongrel kind, and has added the Pound-keeper to my list of daily cares.

He bears an unaccountable grudge against door-knobs and gates and everything wrenchable—which makes a sizable figure in the domestic budget and also involves me with my neighbors.

He has a sublime contempt for Girls and youngsters of timid spirit.

Naturally, Bill's education is fearfully in arrears. He is not a dull boy and his masters tell me that old, old story, that if he would only apply himself he would lead his classes. Rather, they used to tell me that—they have now washed their hands of him. Maybe they are not performing their full measure of Duty in expelling Bill because he played hookey often, was still oftener tardy, fell down in his lessons, used his hard young fists in settling recess disputes, and was always as uneasy during school hours as an Imp of Satan in a holy-water font. I don't know—there is the System! But it gave me a bad feeling about the heart to see him come home with his head hanging, branded Incurable. I shared his sentence and my sorrow was more than he could understand, though it seemed to touch his wild heart. Poor Bill!

It now occurs to me vaguely that our much boasted Public School System might be improved as regards its dealing with boys of the Bill kind. In this respect it seems to be mainly successful in dodging responsibility. No doubt I am wrong and not competent to hold an opinion in the matter. Anyway, Bill's teachers, backed up by the Principal, declare they have done with the Problem and that it is now up to his parents. Ah, I know!

Perhaps the root of Bill's trouble is excess of the Red Corpuscle; too much health and a kind of energy that does not agree with books and tasks. Nature is more to blame for the Problem than the wise men of the Public School System would allow. Yet I who have known sickness should not care to see Bill a puny lad, shrinking from rude sports and sitting in a corner with his knees gathered up and head intent over a lesson. Indeed, as between Bill and a Book, I would have to take Bill—and yet the Problem is heavy on my heart. For the days are going by and he is losing that which should furnish him against the years. What shall we do with Bill? . . .

But there is good stuff in Bill, though his teachers, declining responsibility and mainly concerned to draw their salaries on the easiest terms, could not plumb their way to it. Perhaps I ought to thank them for sending him home, for not long after, as he was loafing about the house one morning,

his little sister broke through the ice in the river at the foot of our garden. A large, robust man stood on the shore within a few yards of the struggling child and shouted quite earnestly for help. Bill—God bless him!—never stopped a second, but took down the bank in five leaps, landing boots and all in the river where it was three feet over his head. And he handed the little girl out, on her coming up the second time, to the large, robust man, who got his feet very wet, but was described in the village paper as a Hero!

Yes, there is good stuff in Bill, the kind of soul-stuff which the Public School System makes no account of when figuring out the claims of a boy to be Fired. Quality that is never too common and which perhaps a Better System might take into consideration ere disbarring a lad from his rightful chance with his fellows. Maybe, since the most admirable Systems are now and then changed or amended—and sometimes even pitched to Hell altogether—maybe, I say, the day will come when no prig of a schoolmaster, studious of his own Comfort and Dignity, shall dare to take away a boy's first chance in life and block the road of earliest opportunity, for the terrible offence of—being a boy!

That is my humble hope, but meantime it affords no help for the Problem—What shall we do with Bill?

* * * * *

THE CALL OF THE SEA

IT is said that once at least in every real boy's life the call of the sea comes to him, and if his home anchorage be not very fast and snug indeed, he is bound to obey it by hook or crook. Less romantically, it is also true, that this summons of the deep has helped to solve many a knotty domestic problem, besides keeping in commission that perennial stock of "gentlemen adventurers," lacking which the poetry and business of the seven seas could not be carried on. I may as well admit that the call seems to have worked a happy result in the case of our Bill, concerning whom my readers have heretofore heard something. Yet now that he is properly article'd and gone from us, and we shall not see him for many weeks, with half a world of tossing water between him and his home, I sometimes wish there might have been another way.

If any harm should ever come of it I shall have to blame it, in part, to this passage in a book very dear to both Bill and me:—

"Think of this wine, for instance," said old Sol, "which has been to the East Indies and back, I'm not able to say how often, and has been once around

the world. Think of the pitch-dark nights, the roaring winds, and rolling seas!"——"The thunder, lightning, rain, hail, storms of all kinds," said the boy.

"To be sure," said Solomon——"that this wine has passed through. Think what a straining and creaking of timbers and masts; what a whistling and howling of the gale through ropes and rigging!"

"What a clambering aloft of men, vying with each other who shall lie out first upon the yards to furl the icy sails while the ship rolls and pitches like mad!" cried his nephew.

"Exactly so," said Solomon, "has gone on, over the old cask that held this wine. Why, when the *Charming Sally* went down in the——"

"In the Baltic Sea, in the dead of night; five and twenty minutes past twelve when the captain's watch stopped in his pocket; he lying dead against the main-mast——on the fourteenth of February, seventeen forty-nine!" cried Walter, with great animation.

"Ay, to be sure!" cried Sol, "quite right. Then there were five hundred casks of such wine aboard; and all hands (except the first mate, first lieutenant, two seamen and a lady, in a leaky boat) going to work to stave the casks, got drunk and died drunk, singing 'Rule Britannia' when she settled and went down, and ending with one awful scream in chorus."

"And when," said old Sol——"when the *Polyphemus*——"

"Private West India trader; burden, three hundred and fifty tons; captain, John Brown of Deptford; owners, Wiggs & Co.," cried Walter.

"The same," said Sol; "when she took fire, four

days' sail with a fair wind out of Jamaica Harbor, in the night——”

“There were two brothers on board,” interposed his nephew, speaking very fast and loud; “and there not being room for both of them in the only boat that wasn't swamped, neither of them would consent to go, until the elder took the younger by the waist and flung him in. And then the younger, rising in the boat, cried out, ‘Dear Edward, think of your promised wife at home. I'm only a boy. No one waits at home for me. Leap down into my place,’ and flung himself into the sea!”

Was it this that decided our Bill's vocation, or was it not rather that, being the right sort of a boy, he had reached the age when the sea lays its potent spell on such youngsters? Probably both these things are true, but there is much in the heart of a boy that the wisest man can not fathom. I only know that when I told Bill I would not oppose his wish he seemed more content than I had ever known him, and I noticed that for some nights thereafter he slept with clenched fists:—Bill had reached the Age of Purpose.

But other things impelled our Bill to listen to the far-off, urgent voice of the sea, and chief among these was his chronic difficulty with his teachers. Never was a boy harder to keep at school; never one with whom books and tasks less agreed. I'm told it is one of the commonest troubles in the world with boys of the Bill kind, but somehow I've never

been able to get a good understanding of it. Especially as Bill's father (whom I knew very well as a Boy) while never his teachers' Pride or a Model in any respect, yet was no great hater of books and kept up his end without too much urging. Bill never fully believed in the existence of that Boy, and could not be moved to emulate him.

As I have said, Bill was anything but studious (except of literature of the "Deadwood Dick" and "Old Sleuth" type), and I can easily remember the number of times I have caught him with task-book in hand. At the same time, he was not a dolt and he had too much pride to pass for one, so he managed to stand fairly well in his classes *when* he went to school. I suspect that the full tale of his truancy is known only to God and his mother, and neither is in the habit of confiding such matters to me. His teachers declared Bill "impossible," which perhaps meant that his case required a little original treatment, not provided in our admirable public school discipline. However, it is not for me to criticise his teachers, having fallen down on the job myself. There was perhaps only one way to conquer Bill and make a regulation good boy of him, and that was to hammer him into submission. But I had had too much of that sort of thing in my own boyhood, and I couldn't pass it on to Bill. Oh, I did make one or two half-hearted attempts, which I don't like to recall, only to convince myself that God had not

given me a son for that, and also that I was punishing my own soul far more than the boy's body—he used to laugh about it to his mother! Spare the rod and save the parent, I say.

Well, as I told you, the sea, which is much wiser than parents or school-teachers and which has been attending to the matter a long, long time, took this trouble off our hands. It happened several months ago when we were living in the great city of New York and the problem of Bill had reached its most acute stage of anxiety. What with vaudeville shows, coon songs, crap-shooting and cigarettes to draw off his surplus energy, besides the regular daily fights to keep up his standing, it began to look as though Bill's future might be, to borrow his own simple language, a fifty to one shot for the blink house.

And yet Bill was just a real boy, half through his sixteenth year and fairly crazy to be a man; hard as nails and able to account for himself in any dispute peculiar to his age. Tolerably good-looking, with a frank smile out of wide-open blue-gray eyes that explained his mother's partiality and will perhaps carry him farther than his real merits or his inner sense of righteousness. Well set up, of fair height and still growing, with a supple command of every limb and joint. All in all (though I say it who shouldn't) too fine a lad to let drift to the world's wastage, without making a sterner fight of it. And

on this fight I was tensely resolved, when the sea spoke up for Bill, and I saw in his young eyes the light that has lured so many a brave lad from tender arms and clinging lips unto the romance and wonder of the Great Deep.

But these are my thoughts, if you please—not those of Midshipman Bill, now firmly holding his sea legs on the good ship *St. Mary's*, Commodore Hanus commanding, which I, unskilled in navigation, conjecture to be at this writing not more than two or three days' sail off Plymouth. (Bill was a good deal set back that his first cruise would not be to the China Seas, and a run to either Pole would not have been far wide of his reckoning.)

The *St. Mary's* is a sailing vessel and one of the stanchest on the seven seas, which she has voyaged more than half the years of her gray-headed Commodore. Her cadets are mostly graduated for the merchant marine, and they are picked with care from a host of candidates offered by the schools of New York. No boy is taken against his will, for the Nautical School is not in any sense a reformatory, and the standard of fitness is such as to admit only good material. I mention this in order to correct the impression that the school is a dumping ground for derelicts. The tests are both physical and academic, and the term is for three years. This fine opportunity is provided by the city of New

York, which bears all the cost, excepting the charge of each boy's outfit, etc.

With Bill on the St. Mary's there are an even hundred of as fine and clean and hopeful lads as ever went down to the sea in ships, and their Captain's heart is of the American oak. They are well taught the usual branches of a sound English education, together with all that pertains to seamanship and navigation. But manliness, courage, discipline, self-reliance and self-denial—these are the better part of their schooling. I am not sure the colleges give more in the way of *real* education.

So, here's a health to the gallant Commodore Hanus, his right hand, First Officer Marsden, and the crew of the good ship St. Mary's, and to all young tars aboard, no less than mine. May the old gray sea that goes ever whispering about the world, stealing away the hearts of simple lads, have called them to no worse fate than a prosperous cruise and a safe voyage Home!

* * * * *

EXIT BILL

THE call of the sea for Bill turned out to be a false alarm, as it were, but the fault was not so much that of the sea as of Bill himself. I am fairly well reconciled to it now, though for a long time I liked to think of him as a Trig Officer on the quarter deck, and my imagination even went so far as to picture him a Commodore in his country's Navy. These things were not to be, I daresay. There never was a Seaman in our family that I heard of, and though my father taught Navigation and the Higher Mathematics, he could not have steered a tub on a duck pond.

Fate has these things in charge, I suppose, and there is something in a boy's head that upsets all the best-laid plans of his Elders. I humbly admit that, though I long thought myself Master of the situation, Bill did with me as he liked. Maybe he will remember this when he is as old as I am, and be merciful toward his own Boy.

That one voyage of Bill's will not soon be forgotten, and his sisters always refer to it in Terms of Romance. As mementos of it (though indeed she needs none) the Mother has carefully put away a

bunch of picture postal-cards from various Foreign places and a good likeness of the lost Commodore—I should say Bill—in his natty cadet's uniform. The romance of the experience failed to impress Bill—he was too young and he had read too little to care much for London and the Tower and Westminster Abbey, etc., which to see his father at Bill's age would have risked something. What he chiefly remembered was his four-hour Watches, weary enough to a young lad getting his growth, who had ever slept his fill at home; the petty tyranny which the "old mugs," or cadets of one year's standing, practise on the new recruits; the swabbing and polishing and sail-mending and all the endless tasks that go to make up the excellent discipline of the school-ship. But I guess the thing which mostly bit into Bill's heart was the thought of Home and Mother that weakens the stoutest lads.

From London and Portsmouth they sailed away to the West Indies and getting into tropical waters, there was a lowering of the diet, which caused an outbreak of boils among the hundred cadets. To Bill this still appears the most remarkable event of the cruise. Often as I try to draw him out on the strange sights he must have seen by sea or shore, he never fails to lead me back to his Boils. And now I think it was the Boils and the fear of a repetition of that painful experience which cut off our family from hopes of a Commodore.

Discipline was the rock on which Bill had foundered at school, and the same thing blotted out that gallant picture which I had long carried in my mind of a future Naval Commander. The St. Mary's weathered home in due time and with it Bill, looking like a real sailor, rolling gait, hitch and all; bettered in every way, as I thought, by his first cruise.

With the ship in harbor at New York, Bill had every week-end at home, and his way led right across Fourteenth Street to the Jersey Ferries. In that short stretch of the Big Town, there were more real Wonders to Bill's young eyes than he had glimpsed in foreign parts. Talk about monsters of the deep, here were museum barkers, snake-charmers, tattooed men, bearded ladies, and some without beards who might be far more dangerous to a simple lad. Then the Nickleodeons, where you heard the latest coon songs and saw funny or almost wicked things by peeping into a machine and turning a knob; and the Continuous, where the acts and jokes were simply great, though they did seem a good deal alike; and best of all, the loveliest Fairies, without any clothes to speak of—wonderfully like Girls, too—who danced bewitching dances while seeming to look always at Bill, and over and above the rest of their bewildering performance, gave the boy Something to think about until he came again.

Some or all of these things cast a spell upon Bill—poor young blunderer in a land of sham enchant-

ment; and as a result, he was led into relaxation of his proper Nautical form. Then followed reprimands, gentle at first, until soon Bill found himself up against the sharp edge of discipline. But the call of Fourteenth Street was just then more potent in Bill's ears than that of the sea. Alas, to how many older and wiser than he is not temptation stronger than the voice of duty! Upon a further breach of discipline, in which several of the lads participated, but of which Bill alone willingly suffered himself to be made the scapegoat, the blow fell. Bill was not actually dismissed, however, and yet it amounted to something like that: I was merely asked to withdraw him. The distinction is less consolatory to me than to Bill. . . .

Now here's a curious thing that ought to be noted by all hazing judges and all disciplinarians high and low. Very soon after Bill was thus cut off from the career upon which we had set our hearts for him—the officers admitted that there was nothing really wrong with the boy—I began to see in him that change when a lad ceases to be the sport of his ungoverned impulses—in short, the dawning of reason and judgment. Had his superiors used a little more forbearance, had they given him the saving one more chance, who knows but that our glorious vision of the Commodore would one day be fulfilled? . . .

I am not sure that his regrets were very deep (re-

membering the Boils) for he can keep a close mouth; but he went about thoughtfully and in a new way for him—it was the first real fall that life had taken out of Bill.

But bless me, that was over a year ago, and the same Bill no longer walks the earth—more's the pity, I think sometimes, for there is loss and gain in all changes. Instead of that wild scapegrace, ready for any prank or mischief, we have a sedate young man who creases his pants, wears a high collar, looks much at himself in the glass, uses a Gem Junior solicitously on a faintly stubbled chin, and has become interesting to Girls. Bill is in truth almost a Man, and we dare not take the old freedoms with him. So far as we are concerned, he is done with Literature and has commenced Life, with a fair prospect of making his way in the world.

Of course, I'm not sorry that the old vexatious problem of Bill is thus happily working itself out. And yet . . . and yet . . . that Commodore!

THE OTHER FACE

EVERYBODY has seen the puzzle-picture called "Find the Other Face," or "Look for her Mother," or words to that effect—the label really doesn't matter, the picture being *the* thing.

So popular is it that you will see it in the window of 'most any art-shop, and quite often it is given as a supplement with the Sunday paper. Then the children puzzle over it, while the head of the family, perhaps, looks on with a sad but eloquent smile, and his better half indulges in the sniff disdainful.

The picture is usually that of a pretty girl shown in profile, which, after you have looked at it long enough, changes marvellously into the likeness of an ugly old woman—the object of the artist being to make the contrast as striking as possible. The delicate young face, with its soft lines and curves and dimples, vanishes as if by magic, and in its place you see the visage of a toothless, ancient hag, breathing a curse, as it were, where beauty just has been.

As a bit of human satire, nothing could be more effective, but it is so repulsive and forbidding that I have to wonder at its popularity. Maybe the ex-

planation is that most people fail to grasp the deeper meaning of it, looking upon it merely as an odd caprice of the artist.

We read that among the ancient Egyptians the process of embalming the dead was divided among several experts—I dare not call them artists. To one of these fell the office of removing the intestines of the subject—a disagreeable duty, but very essential to the success of the operation. The people looked upon this particular act with the greatest abhorrence, and the unlucky man who had to perform it not seldom barely escaped with his life. Nearly always he had to run for it, quite careless where he threw his tools.

Something like this is the usual fate of the man who dares to tell an unpleasant truth—it may pass uncontradicted, but he will be hated for telling it. We know of such things, but we are afraid to think of, not to say look at them; and he who forces us to gaze upon those deep-hidden secrets of human nature at which the soul shudders, must pay the penalty.

But to return to our picture. Is it not an artistic whim that would have delighted Balzac and perhaps moved him to add another chapter to the *Comédie Humaine*,—even as the mere accidental glimpse of the curious name “Z. Marcas” drew a story from his teeming imagination?

Ah, it is easier to fancy than to set down in words

what Balzac would have done with our puzzle-picture, but perhaps one may hazard a hint or two, founded upon long study of the great Master, and not thereby challenge too severe a reckoning.

Of course, it's a mere fancy sketch, true only in the possible—what man having lived through such an experience, could find the heart to tell of it! . . .

Well, then, Balzac would create a young woman to match that fresh young face which, on the first glance, looks out at you so sweetly from the picture. He would show her at the time of her marriage, quite undeveloped as to character—most young women are only a hint, a sketch, an outline until then,—a fact that their mates do not perhaps sufficiently consider. He would marry her to a young man with his way to make in the world, a young man with faults a-plenty, but yet loving and candid and true.

There follows a very short season of happiness—which youth will have on any terms, and then the life-long feud begins. The wife is timid, secretive, devoid of candor, owing to hereditary influences of which Balzac would offer a searching exposition. In vain does the husband seek to win her perfect confidence—the fear of the lightest reproach closes her mouth like a vise. She is, besides, totally without judgment and worldly sense, incapable of that foresight and thrift lacking which such a household goes

to wreck. Though never used to money, she is quite indifferent to its value. Always she acts on the first impulse, which almost invariably misleads her.

She runs the little household into debt, being thriftless and careless rather than extravagant. She treasures nothing—even the little gifts of her marriage, of small price but dear in the heart's reckoning, are tossed aside negligently and soon disappear: in her hands it is only a question of brief time when all things disappear. The pawnshop in part supplies the needed explanation.

During the early years of their union her one idea is to hide her debts from her husband, and to succeed in this she resorts to the most foolish, even desperate expedients. Of these the most fatal is a practice she early falls into, of secretly borrowing money from his men friends. They submit to be bled in silence for a time, but finally one more candid than the rest tells him the truth. Then his eyes are opened at last and discoveries thicken.

Here we depart from Balzac, for he would have been sure to give the wife an intrigue, growing out of her attempts to borrow money, but I am supposing a woman as virtuous as *Nora Helmer*. Which perhaps does not help the situation: we know how to deal with the wicked, but when the good err we lose our reckoning.

The husband, I should say, is a bit of a poet and literary man, of good principle, but with something

of that inaptitude in business affairs which marks the type. He leaves the burden of household management to his wife, content with paying the bills, as he thinks. The killing truth he comes to learn soon enough is that, through her maneuvers, he rarely pays them—*in full*.

Of course he is not strictly just and fair with her—what man ever is toward a woman? And maybe he gets only his dues for his own weakness and cowardice. The woman is living her share of the tragedy, too—let us not forget that.

The feud now opens in earnest. During early years the wife pretends or perhaps actually feels repentance for her fault, which is chiefly due to weakness of character; the debts are paid over and over again by heroic effort, and the couple being young and under a necessity of loving, their quarrels, frequent enough, are always made up or do not result in lasting estrangement. Many children come to them,—perhaps as a consequence of their quarrels: I cannot say, not being as wise as Balzac was in these matters.

With the years the wife hardens—that is to say, the second profile begins to steal out in the picture. Losing her youth and charm, she weeps less in their differences,—which never cease, owing to the same old cause chiefly,—and fights back like a virago. They lead each other often to the door of Hell,—and still they go on under the yoke.

But love and hate can dwell in the same house, strange to say, and this woman frequently declares her love for the man whom she is hounding to death, and protests the fidelity with which she has kept her marriage vows. Indeed, she becomes furiously jealous when he ceases to be attracted as of old by her person—the one powerful chain by which she has hitherto held him.

And yet a little more the *other face* cuts into the picture.

So the feud goes wearily on. The husband, finally giving up all hope of reforming her or, at least, ridding her of those fatal propensities which have wrecked their happiness, becomes violent and brutal in their quarrels, saying the harshest words, flinging the bitterest taunt, dealing with her as the enemy of his peace and of his life. She repays him in the same coin, and at such times seems to be grimly content at her power to call forth all that is evil in the man. And always she feels herself justified in the resistance upon which she is, as ever, stubbornly determined.

The lineaments of that *other face* darken in the picture, and are sometimes lit up with the lurid hues of Hell!

The husband reaches the age when a man either plays his best hand or slinks beaten from the Game of Life—the time of all times when he needs the support and inspiration of a home warm with love

and wrapt with security, whence he may sally forth brave-hearted, though with the gray in his hair, to fight the best battle of all.

This man's ambition declines; he makes less and less of his talent; while he feels more and more the stigma of his wretched domestic life. He shuns his friends because of their knowledge of it (she has taken care to remind them from time to time in the old way); and they are glad enough to avoid him for the same reason. The man's youth is gone without his having secured the recognition or the reward due to his talents and once vigorous ambition. His health sinks under the accumulated burden of years of bitterness, sorrow and disappointment. He begins to have that fear of the morrow, that dread of responsibility, that despair of the future,—in a word, that sickness of life which, when it seizes a man, tokens very surely that life will soon be done with him.

In this lamentable spirit he begs for a truce from the old disease that is steadily killing him, inch by inch,—but the feud goes on just the same. It seems at length to be a fell necessity of the hearth where it has so long brooded.

The horror of it grows with the children's growth, for the one thought of the wife is to win them to her side, to imbue them with her spirit of secrecy, disloyalty and resistance. This she does not scruple to accomplish by tolerating bad habits in

them, by conniving at their truancy and disobedience, by indulging and pampering them beyond the household means. And the evil fruit of this unnatural conduct shows itself in due time—of all the curses of that ill-fated house, the heaviest and the worst. For the father looks at his alienated children, and the warm fount of love is frozen in his breast at seeing reflected in their young eyes the thing which has cursed his life and brought it to naught. . . .

Look now at the picture. Ah! the beautiful young face is completely lost in the black shadow of that terrible visage behind: the eternal Furies have executed a masterpiece! . . .

You shudder? Well, blame it to the artist. Only such a hideous conception as this could justify the story I have attempted to suggest in a manner, if you please, after Balzac. It is too horrible, I grant you. Let us be thankful that I have been only feigning, and that there is no more truth and substance to my ghastly romance than there is—well, to that *other face* in the picture.

LILITH

UNTIL Balzac came there was little, if any, adequate treatment of women in fiction. In this respect as in others, he may be said to have founded the modern novel of life and manners, which has not advanced beyond him, save in minor details of style and treatment.

A false sentiment of delicacy and an overstrained chivalry conspired with a certain real ignorance to prevent the writer of fiction before Balzac from dealing honestly or intelligently with his female characters. Commonly he made of them dolls or marionettes or endowed them with superhuman as well as supra-feminine graces and virtues. If it was necessary for him to subject one of them to temptation and even to ruin, the reader was asked to weep as at the fall of an angel. The problems of sex (of which we have had latterly something too much) were either vigilantly scouted or handled from the standpoint of sheer gallantry. Such writers knew, or thought they knew, only the Lady and the Courtesan—the Woman had not yet come into artistic existence.

A marked survival of this artistic ineptitude or

conventional cowardice is seen in much of the work of Dickens, too many of whose female characters are mere abstractions of the so-called domestic virtues. Indeed, outside his admirable Peggottys, Sairey Gamps, etc., it is doubtful if he ever achieved the creation of a single woman human at all points,—say, like Becky Sharp, the one flawless triumph of his great rival Thackeray.

The change for the better, in truth and in art, we owe chiefly to Balzac, and it is not the least conquest of his bold and valid genius. His women are often lovable and sometimes, like Eugénie Grandet, almost angelic, in the older fashion; but their essential humanity is always beyond dispute. The truth is that as an artist he loved Eve much but Lilith more; and so his masterpieces of creation belong rather to that sinister gallery of evil women which he has given to literature. On them he lavished all the powers of his genius, contending as with God and the Devil in his work. That he loved them beyond the virtuous ones is evident from the extreme care with which he fashioned Valérie and Bette, those perfect flowers of evil. Had the Devil himself made them, we feel that he would not have made them any different. They and others from the same hand are the finest examples of female wickedness, perfectly within the rules of nature and art, that modern literature can show.

How wonderful are those bad women of Balzac!

—what delectable she-devils! How he loved to depict their subtle and facile passion for evil-doing; their mouths sweet with poisonous honey or green with the slime of hate and envy; their hearts corroded with rancors and foul with sated or ungratified lust; the audacity and shamelessness with which they affronted God and man unto the end, or the sublime hypocrisy with which they absolved themselves of evil. For Balzac's wicked women, like those of the actual world, never repent. And they do not repent because they know no other way. Like Lilith, eldest daughter of Satan, they make evil their good, and it is the law of their being.

The problem of depicting such wickedness, of showing the soul that an evil woman is so skillful in concealing, or the bad nature that she has so much art and resource in dissembling, is one of the most difficult and formidable that can be proposed to an artist. Yet Balzac has triumphed in a score of instances.

I have referred to one or two of the best known examples, familiar to every reader. But take one rather more within the lines of ordinary experience and acting in less strongly dramatized situations,—take Rosalie De Watteville in "Albert Savarus." This is one of Balzac's quiet tales in which his divination of character, that quality in which he excelled all writers, appears at the highest value. The atmosphere is without storm, yet tense and breathless

with underlying tragedy. Rosalie is no less a triumph than the daughters of Goriot—her exquisite iniquity is even more fascinating than their self-indulgent vanity and vice. The book seems to me a most original and profoundly true study of that liability to evil, that sinning without care or conscience, that emotionless cruelty without a pang or an afterthought, which are characteristic of certain refined types of female wickedness.

Read the story—I cannot pretend to give you even a hint of it within the limits of this paper. But I will tell you why I like Mademoiselle De Watteville so much and think her entirely worthy of the Master's hand.

Because I, and doubtless you too, have known her, with her cold blue eyes in whose depths the soul of evil hides and lurks, scarcely ever showing itself; with her pale cheek that can dissemble the strongest passion; with her thin-lipped mouth, like a knife-wound, that alone at times betrays the unfathomable cruelty and wickedness of her heart; with her shrunken breasts wherein the warm tides of love and motherhood never rise, as if Nature refused to nourish with poison or to suffer one shoot to spring from an accursed tree!

She will steal and intercept letters intended for others; she will break the most sacred seals of confidence; she will nestle close to the hearts of her victims the better to strike and betray; she will destroy

the happiness of the innocent without a qualm; she will lie, and turn again, and lie, and double-damn and perjure herself over and over, in order to get the evil satisfaction that her perverted nature demands.

Balzac knew the truth, which a mealy-mouthed sentimentalism would deny—that there are men and women who personify the very principle of evil and who (as Dickens says somewhere) ought to be killed on sight, for the protection of humanity.

TO A LITERARY CHARACTER

[For thirty years all the most valuable material in the edition definitive of Balzac and the later works of others, has been directly or indirectly due to M. de Lovenjoul.]

MONSIEUR Vicomte de Lovenjoul,
Why does your name my fancy rule,
E'en like Vautrin or Rastignac,
Like Mulquinier or Fezensac,
Till oftentimes it seems to me
I met you in the Comédie:
Dancing or dicing, plotting, fighting,
Dazzling or daring, blessing, blighting?

Monsieur Vicomte de Lovenjoul,
Your servant, Sir, is not a fool,
But years in that bewild'ring maze
A little have perplexed his ways,
And though he kens it better far
Than this dull world where earthlings are,
Fain would he know, for his soul's sake,
If you be flesh or Balzac's make!

Monsieur Vicomte de Lovenjoul,
I shall not let my fancy cool
Without adventuring just one
More guess—are you perhaps HIS SON!
Still working at the mighty plan
Of that great Devil of a Man;
Adding new stones unto the pile
Whence rays his enigmatic smile.

Monsieur Vicomte de Lovenjoul,
My faith, a man you are—no ghoul,
Or shadow from the haunted page
Where wreaked he his creative rage;
A man of courage high and rare
Such as we seldom see but *there*;
Touched with a loyalty supreme
Unto the Dreamer and his Dream.

Monsieur Vicomte de Lovenjoul,
How found the Master this good tool
To labor still, when he was spent,
On his immortal monument?
Thrice happy chance!—Go on, brave Sir,
Though he be in the sepulchre;
Bring ever more of that vast mind,
To please, to awe, to stun mankind!

POTPOURRI

ROMANCE is the sphinx's riddle: realism is the solution. Romance is a bride in her veil and orange flowers: realism the same lady a year or so afterward in curl papers and peignoir.

The world which loves to deceive itself will always prefer romance to realism. It is by grace of romance that most marriages are made and, perhaps, most children begotten. Let the wiseacres say what they will, in no human relation is romance so valuable as in marriage—unhappily it is mostly before marriage. When the veil, the illusion we name romance, drops away from betwixt two persons who have chosen the long road together, then follows what the lawyers call incompatibility, and plain men hell.

Romance or illusion is really the ideal state. If the good Lord would grant me one wish, and one only, I should ask Him to leave me my illusions—that is, my romances.

Love is a romance, friendship a romance, and when either is maintained by two persons who complement each other, then we have the best happiness that life affords.

No doubt the world is the more enamored of romance that it is actually so rare. This is shown, above all, in the preferences of reading people. Of all sorts of literature, novels are by far the most popular, and among novels themselves the love novel or pure romance carries the palm. Is it any wonder? All of us desire to be loved; most of us believe—*O vanitas vanitatum!*—that we are capable of inspiring the tender passion; and many of us hug the darling thought that we have never been loved up to our deserts. In short, the whole world's vanity is engaged in favor of romance, and Nature abets the conspiracy.

Look at Dickens and Thackeray, who for a time divided the interest of the English-reading world, and to some extent still do so. I have read many sage essays purporting to explain their comparative popularity, but not one that really touched the point. It is this: Dickens always has been and always will be the more popular writer, because he was a great romantic. The best of his work, like much of "Copperfield," of the "Two Cities," and the whole of "Great Expectations," is pure romance. By this I mean a certain idealization of reality which Dickens either deliberately chose as his artistic method or which, more likely, was inseparable from his manner of "seeing things." At any rate, it gave him an immense advantage with the romance-loving public.

Thackeray *suffered* life too much to be a great romantic like Dickens, and so he could not idealize—he *reported*. This is true even of “Esmond,” his one ambitious attempt at romance:—yet one remembers nothing of it better than the quarrels of my Lord and Lady Castlewood. A greater novelist than Dickens on several counts, he was much inferior to him in the blended faculty of vision and feeling that we call romance. This he himself confessed when he said regretfully, “I have no head above my eyes.”

Since we are thus come to it, let me try to explain the difference between the romantic and the realistic way of looking at things. The quarrels of the excellent “Mr. Dombey” and his beautiful second wife are purely romantic, not to say theatrical. But one does not *suffer* by them—one does not feel as if one must get away somewhere, out of hearing. A realistic quarrel affords little artistic pleasure. Mr. Dickens never used this method in his art—in his life he did occasionally, as when he wrote after the separation from his wife, that “either she would have driven him mad or he would have driven her mad.” There is nothing quite so forcible as this in the story of the Dombey—that is to say, it does not sin against romance.

Balzac was equal parts realist and romantic, and perhaps it is to this union of opposite qualities that he owes his great distinction. “The Lily of the Val-

ley" is one of the finest romances in the world, and yet in this charming tale the Comte de Mortsauf bitterly tells his noble wife that she is "*a virgin at his expense*"—a piece of realism that Dickens would never have permitted himself. For an English parallel we must turn to Thackeray and old Steyne's sneer at his daughter-in-law Lady Blanche,—that "*she had come here to have children and she hadn't had them.*"

However, "Vanity Fair" (in spite of Amelia) has never circulated like "David Copperfield"—the man who wrote the first had met the Furies and couldn't help showing it. By the way, it was the same great realist (in spite of himself) who wrote that "since the author of 'Tom Jones' was buried, no writer among us has dared to depict to his utmost power a Man!" . . .

Certainly not: romance and the public would never stand for him.

II

IN his brilliant essay on Rossini and Meyerbeer, Heine pays his respects to the professional critics of the time in terms that read like a strict indictment of their present-day successors. He describes their "critiques, composed in a kind of *argot* (dialect), larded with technical expressions not familiar to the generally cultivated world, but only to

practical artists, yet which give to their rubbish an air that imposes on the multitude."

The manners of the music critics have not improved since these lines were written—they continue to write in a language that very few understand, putting always the "shop" before sense and sentiment. Now, as then, they are far more concerned to exhibit their verbal gymnastics than to tell us what we really want to hear—in other words, to give us a sane, intelligible criticism. They are all stylists in their own conceit, but somehow with all their pretensions and straining for effect, they never achieve literature, though they occasionally publish books. We should indeed believe that nothing in the way of pure literature could be written about music or musicians were it not for the achievement of some genuine writers, and conspicuous among them, Heine himself. The press of New York numbers a half-dozen music critics who could smother Heine with the resources of their technical vocabulary, and yet their work dies with each day's sun. As it has been said of musicians that they form a third sex, so it may be held of music critics that they are a class *sui generis*, not amenable to literary laws. They feel themselves superior to the public and for this reason the public will have none of them.

Heine did better than merely to expose the pretentious vanity of the critics of his day—he showed how a true literary man could do their office, as in

the essay above mentioned, or in his famous description of Paganini's playing, which is worth all the tons of music criticism that have been emitted since David played on his harp to the delight of the daughters of Jerusalem.

There is a furious emulation between our dramatic critics and the scribes of music. Both labor to be cryptic, obscure and Chinese in their tortuous inversions—a plain mind is quickly damned between them. The vanity of these fellows will not suffer them to write a simple sentence; they are constantly plucking your sleeve to marvel at them instead of their proper subject. If a distinction must be made, the dramatic critic is the more blamable, since there is no shadow of warrant in his case for abusing the tongue of Shakespeare. It was not so that not merely the best but the best-beloved critic that the English stage has ever known, won his unique place in letters. I wonder if our New York critics ever read Charles Lamb, or if they haughtily set him down as an amateur, as, thank God! he was. In my time I must have read acres—whole townships—of newspaper criticism, and of all that I have not retained a syllable, while the phrases of Lamb hold ever fast in my grateful memory. How did this man make a classic of himself with a few such essays as "My First Play," "The Comedy of the Last (Eighteenth) Century," "On Some of the Old Actors," "On the Acting of Munden," etc.? I am

very sure that if he were alive to-day, he would not get a place beside the highly paid critics of the New York press. The slow pain by which he wrought the undying phrase would never do for the morning editions.

III

HOW did Lafcadio Hearn suppress the natural fun in him so that it scarcely comes to the surface of his more finished and ambitious work? There is hardly a smile in all his Japanese books, or in his earlier West Indian sketches, and yet the man's letters reveal him as an exquisite humorist—especially the little series called "Letters from the Raven," written mostly during his New Orleans period. The fun in these is often good as Mark Twain, and the picture which they offer of the needy, trampish, little down-at-heel reporter, cherishing his dreams of future literary fame on next to nothing a week; eating sometimes only once in two days but always feeding the instinctive hunger of genius; as helpless as a child apparently and yet making his way with a kind of elfin wisdom; gay and reckless as beseems youth, whatever its portion, but ever mindful of the feeble spark within that was one day to blaze up a sacred fire:—here is a picture, I would say, at once pathetic, humorous, fascinating, and human to the marrow: another of those happy

accidents that have conspired to give this man his uniquely individual place in Letters.

The particular charm of these utterly frank, boyish, often profane and always unrestrained letters, is the contrast which they offer to Hearn's later and more studied epistles, and, of course, the delightful glimpses they afford of his strangely vagrant and haphazard life. How true it is that the artist must suffer that the world may enjoy!

The "Letters from the Raven" were written to a Mr. Watkin in Cincinnati, a kind-hearted printer who had befriended Hearn during his early years in this country. In their familiar intercourse Hearn used to call or sign himself "The Raven" in sport, from his fondness for Poe and his own fancied likeness to the sable bird,—which was rather real than fanciful at that time, with his thin face, coal black flowing hair and protuberant eyes. In the book (as published by Brentano's), letters and even post cards are shown liberally sprinkled with effigies of the Plutonian fowl, not badly drawn either, and they add much to the whimsical effect of the work.

Watkin was many years older than Hearn, a bluff, good-natured pagan, but a natural sympathy and something of the same bookish taste united him to his queer little protégé. He seems to have been one of the few friends whom the touchy, suspicious Irish Greek—half nettle, half flower—ever wholly trusted, or to whom he gave himself without re-

serve. In literary power these letters do not, of course, compare with those written many years after, when the man was matured, his style perfected and his reputation made. They are leaves from the stripling tree, wine of the same vintage, though a bit crude and sour. And their biographic value is marked, for when Hearn had reached port and haven, like many other artists, he hated to confess the cruel hardships of the passage. Above all, they help us to make out the human side of Hearn, which certain critics deem to be sketchy and incomplete. Hence the peculiar charm of these "Letters from the Raven," by preserving which the "Dear Old Man" in Cincinnati, with a prophetic care and wisdom, won for himself an enduring place in the life-story of Lafcadio Hearn.

In later years, when fame and success had come to him from his unrivalled studies of Japan, with their marvellous interpretation of beauty material and spiritual, Hearn was wont to lament his inability to translate reality into such tense, graphic and compelling fiction as Kipling has given us. Often his artist soul was dissatisfied with the ghostly, diaphanous dreams and visions, the shadowing forth of those almost intangible romances, those vague and Buddhistic conceptions which the West eagerly took from his hand. But all true art is a oneness and the last terms include the first. Perhaps it never occurred to Lafcadio Hearn that he had himself lived

and recorded the kind of human reality he was wont to envy in the work of Kipling; and that years after his death it would be given to the world in these "Letters from the Raven."

IV

MANY people can not bear to read "Cousine Bette," on account of the appalling frankness and fidelity of its pictures of passion. The book is, nevertheless, one of the grand triumphs of genius, and in a special degree it exhibits that extraordinary power of divination which Balzac possessed beyond all writers. It is the capstone of the "Comédie Humaine," that most wonderful structure ever raised by a single mind. It is devilish in its utterly immoral consistency, for Balzac made men and women as Nature does and with no more squeamishness—a Bette or a Madame de Mortsauf, a Philippe Bridau or a Pons, with the like impartial care and the same joy of creation. So the critics, and particularly the English critics, whose literature has nothing like "Cousine Bette," are mightily concerned to defend the moralities against Balzac; and hence they are in the habit of declaring his pictures of vice overcolored and his personages wicked beyond the bounds of art and truth. Bette, they would have us believe, is too much of a fiend for this world, bad as it is; Valérie is

depraved beyond reason and Hulot's licentiousness altogether exaggerated and out of drawing. But Nature and Balzac knew better.

V

IT is true that Chatterton starved, and Burns had to work as an excise gauger, and Poe never rose to more than Ten a week. All this is very sad, and it is indubitable that men of means and leisure, like Byron and Shelley and Swinburne, produce the best work as a rule, albeit there are many exceptions.

However, the drunkard will drink, the lover will love, and the writer will write. The literary instinct is quite insuppressible—if it's in the man, it must and will come out. I do not believe that literature is any the poorer for its "mute, inglorious Miltons." Thieves and vagabonds and beggars have contributed a full share to the undying literature of the world. The instinct of production and the vanity of authorship are among the strongest human motives. Genius never fails to deliver itself, though it must be granted the conditions are too often hard and unfavorable. On the other hand, if they were uniformly easy, the world would be glutted with production, and perhaps all perception and appreciation of the higher literary values would perish. Even as things are, this danger is neither visionary nor problematic.

VI

IBSEN is very great and perhaps no plays, in the reading, awaken a more breathless interest than "Ghosts," "A Doll's House," "Hedda Gabler," "Rosmersholm" and "The Master Builder." The construction of these plays is the acme of dramatic craftsmanship—nothing superfluous or irrelevant—the dialogue cut to the bones and nerves. Talkiness has always been the curse of the English stage from the time of Shakespeare who (it cannot be denied) was a terrible offender in this respect. Ibsen surely has no lack of passion, the fiercer that we know him to be holding it in check; for better than any of his predecessors he knows the art of repression and has the courage to practise it. Some of his most telling situations, his most powerful climaxes, are almost wordless—little more than pantomime. One reads the scene over again to find the effect that is so marvellously suggested without speech.

A great and solitary figure in his chosen province of art, he has taught lesser men to hold the stage, which is fast slipping from his own grasp. In his delirium *Oswald Alving* begs his mother to *give him the sun!* That was Ibsen's need too:—with more of the sun of life in his plays, he had gained a place beside Shakespeare and Molière.

VII

BALZAC has a chapter in celebration of chastity or continence, which he believed was an essential condition of intellectual power. Like all his pet theories, he urged it with the utmost vehemence. Once when Gautier had taken the liberty of differing with him and pointed out instances of great writers noted for their laxity in this respect, the author of the *Comédie Humaine* brushed away the objection.

"They would have done better work," he said, "had they eschewed venery." And the maximum of indulgence he proposed would almost be pardoned to a Trappist! Montaigne would have smiled at the notion, holding as he did that 'twere easier to live without women absolutely than to put up with only one. But the *Sieur de Montaigne* lived in a freer time and perhaps had a weakness for gallantry.

It is allowed that in this matter Balzac's own practice squared with his precept. He was not an ascetic nor a woman-hater, and surely the creator of *Valérie Marneffe* was competent to speak; a true Frenchman, moreover, and one of the greatest of artists. But he was a libertine only in the spending of his intellectual powers. And who shall say how many volumes of the *Comédie* we owe to the fact that during most of his creative period he was con-

tent (at least mainly) to pour out his passion on paper for a woman who lived clear across the map of Europe from him?

Balzac argued that the man of One Idea can accomplish anything possible to humanity, and he showed how continence is necessary to keep the flame of pure creative power from wasting. (I do not quote; the reader may find the chapter in "Cousine Bette"). Virginity and power were, in his mind, almost the same thing.

Certain it is, at any rate, that in the higher operations of the mind or the exercise of the creative faculties, the very quintessence of the vital power is drawn upon, and this draft will not be fully honored when there are sources of loss and waste. Balzac would have kept all for the Idea and little or nothing for venery.

VIII

WILLIAM HAZLITT was a good writer, a sound and original literary critic, something of a philosopher, a stanch friend to liberty, and a decent Englishman. Those who like him best see most clearly his deficiencies. Had he not lived in the same generation with Lamb, we should think better of him as an essayist, or we should not have to think how far he fell below the unrivaled distinction of Elia. Try as he may, he

can not win into our hearts like the latter; always there is some alien veil between us and him. Honest good fellow though William be, there is upon his expression the true English burr and reserve:—he talks enough yet confesses little when all is told. Between him and us, perhaps, the deepest glow of sympathy is never felt.

No, much as we like him, we dare not put him in the same class with his juniper-loving friend of the India House, with *his* cordial sweet blood, his whimsical gay humors, his most sane insanity, his curious felicities of phrase (never has man so modulated the English prose pipe)—his unfailing originality of thought, his wholesome wit without the labor of paradox, and, above all, his humor—the true essence of his genius—of a quality the rarest and finest in our literature. You see how William's victorious rival draws me away!—ah, never had man one more kind and ungrudging. Yet to most of the contemporaries of both, Hazlitt appeared the more considerable writer. I fancy he thought so himself, from the tone of some rather too tolerant references to the rarer genius. But we know better now.

Hazlitt's radicalism was genuine and heart-felt (as an Englishman's is apt to be), yet it is curiously unattractive as part of his literary exhibit. When he talks of what he has lost by it, from the friends of power, etc., the honesty of the boast is as undoubted as the effect is displeasing and unworthy of

his own finer moods. Another point in Lamb's favor, who is never so delightful as when he discourses of himself.

The literary and critical essays of Hazlitt have their own strong, peculiar merits; those who really love literature are not in the habit of ignoring them. (You remember Stevenson's fine praise.) Hazlitt taught his own generation much, and we may still learn of him: in the best of his work there is the heat and glow that mark the man truly called of letters.

IX

BOOKS, yes, let us have talk about books, but well flavored with the tabasco sauce of human interest. I hate your literary eunuchs who lack the sap of virility, whose veins run ink; pale, bloodless worms of the library, poor languid parasites that live their unreal life by grace of a false sentiment; sexless expositors for Epicene journals and young ladies' seminaries.

Say what we will, we love or hate the man behind the book—there is no such thing as impersonality in true literature. I love Lamb for his late suppers, his too many pipes, his clinging to ale and gin, no less than for the essays and letters. The man was all of a piece:—cut off a single foible and you mutilate him. I like Burns for what he was and wish

that he had drunk less whiskey, only that we might have more Highland Marys and Tam O'Shanters. I take off my hat to the splendid passions that made Byron and think they were perhaps worth more than a century of men who lived, died and left no name. So of the most terrible examples that the Pharisees of literature point the slow, unmoving finger of scorn at—Heine, Poe, Verlaine, Wilde, Maupassant,—I give thanks for them all, for the man as well as his genius, the one no less than the other. And I take the few saints of literature—Wordsworth, Emerson, Newman, Arnold—on the same terms, loving them not a jot less for their virtues than the others for their vices (which were *their* virtues). This receptivity would perhaps never do for the Episcene School and the young ladies' seminaries; but I may mention that it has yielded me such satisfaction as I have gotten out of literature.

X

I FIND this in Balzac and it would be hard to cite anything worthier of his penetrative knowledge of life:

“The moral senses have their laws, which are implacable, and we are always punished for disregarding them. There is one in particular which the animals themselves obey without discussion and in-

variably: it is that which tells us to *avoid those who have once injured us*, with or without intention, voluntarily or involuntarily. * * * We have within us an inward power of sight, an eye of the soul which foresees catastrophes; and the repugnance that comes over us against the fateful being is the result of that foresight. Though religion orders us to conquer it, distrust remains and its voice is forever heard."

Few of us have ever turned a deaf ear to that voice—that divining augur of the soul—without having to pay dearly for it. Love is always at first sight—and its opposite.

Looking into my heart I find that the strongest hatreds I have ever felt for individuals—hatreds based upon tangible injuries and solid grievances—have utterly faded out in a short time, so that my arm has relaxed when a chance has presented itself to strike an old foe.

What does this mean? I know myself for a good hater, and I despise the cant of turning the other cheek, the hound-like humility with which base men hide their rancorous hearts behind the Christian code. I would not exchange the hypocritical kiss of peace with my enemies, not if I know myself at all; and yet, after a time, I find myself strangely lacking in Othello's "hearted hatred" and that "gall to make oppression bitter" of which Hamlet speaks. Often it chances that somebody will seek to please

me by recalling an old grudge and officiously damning the author of it—without provoking an echo in my breast or an answering pulse of resentment.

From which I conclude (though loving an honest hater as well as old Sam Johnson) that kindness is the Greater Law; and in spite of the theologians, I do God the honor of believing that, like his poor human children, He is unable to hate eternally but often gives Himself the pleasure of sponging out the evil side of the Recording Angel's account.

It's a good thing for all of us to do—without being hounds or hypocrites.

XI

THACKERAY did not reach old age—he had taken too many crops out of the brain, in his own memorable phrase; but it is known that his great mental powers perceptibly declined in his last years. Hence the comparative failure of "Philip," wherein the author buttonholes us beyond endurance and sometimes forgets the names of his own characters. Hence also the *success* of the "Roundabout Papers" (contributed to the "Cornhill" during the brief period of his editorship) the allowed gossipy, random, hit-or-miss character of which happily suited the relaxed powers of Thackeray. The great man

was prosperous, too, after a lifetime of anxious, incessant labor; and he was nearing the harbor. Content in the fulness of fame and fortune, yielding a little perhaps to the adulation of rank and power (I dismiss with contempt the enterprise of certain literary snobs to rate him as spiritually one of themselves), conscious that his sun was setting, softened in heart and sinking in health, what marvel if he wrote some things in his "lay sermons" that seem in strange and violent contrast with the utterance of his meridian genius. Not so much an utterance indeed as a relaxation of his characteristic attitude, a weakening of fibre; and this made altogether too much of by the sentimentalists and the apologists of the Tribe of Pangloss who would now claim Thackeray for their own.

Other great men have suffered the same partial eclipse. It is proverbially hard, with declining years, to maintain the courage of the mind at meridian temper, the springs of the will unbroken, and to resist the world's last call for a surrender or at least a compromise. That a man should play Judas to the true Messiah of self is a strange thing of which there be examples enough to weep over. For old age, or rather decay, often brings a recantation, nullifying and undoing the work of a man's best years; and we have seen Renan bearing witness against himself in the event of such a senile apostasy. Thackeray had no need to do this—like Hor-

ace whom he loved and admired so much, he was truly *qualis ab incepto* in all his greater effort; and those competent to appraise his work will never doubt where to find the best of it.

On the other hand, too much might easily be made of the misanthropy, the *in-humanity* of Thackeray, as he himself has done in the case of Swift—and it is curious that he has perhaps quite as much in common with the great Dean as with his favorite Fielding. He loved goodness, kindness, virtue, generosity as much as he hated the contrary qualities, and there is no estimating the service he has rendered by exposing the shams and hypocrisies, the unspeakable meanness, turpitude and injustice which perhaps are not yet wholly extirpated from English society. He did his work well; a great work in every sense, and small men shall not impart to it their own littleness. We know that for long the world well pleased with itself, the smug, complacent world defined by Carlyle as “Respectability in its thousand gigs,” refused to do him honor and in surly fashion turned its back upon the ruthless investigator of family skeletons, the daring Asmodeus of English satire. This is the way of the world,—to deny the genius until compelled to accept him, and then, so far as possible, to make him over in its own likeness. To a very slight and negligible degree it succeeded in doing this with Thackeray in the period of his decline—a tired Hercules, with his

great labors behind him. Hence the caricature which fools and sentimentalists have been latterly trying to pass off as a true likeness of the great satirist—the fiercest beak and talon in our literature since Swift.

DICKENS: A REVERIE

DEAR, immortal Dickens! So the wise publishers have discovered a "revival" of interest in the Master of English story, and they are paying him the compliment of many new editions. As if it were not his province to lay his strong toil of grace on each new generation; as if he were not of those beloved Immortals who live on forever in the changeless romance of the young: as if, in fine, his world-wide audience had not been steadily growing in the space since his death until now it is by far the greatest that has ever done honor to an English writer. Truly, messieurs the publishers shall easily persuade us.

But I for one am glad at any rate to hear of this "revival," which never ceases, and to enjoy the publishers' accounts of those fine new editions of the old yet ever young Dickens. Books were written better in his day, no doubt; though Mr. Howells, who was once a daring young heretic on this subject and is now himself under the hand of time, will not have it so. But surely they were not made so well, at least for popular reading. And here the publisher is entitled to his bit of praise, however we

may smile at that evidence of the ingenuity of the publishing trade, the Dickens revival. It will, I think, be always a safe venture to prepare for and to announce a "great revival of interest" in the works of Mr. Charles Dickens—especially with an eye to the new generation. Other authors dispute the fickle preference of the old, the disillusioned, and the too mature—the young are always for Mr. Dickens.

And the sceptre shall not pass from him. Over twenty-five years ago I first read my Dickens in the paper-covered books of the Franklin Square Library. They were ugly in appearance, clumsy to hold and, worse lack of all to a young reader, there were no pictures to give form and pressure to the story. But all this disparagement is the work of my later thought. Surely I was not then conscious of any fault or blemish in the Aladdin's treasure that had suddenly fallen to me from the sky. Pity the man who is not loyal to his first loves! I would give much to taste again the feelings of joy and rapture and wonder which then were mine while making my breathless course through those ungainly publications of the Franklin Square.

I was a boy then—God help me!—the sort of boy, I dare believe, the Master had much in mind; and a whole world of bitter experience lies between me and that happy time. Shall I ever forget the bare cold little room where I spent so many unwearied

hours, hugging my treasure in both arms; often hungry, but forgetting it, fed as I then was with the food of romance; oftener cold, but unheeding that, too, warmed as I was with the glow of fancy? And the smell of the fresh-printed pages as I turned them with trembling, eager hands (the door of the little room shut and I alone)—have I ever since known the like?—could the costliest book now yield me such a thrill?—alas! could any spell, however potent, again make me free of the vanished Kingdom of romance?

O poor little room, which saw that miracle, the lighting up of a boy's imagination, the swelling chivalry of his young heart, the simple joy of his candid youth—I look back now with lamentable vision on the long way I have come, and I know I have met nothing so good in my journey. Would to God, little room, I might wake even now as from a vexed and sorrow-laden dream, to find myself that boy once again, sheltered by you and heedless of hunger and cold, could he but slake his thirst at the Enchanted Fountain! . . .

And sure these blessed things of memory have played me a trick, or I am in very truth a boy again—dear God, do but grant it, a boy again! For I would swear that just now a breeze of youth smote my cheek, and lo! in a trice I am whirled back into the past. Lost and breathless a moment, I soon find myself in a garden with my pretty mother, bolt-

ing furtive gooseberries and trying to look unmoved . . . A wind arises and now I am in the house with Peggotty (I still feel the touch of her finger like a nutmeg grater), poring over the Crockendill Book and vexing her simple soul with my persistent questions. Another change and look!—I see little Em'ly, and Ham, and Mr. Peggotty, and Mrs. Gummidge (bless him for that name!). Barkis has just brought me in the cart and I am so proud to be a Yarmouth Bloater (oh, memory!). Isn't it fine to live in a house made out of an old boat and to hear the wind come creeping about it at night when you are snug in bed and just dropping off to sleep! . . . How sweet little Em'ly is, and oh, how I love her with all the innocent love of my boyish heart! The nights I lie awake, thinking about her and praying that she may come to no harm! . . . Mr. Murdstone is worse than ever since that day when he beat me and I bit him on the hand. His beard is very black and so thick that his skin looks blue after shaving—confound his whiskers and his memory! . . . My box is ready, Mr. Barkis is here again, and my mother comes out to say good-bye to me, with her baby in her arms. She would have said something more to me, I know, but *he* was there to restrain her. "Clara, Clara, be firm!" I hear his warning voice. But she looked intently at me, holding up her baby in her arms. So I lost her, so I saw her many a time afterward

at school, a silent Presence at my bedside, holding up her baby in her arms. . . .

Comes a wooden-legged man stumping through my dream and eyeing me fiercely. Was his name Tungay, and did he put a placard on my back reading "Take Care of Him—He Bites?"—I must ask Traddles about this. . . .

The "horfling" and I have just parted in tears—she to St. Luke's Workhouse and Mr. Micawber to the Fleet, still gallantly figuring on his insoluble problem. I am somewhat comforted in the assurance that Mrs. Micawber (*with* the twins) will never desert him. . . . Now I am in Canterbury. It is a fine day and the rooks are flying about the old cathedral. Here is poor Mr. Dick, still bothered about the head of Charles I., and the Doctor placidly at work on his dictionary (not having advanced a letter since the old days!), and Uriah Heep deep in Tidd's Practice. ("Oh, what a writer Mr. Tidd is, Mr. Copperfull!") . . . How familiar seems this house, with the hallowed sense of early dreams! I enter and lo! what graceful figure is this coming down the stair to meet me, a bunch of household keys jingling at her waist? What was it about Agnes Wickfield that made me associate her always with the peace and radiance of a stained-glass window? . . .

How the scar flamed out on Miss Dartle's pale cheek when Steerforth asked her to sing! . . .

I hate that sneak Littimer who always makes me feel as if I was too young (alas, too young!) . . . Yarmouth again and Steerforth with me, more handsome and fascinating and irresistible than ever. Yes, though he broke her heart, and mine, too—(I have never recovered from it!)—still do I forgive him for the old love I bore him. Let me keep the sacred pledge of my boyish faith, to remember him at his best, as he asked me to, that night when we left the old boat together and I marked something different in him; let me think of him as I loved to see him in our school days, lying asleep with his head on his arm . . . So they found him after the great storm and wreck, lying at rest amid the ruins of the home he had wronged. . . .

Ours was the marsh country down by the sea, where I first saw the Convict, what time the guns were firing and the hulks lay at anchor near by . . . Wasn't it kind of dear old Joe to put that inscription over his bad and worthless father—

*Whatsomever the failings on his part,
Remember, reader, he had that good in his heart.*

I saw that snorting old Pumblechook yesterday when I was on my way to Miss Havisham's—he always makes me feel guilty, as if he knew something bad about me. . . .

What a strange lady Miss Havisham is, and why does she stay, dressed all in white and covered with old bridal finery, in a room where candles burn always and from which the light of day is shut out? . . . Oh, Estelle, Estelle!—how beautiful she was to-day! How I love her, and how she wounds me with her disdain! Yet once I plucked up courage to ask her for a kiss, and she slapped me on the cheek—I feel the sting of it yet! But my turn came when I had whipped the prowling boy behind the brewery wall and she, unseen by us both, had watched the battle. “You may kiss me if you please,” she said, with flushed cheek—how lovely she was in her conquered pride, and what a reward was mine! . . .

Ever the best of friends, ain’t us, Pip?—Dear old Joe! shall I ever forget when he came to see me at my lodgings in London and the trouble he had to keep his hat from falling? What a giant he was at the forge, though as gentle as a child! Surly Orlick soon found his master.

*Beat it out, beat it out, old Clem,
With a clink to the stout, old Clem! . . .*

Bentley Drummle came to Mr. Focket’s school when he was a head taller than that gentleman and several heads thicker than most young gentlemen . . . I can not believe that Estelle will marry

that fool and brute. . . . He came up the stairway as I held the light for him and looked at me with a peculiar expression. . . . "When the colonists rode by me on their blooded horses I said to myself, I am making a better gentleman nor any of you." . . . How strange it was of Mr. Jagers to ask his housekeeper to show us her hands! . . . Good God! Could it be possible that this convict, yet my benefactor, Abel Magwitch, was Estelle's father? . . . I went to the forge and it was strangely quiet. The house was closed. I walked toward the little church and suddenly I met them, Joe smiling and awkward in his Sunday clothes, Biddy in her best attire—"It is my wedding day and I am married to Joe!" . . .

A broad stream of light united the judge and the condemned, reminding some there present of that greater Judgment to which all alike were passing and which can not err. Standing for a moment, a distinct speck in that sea of light, the prisoner said, "My lord, I have received my sentence from the hand of the Almighty, but I bow to yours." . . . A woman was sitting there alone—it was Estelle! "We are friends?" I said. "Yes," she answered, "and will continue friends apart." I took her hand and we went out of the ruined churchyard together. The mists were rising as they rose on that morning long ago when I first left the forge. And in all the broad expanse of tranquil light they showed to me,

I saw no shadow of another parting from her.

Why this must be Mr. Pecksniff's Architectooral Academy! I hear Mercy giggling on the stair. There is the portrait by Spiller, the bust by Spoker, and as I live, here is Tom Pinch still making a shamefaced attempt to learn the violin between the bed-clothes. Poor Tom Pinch! Have I ever seen simple-hearted kindness and truth in the world without thinking of thee?—have I ever seen unctuous pretence and rascality without recalling thy master? And yet they say thy Creator could not draw a character according to nature—the fools!

Yo-ho—a race with the moon. I am making that famous journey with Tom Pinch by stage coach to London. But lo! we have not gone far when we overhaul Nicholas and Smike on the road, fleeing to London, too, after thrashing Squeers and turning loose the tender youth of Dotheboys. Shall we make room for them?—well! . . . But have a care, coachman, that Jonas Chuzzlewit shall not get a lift with us, for we have a dreadful suspicion of Something he left behind him in the wood. . . . Who were those two that crossed the road before us just then and slunk away in the shadow, a big hulking fellow and a boy?—I'll wager it was Bill Sykes and Oliver Twist going to crack a crib—more of Fagin's deviltry! . . . Yo-ho! the lights of London!—and here we are at last at Lon-

don Bridge where, quite giddy and breathless, we get down with Tom Pinch and the others—did I say that we had also picked up Codlin and Short, Mr. Scrooge and Tim Linkinwater, and a silent gentleman who cracked his joints incessantly?—I catch a glimpse of Rogue Riderhood slinking about his evil affairs and still wearing that old cap like a drowned dog. Drowned! That was the word in flaring black letters which stared from a dead wall—I saw John Harmon, muffled to the ears, stand before it a long time. . . . Now in the lighted city, and who of all strangely assorted beings of fact or fancy should I see in close conversation but Mr. Jarvis Lorry of Tellson's and Mr. Tulkinghorn of Lincoln's Inn Fields! No doubt they are talking about the strange disappearance of Lady Dedlock—I wonder if that boy limping past them, unheeded, who looks so like Poor Jo, could throw any light on it. . . . But what grotesque figures are these under the corner lamp, with bonneted heads bobbing at each other in eager colloquy? My life! it's Miss Flite and Sairey Gamp (dear Mrs. Gamp! thou too art said to be of an unreal world, yet do I hold thee dearer than all the joyless realities of their realism). I catch a few words—"the Man from Shropshire"—and I surmise they are gossiping about the strange end of that unfortunate suitor of Chancery, who dropped dead on his one thousandth interruption of the Court. . . .

Plash-water weir mill lock of a balmy summer's evening and a rough fellow dressed like a bargeman, with a red neckerchief, who looks strangely like the schoolmaster Bradley Headstone. Was that the careless, handsome Eugene Wrayburn who went on before? Hurry, for God's sake, ere murder be done—you have not seen that man as I did, smash his desperate hand against a stone wall. Hark! a blow!—another!—a splash—we are too late. But look! Lizzie Hexam is there before us, rowing her boat with a firm nerve and practised skill. Now thanks to God for that old time, and let me but save his life, even though it be for another! . . .

At Dr. Blimber's select academy for young gentlemen, and Master Bitherstone has just asked me, in a crisis of wounded feeling, if I would please map out for him an easy overland route to Bengal. I listened distractedly, for my mind was fixed on the New Boy. And who is this little fellow sitting sadly alone while the grave clock seems to repeat the Doctor's greeting: "How, is, my, lit, tle, friend, how, is, my, lit, tle, friend?" Oh, thou rejected of men and critics, let the world deny thee as it may, I call Heaven to witness that I was once as thou; that I wept true tears over thy young sorrows; that no child of my own house is more real to me than Paul Dombey! . . .

Mr. Richard Swiveller has just confided to me the extraordinary dilemma in which he finds himself—

we were having a modest quencher, which induced the confidence. Mr. Swiveller's creditors have increased at such a rate that the principal thoroughfares are now closed to him, and in order to get only across the way, he is obliged to go into the country. I should have heard more on this interesting subject but for the sudden appearance, at the door, of a small person—Mr. Swiveller humorously called her the Marchioness—who made frantic gestures, importing that his presence was required in the establishment of Sampson Brass, Barrister-at-law. . . . Little Nell was dead. No sleep so calm and beautiful, so free from trace of pain, so fair to look upon. She seemed a creature fresh from the hand of God—not one that had lived and suffered Death. . . . (And this, too, they have rejected, because, they say, it is blank verse!).

Have you ever heard the legend of Bleeding Heart Yard where Mr. Panks collects the rent and the Patriarch benevolently airs his bumps?—

*Bleeding heart, bleeding heart,
Bleeding away!*

Mrs. Plornish (who translates the Italian so elegantly) told it me not long ago, but though it was very sad, I have forgotten it. Perhaps because I was watching the eager eyes of John Baptist Cavalletto and wondering what he knows about one Rigaud whose moustache goes up and whose nose

comes down. . . . I am sure now that if Arthur Clennam had not given his heart to the young lady, and there had been no such thing as her engagement to Another, the rain would still have behaved just as it did—that is, it would have fallen heavily, drearily. But oh! I did not think so then. . . .

“Amy, is Bob on the lock?” . . .

I see an old man with white hair standing at the head of a rich banquet table and looking strangely upon the two long lines of astonished guests. Then I see Her go swiftly to his side and lay her hand on his arm, without shame, proud of him, loving him. And in her true eyes I see the fulness of that love through which the human reaches the divine—that love which, among English writers, Charles Dickens has best figured and expressed. . . . “Ladies and gentlemen, I am called the Father of the Marshalsea. It is, ahem, a title, hum, hum, I may say earned, ahem, earned, by a somewhat protracted period of, ahem, residence. On this account it is, ahem, customary for visitors and, hum, hum, students, to make me a little offering, which usually takes the form of, ahem, a slight pecuniary donation. This is my daughter, ladies and gentlemen. Born here, bred here!”

So they pass in review before my fond memory—the people of Dickens: a wonderful procession, fan-

tastic, varied, extraordinary, not surely of this world, perhaps, but then of a better one—the magic realm of the master wizard of English story. And yet I am glad that I read him as a boy—that he belongs with so much else that is precious to the enchanted period of life. Rich as that genius was, and on many counts without a rival, one must I fear break with the charm when the illusions of youth are past. This is less the fault and loss of Dickens than our own.

Therefore, loving Dickens as I do, I am yet not ashamed to confess that since boyhood I have re-read but few of his books—one of these was the "Tale of Two Cities," and either the drinker was changed or there was something alien in the draught. I do not own a set of them, not even the old Franklin Square novels, which, a ragged regiment, have long since fluttered away into that dear and irrecoverable country where lie the lost treasures of youth. So I can honestly say that in the foregoing pages I have jotted down, without art or method, and without reference to the books themselves, some memories still fresh after twenty-five years—it is perhaps given to few authors to inspire us with such lasting recollections. Yet if I were to lose all these, I should not be beggared: there would still remain a world of Dickens in my remembrance.

A LITTLE DINNER WITH EGERIA

IF you will bear in mind that I am one of those persons to whom the miraculous is far easier than the ordinary or the probable—to whom dreams and shadows are more real than tangible realities—then you will not scorn the little tale here offered you, God knows with small assurance of its being credited for the truth it is.

It was in the Martha Washington Hotel for women in New York that I first saw *Her*—you will grant me at least that there could scarcely be a more weirdly unpromising place for such a visitation. I had gone to that well ordered gynecium in order to meet a lady from the South, a sister of the pen, with whom I had had a slight but friendly correspondence. In the way of the craft she had signalled me as a brother, which a little surprised me, love and understanding of each other's merits not being, as is commonly taken for granted, the peculiar virtues of writing folk, more particularly the magazine bandar log. I therefore wished to offer this lady (whom I had never seen) some ordinary courtesies on the occasion of her visit to New York. This will explain my call at the Martha Washing-

ton. It will not nor shall I attempt to explain what followed there and afterward. I must be content to leave the story to the few who will understand.

It was in the early evening of a warm but lovely June day when I stepped into the broad court of the Martha and looked about me somewhat anxiously for my friend. I wished to be at my ease and my best on our first meeting, knowing how women are governed by first impressions. To pick out a lady whom I had never seen among the many women passing and repassing across the court, sitting about in chairs and lounges, scattered singly or in groups, entering or departing, was no easy matter; and very soon I felt my calm and correct manner deserting me. Then I grew a little angry, for had I not promised myself that I should know her at the first glance and delight her with my intuition? Perhaps at this very moment she was quietly looking me over, noting my fits and starts, with the unfailing tact and self-possession of women. It might well be so indeed, for full twenty minutes had elapsed since the boy had taken up my card.

And then I saw her coming toward me with that slow-gliding movement which the old poets recognized as the gait of an Olympian—

Et vera incessu patuit dea!

And which he can never forget who has but peeped into the magic mirror of classic poesy.

It is Egeria! I said, as with a lightning flash of

inspiration. Her whole presence announced the Divinity, and I all but fell on my knees in the open court of the Martha Washington, where many ladies pass who of a truth never, never would be taken for goddesses.

She was of the true divine stature, without being extremely tall (gods and men have always been in agreement on this point). She bore her noble head with the indescribable pose of antique sculpture, denoting her of the sisterhood of Hera and Aphrodite, of Maia and Niobe. Her hair, a rich bronzed auburn, was dressed in the ancient manner, save that she wore no fillet,—doubtless with a view to sparing the sensibilities of the Martha. But it was her eyes, above all, that declared the goddess, eyes of a fathomless golden brown depth like a sea wherein countless suns have set in glory,—for I might not evade the fact, however incredible, that by earthly reckoning Egeria must be some twenty-six hundred years old, though indeed there was no disfiguring trace of time upon her. Those wonderful eyes turned with unhurried majesty in their orbits—had they not long since looked upon all that was worth while on earth or in heaven?—and they never seemed to close! Then I recalled that the Olympians are to be known by their unwinking gaze, and I gave myself up for lost, when the Vision put forth a hand in greeting and said in a voice with sweet lingering cadences which I involuntarily tried to scan:

“Well, my friend, why are you thus
Rapt in wonder? I shall not eat
You, though you are to take me
To dinner.”

Unpersuaded and like a man in a dream, I gave her my arm, still feeling that there would be a terrible row if the Martha knew that I was taking out to dinner a woman twenty-six hundred years old. I observed, though, that she had a pretty color in her cheeks and seemed happily expectant, quite like a mere mortal woman not averse to dining, who might have a comfortable balance of youth in her favor.

An hour or so later, seated in a famous French restaurant, with the solids of a good dinner disposed of and a bottle of Château Lafite between us, a decorous orchestra permitting us to chat without being overheard by our neighbors, I began to shake off the strange illusion with which the first sight of her had possessed me.

Yet I still found myself trying to scan the slow sweet halting music of her speech, and still from time to time I was thrilled and set to dreaming of “old unhappy far-off things” by an enigmatic glance of her great eyes.

“I may have told you in one of my letters,” she said,—(I swear I had no recollection of it)—“that

I was brought up on an old plantation in the South, in a sort of lonely way. Being an only child, I was indulged in all manner of caprices. There was a grotto, or so you might call it, with a deep spring of water on the place, where I loved to sit and dream by the hour. I had studied enough, in a haphazard fashion, to know something about Numa Pompilius, which, I remember, seemed to me a right clever name to give a ducky. And I used to like to go to this grotto, and crown myself with a wreath of wild flowers, and make-believe to myself that I was the nymph Egeria waiting for her mortal lover Numa."

Here she paused and looked at me musingly, with the mystic light in her eyes that almost renewed the illusion.

"Your hair is gray like *his*," she said in a reminiscent tone, "but not from wisdom. I reckon your gray locks prove nothing for you on that score."

It really wasn't polite, but feeling that Olympians may have a different social code from ours, I frankly agreed with her. There was, I thought, small need of a ghost or goddess come from buried Rome to tell me this.

"But that's really why I have come," she went on kindly. "I helped *him*, you know (since you *will* identify me in my ancient divine character) and I can help you. . . That is, of course, if you will try to be worthy of yourself and of me, and learn your lessons as well as Numa learned his. Although,"

she added, with a slight faltering, "I fear you're not nearly so biddable as he was."

I could only agree with her again.

"Well, never mind," she said, with a sudden dash of hopefulness, "since you've been brave and imaginative enough to see Egeria at the Martha Washington, you can't be all bad, and we must try what can be done to bring out the good in you. Heaven knows you need it!"

And then after a pause, with the mystic light invading her eyes so that they glowed like the old-rose flame in her glass of Bordeaux,—

"Egeria will come to you again, I guess."

"But when, dear goddess?" I pleaded.

Her only answer was an enigmatic smile wherein the warmth of her soul perhaps faintly shadowed forth a promise.

"And now take me back to the Martha," she said, "where all proper goddesses and other seemly persons should be housed and bedded by one after midnight."

I did as she bade me, and, goddess though she might be, I saw that her steps lingered along the Great White Way, while she stopped and gazed earnestly at the far twinkling cressets of Fifth Avenue.

Was it again my wayward fancy, or did I hear her say to herself, with a mixture of scorn and passion,—“O for one hour of the Appian Way, or even

a few minutes by the Scæan Gate!" . . . At the door of the Martha she gave me her hand, with a perfectly contemporaneous smile.

And there the matter rests—for the present.

E*VEN if He did take away His old Paradiſe,
there could have been no Paradise without
the Woman. And She remains!*

TO THE SHADE OF LAMB

IN what bodiless region dost thou now sojourn, O Carolus Agnus, with thy slim shy soul answering to what was erst its earthly integument? Art thou,—if daring conjecture may follow thee beyond the warm precincts of the cheerful day,—somewhere in the vast stellar interspaces (for the “downright Bible heaven” were not for thee)—wandering forlorn with Her who companioned thy earth journey? Or (and to this chiefly doth my fancy cleave) art thou sheltered in some quiet nebula, remote from all that vexed thy spirit in its inferior transit, some celestial image of thy terrestrial Islington; sharing, as of yore, sweet converse with Coleridge, and Hazlitt, and Hunt, and Godwin, and all that rare company in whose variant humor thou wert wont to delect thy sublunary leisure? Not otherwise would the kind Fates ordain; nor would She, the fond guardian of thy mortal course, be wanting to this reunited fellowship. She to whom thy constant heart pledged a most pure sacrifice. Yes, and it is sweet to believe that her old office, in token of her so great love, hath not been taken from her. For, as the high debate proceeds and, waxing

warm at some intractability of Godwin's (who had always power to move thee) thou retortest in shrill, impedimental fashion, She lays to lip an admonitory finger; and thou, observant of that familiar caution, dost smile with renewed serenity, leaving to the philosopher a victory not fairly his own.

Then Coleridge seemeth to speak, and all is admiring silence. Nothing of his old eloquence hath Samuel Taylor lost by his translation to a higher sphere. Nay, he that was finite (though in thy quaint malice thou wouldst not always have it so) is now, of a truth, infinite; composing without conscious effort a thousand "Christabels," and delivering, unpremeditated, discourse fit for the enthroned gods. The celestial equivalent for "Coleridge is up!" flashes in a manner not to be conveyed by mundane simile, through the wide-scattered ranks of spheres, thrilling even the high-ministrant Thrones and Intelligences, who must needs perform their elect service with an air distraught, as wishing to be of that lower auditory. (Alas! there is *ennui* even in heaven.) While the immortal Mortal pours forth a strain of sublime speech on themes forbidden to our mention here, the shades come thronging thick and fast to listen, as the Roman poet saw them when Sappho and Alcæus with their golden lyres smote the three-headed Cerberus and the tumultuous hordes of Pluto into a ravished silence.

*Utrumque sacro digna silentio
Mirantur umbræ dicere.*

Art thou happy there, O Elia, as when thou didst tarry upon this green earth? Dost thou repine beside the celestial Abana and Pharpar, for the "unspeakable rural solitudes, the sweet security of streets?" Wouldst thou gladlier tread again the everlasting flints of London, a toilworn clerk, hiding in thy shy bosom a genius that forever invokes the tears and praises of men; thy days of labor sweetened by nights of tranquil study or social converse with the friends whom thy heart sealed for its own? Or wouldst thou, O Elia, be again a child at Christ's, glad to lay thy sick head on a pillow, with the image of maternal tenderness bending over thee that, unknown, had watched thy sleep; or with her, thy life-mate (whom thou so playfully didst call thy cousin, Bridget Elia) bound to thee withal by a more sacred tie than that of wedded love,—wouldst thou revisit the green fields of pleasant Herfordshire, and all the scenes made dear by so many years of unbroken faith and companionship? Well I believe it, for thou hadst never a mind for joys beyond thy ken. The factitious raptures of spiritists were not for thee, nor wert thou ever seduced from the steady contemplation of thy ideal of happiness here below, by a disordered vision of the New Jerusalem. Thou wert not indeed too fond of

the Old Jerusalem—why should there be another! . . .

O rare Spirit, would that I might offer thee a cup of kindly ale, such as so often moved thee to the world's profit and rejoicing! Better, I doubt not, would it please thee than the o'er-besung nectar of thy incorporeal residence. Thou wert ever for human comforts—"Sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, society and the cheerful glass, and candle-light, and fireside conversations." Thou didst ever reluct from the fantastical conceits of epic cookery; thou gavest thy voice for all things truly gustable, and, if thou wouldst do honor to the gods, a leg of mutton failed not to grace thy *lectisternium*. Even from thy choicest pages the sapor of roast pig rises immortal! . . .

How canst thou, whose warm heart-beats we yet feel, neighbor with phantoms,—thou who in life wert never of their fellowship? Thy genial human creed forbade thee to believe much in the promises of men, arrogating a knowledge beyond the grave. This earth sufficed thee—this earth that is the happier and better for thy too brief sojourn upon it. Millions have lived since thou wert called away, yet how few that are worthy to be remembered with thee! We open thy Book and the spell of thy kindly thought is upon us. Thy phrases are loved

and familiar. We weep with thee over thy lost childish love, which thou didst again figure in gracious allegory as the Child-Angel who goeth lame but lovely; and we know whose heart lies buried with Ada that sleepeth by the river Pison. Thy tenderness for thy Sister—the great love and tragedy of thy life—is writ in gold where none but angels may turn the page. Thou, whose earth-passage was scarce noticed, art now become a treasure to all feeling hearts. Thou wert indeed a man and a brother, with thy full share of human weaknesses, which thou didst not, in craven humility, accept as a token of divine reprobation, but didst rather cover them as with a mantle of light, in thy true and modest virtues. Thou wouldst reject the title of saint with the fine irony that so well became thee; yet of many is thy saintship approved who would agnize few others in the calendar. Thy soul was full of antique reverence, though it shrank from the fictile creeds of men. A Christmas carol was to thee worth all the psalmody in the world; a kind heart all the theology and word-worship. Thou couldst see no evil in thy fellow man which thou wouldst not readily forgive—save, perhaps, unkindness. Thy feeling toward women, expressed in the most gracious of thy written words, would alone keep thy name sweet for many a future generation. Within thy heart, thy virgin heart, cheated of, yet ever faithful to, its only dream—there bloomed the white

flower of chivalry. Cockney, as they called thee, loyal to thy London pots and chimneys, thou wert as knightly as Bayard, as tender as Sidney; and the world may well regret thee as born out of thy due time. Yet herein is the proof of thy rare distinction—that thy life, humbly derived, humbly fulfilled, still sheds an interior light which turns all into beauty; invests the poor and unworthy circumstances of thy earth-progress with the grace of romance; and the farther thou recedest from us, draws us the more to thy attaching and ennobling genius.

SLEEP

“**B**LESSED be the man that invented sleep,” says the wise Sancho. All great brain-workers have been good sleepers and long sleepers, nothing serving like sleep to restore the delicate tissues of the brain, worn thin by mental effort. There have been exceptions, but they were not long livers.

Mr. Edison, though as great a man as need be cited, holds a contrary view; four hours, he thinks, being enough for sleep. The authorities are against Mr. Edison, as regards the really first-class thinkers of the world. That the great inventor is himself an exception (as we are led to believe) goes merely to prove the rule.

The list of good sleepers among literary men is fortifying. “Health is the first Muse,” says Emerson; and sound sleep is the first mark of the healthy man. One cannot but figure Rabelais as a great lusty sleeper like his own Gargantua. A giant requires a giant’s sleep, and one must have slept well to have earned the privilege of keeping the world awake during several centuries. Insomnia was unheard of in that immortal Abbey of Thelema.

Montaigne was a luxurious sleeper, and spent

more hours in his bed than in his famous tower. His essays have lasted the better for it. Herein his great time-fellow Shakespeare agreed with him,—who has written so beautifully of nature's chief boon to man?

Sleep that knits up the raveled sleeve of care.

Is not this the very finest thing that ever was said on the subject?—a favorite subject, too, with the great bard. Taine says somewhere that Shakespeare's mighty genius was conditioned by a full health unknown in our later day, that has sometimes regarded genius as a symptom of disease. We can be sure, at least, that the brain which created "Hamlet" and "Lear" was wont to sleep sound and well, else it had failed under its tremendous labor long before fifty.

The extremely long life and the astonishing literary productiveness of Voltaire were looked upon by many pious people of the Eighteenth Century as a special manifestation of the power of the Devil. This notion is not yet wholly abandoned. Morley thinks that had Voltaire died at fifty, he would have left no enduring name, his best work having been done after that age. We see now that it was sleep and moderation in all things which preserved Voltaire—not the Devil. He would remain in bed for weeks at a time—not ill, but resting and recuperating. Mark Twain has taken a hint from the great Frenchman, and shown us how

“To husband out life’s taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose.”

Goethe, who ranks as the greatest creative mind since Shakespeare, and who to short-lived men seemed to rival the gods in his age and beauty and power—owed much to sleep. Fourteen hours was his regular tale, and it so preserved the vigor of his mind that a full half-century divided the first from the second “Faust.” In his old age, as Heine tells us, he looked like Jupiter, and surely his unusual span of life,—peaceful, creative, beneficent,—had much that was divine about it. In his passions, too, he greatly resembled the old pagan gods—but I must not stray from my theme.

Balzac slept badly, and giant as he was, to this fact must be attributed his premature break-down. He had a theory that the creative faculties deteriorate under much sleep, and so he worked at night, stimulating himself with the strongest coffee, and ordinarily slept but a few hours in the day-time. Gautier tells us how his stertorous breathing sounded through the house like that of some wounded animal. Had Balzac more wisely regulated his sleep and taken the rest his enormous labors needed, he would perhaps have lived to finish his “Human Comedy.”

To some extent, Dickens had the same unfortunate habit of burning the candle at both ends.

Though he commonly did his stint of work in the cheerful day, his brain became abnormally active under the spur of creative effort, and often drove him forth to prowling about London the long night through. On this account, we have some wonderful sketches of London in the dark hours—but they scarcely make up for the fact that Dickens died under sixty.

His great rival Thackeray was a few years younger when he passed away in his sleep. The doctors found that every vital organ was worn out and that he had died as quietly and with as little warning as a clock gives in running down. "I have taken too many crops out of the brain," he had said, foreseeing his early death. But the tale of lost or broken sleep was doubtless the chief cause.

Great men of action are mostly good sleepers, and some very great ones have had the enviable capacity of sleeping at will, under all circumstances. We read that when the executioners went in for the brave Argyl, in order to fetch him away to his death, they found him sleeping as peacefully as a child. It is easy to believe that Raleigh slept well on the night before his most unmerited death. If the gallant Essex waked often, be sure that it was not from fear, but only because his heart was torn by the black treachery of Francis Bacon.

Napoleon could sleep at will, but he began a long suicide when he ordered his secretaries to waken

him on the receipt of ill news. But in no event would his devouring mental activity have let him sleep long—the master was too conscious of his world! When, however, the need of rest became imperative, he yielded to it without ceremony. We read of his dismissing a crowd of petitionary German princes before they could open their mouths, with the cry, “Berthier, send these people away,—I must sleep fifteen minutes!”

Fate lurks in little things. Had Napoleon given himself sleep enough, or had he never risen in the night to read his despatches, there might never have been a Waterloo, and his descendants might to-day be lodging at Versailles.

And a much better thing!—Ney would not have died the death of a traitor at the hands of his own countrymen. Has France lost the mould of such heroes? In the Comte de Ségur’s account of the Retreat from Moscow—the most thrilling narrative of the kind since Cæsar’s Commentaries—we read how this great-hearted soldier defended the retreat of the starving, frozen fragment of the finest army Europe ever saw. To me it seems the noblest story in the world, and if there ever were to be an excuse for war, such heroism would furnish it. In that most striking act of a great drama, I like nothing better than the picture of the Marshal Ney—the bravest of the brave, as he was justly called—guarding the huddled, perishing end of the *Grande*

Armée from the constant attacks of the Russians; sharing all the privations and miseries of the common soldier; and between repulses of the enemy, wrapping himself in his cloak and taking his rest calmly in the snow—a more truly heroic figure than Napoleon at the head of the column. . . .

Great and small, let us get our sleep.

FORTY YEAR

Wait till you come to forty year.—Thackeray.

YOUTH is the season of adventure, of faring forth every day to a new world, of doing many things and nothing long. It is the time (as one who tried it right hardily has said) “to go flashing from one end of the earth to the other, both in mind and body; to try the manners of different nations; to hear the chimes at midnight; to see sunrise in town and country; to be converted at a revival; to circumnavigate the metaphysics; write halting verses; run a mile to see a fire, and wait all day long in the theatre to applaud ‘Hernani.’”

Looked at rightly, a sad enough change is it when a man must say a wistful farewell to the free spirit of adventure, and take his place in the stocks of age. No greater renunciation is demanded of him, until the last of all. Perhaps not many men so feel it, for use and universal acquiescence make the yoke easy or bearable.

But there is a sort of man whose spirit has not lost its fire or aged equally with his body, and whose

unsatisfied youth pines cruelly under the sentence of time. There are such poor fellows a-plenty, too, but not willingly do they confess their state. What chiefly betrays them is a certain youthful ineptitude and lack of heart in their tied routine, which agrees not well with the gray in their hair. Often they terrify themselves with the spirit of revolt that rises up in them at the daily assumption of their enforced slavery. They would throw off all bonds and reject their fetters as at twenty—in other words, they are moved to fling away, in the delirium of a sort of calenture, the comforts and advantages of a position and a *milieu* not easily duplicated or recovered at forty odd. Oh, the fit never lasts long, but 'tis cruel hard while it does, and when 'tis done and over with, my man has a few more gray hairs and a tightening at the mouth.

Poor young old boys! Sad bondmen of the years! Why kick against the pricks, why dash yourselves against the iron doors? All vain is your struggle—the enchanted land of your youth is gone beyond recall, and you should not get a glimpse of it, though every path in the world were opened to you. Be content that a fleeting vision of it is, at long intervals, vouchsafed you in dreams! . . .

Some time ago I wrote that thirty-five is the Great Age for writing and thinking men, when their knowledge of life is ripe and their powers at the height. I discussed the point with much eloquence

and fully believed in my own conclusions—for I was then thirty-five!

Let me quote a little from my favorite author: "For about the seventh lustrum a man begins to see the true value of life and to hold a serious accounting with himself. The spendthrift desires and ardors of passion are past—the riot and the rapture of mere sensuous enjoyment discounted, if not given over. Henceforth a man is no longer the fool of his senses—unless he be a fool from his mother's womb. The universe has steadied itself in his gaze; men cease to appear unto him 'as trees walking'; the eternal questions, Wherefore? Whither? recur with a persistence that will not be laid to sleep.

"Up again, brave heart, thy best work is still to be done! Thou art tried and tempered and purified for the Great Task. Fear not. In this dread moment of blank and silence that follows the tumultuous hour of youth, thou art but receiving thy consecration. The God in thy breast stirs—awakes!—thou hast attained the dignity of Man."

Ah well! I would an I could now make as good a brief for forty year—that great disillusioner, that age of iron—for time has not stood still with me since I penned the above. But to be strictly honest with the reader and myself, I can not bring my laggard pen to such a feat; my doubting heart hangs

back and will not give its message of consent to brain and hand. Even with my vanity bidding against my judgment, I dare not make a false appraisal of life—nay, must I rather confess that thirty-five still rises like Pisgah from the plain, the Mount of Vision and the Hill of Achievement. I will not unsay a word that I said when my feet were planted on that glory-crowned summit and my heart was filled with a rapture of things unutterable,—that were, alas, not to come true! Yes, I will be honest with myself, though I am a little overpast the cold self-deceiving climacteric of forty years.

Oh, something is to be said for forty year, of course, and even as against the epochal thirty-five. I have lost but I have also gained somewhat—yes, I am very sure of that. But Nature still beats us at this kind of barter, and I am even surer that what I have gained was not worth what I gave. It is not for my comfort to inquire too curiously into that which I have lost since I left the Great Age behind me.

Bernard Shaw, with his favorite trick of doing up a truism in a paradox, says somewhere that every man after forty is a scoundrel. So he is, and the more or less depends on his consciousness of the fact. What Shaw's saying really means is, that youth being done with, men give themselves to the worship of self and the cultivation of the Main Chance with the perfect singleness of aim that in-

sure success. The sacrifices and generousities are over and past; the self-calculations, the prudences—ah me! I fear, the meannesses—now have their long inning. Man, if not a fool or a poet, now becomes sophisticated, keeps perfect faith with no one—that silly dream of our jelly-fish period!—and applauds himself for a species of cunning of which, a few years back, he would have been ashamed to the marrow.

About this time he begins to take that absorbing interest in himself which he used to find so hateful in another. He tells himself that all a rational man's effort should be directed to one end and that a simple one—to win some good measure of comfort and security for the latter half of life (he does not expect to quit the game under eighty). The Oslers are right as to this, that about the fortieth year man consciously begins his homing journey; being then, as the French say, *l'homme sur son retour*. He will tell you that he is at his best and ask you to feel his muscles, etc., but all the same he takes extraordinary measures to preserve himself. The cunning of age shows through his florid maturity; the fine recklessness of youth striving in vain to spend its capital of hope and health is gone. He goes to bed early, *by system*—a sure sign that the preoccupations of senility are already upon him. He may stay up for a friendly wassail with you, under somewhat of compulsion, but long ere

the chimes you will have a yawner on your hands. From being a waster of time, he is changed into a niggard economist. Once he lost days and weeks; now he makes a jealous audit of the hours and minutes. His eye is on the clock.

Now, if he be rather a *thinking* than an *acting* man, he will be content with whatever lot assures him a decent freedom of mind and a tolerable exemption from the lowest cares of existence. Though he may not be able to call any house his own, he should at least have one quiet room to himself in the house of his tenancy, where he may indulge his feelings of independence to the utmost. The matter is not so simple either—there are those rich in houses who cannot compass it. For it is possible to acquire much realty and yet not to possess your own soul, as we see every day. But the thing is important, for the reason that the chief value of the decline of life—setting in, we may as well admit, about forty—lies in its fitness for and proneness to the contemplative. By reflection the man doubles his days, as well as the enjoyments and solaces thereof. And herein Nature seems to compensate us in no small degree for our lost youth when the fierce ardor of delight was such that we kept no count of time and were as one who knows that he has supped well, yet cannot recall the dishes of the banquet. The young eat and forget: the old digest and remember.

Again, age is really more in love with life than youth, though it pretend otherwise; and it fears death more. I have seen young boys and girls die with calm courage; I have seen men in the strong noon of life fold their hands and pass, "gentlemen unafraid;" while old gaffers and grandames long past the Psalmist's limit, cluttered in ghastly terror at sight of the Grim Reaper. This is despicable, of course, and our forty-year philosophy should be proof against it. Let us stay as long as we may, but, when bidden, let us go with dignity. The leisure for meditation which age covets as its darling desire and which is its best appanage, should be turned to worthy account. It can afford nothing better than a true temper of resignation and courage in that solemn hour of which Hamlet says: "If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all."

Time stays, says an old song, *we go!*

Strange how slow we are in taking to heart this truth as old as the world. Nothing is so sure, nothing so plain and simple, so manifest and universal: yet nothing is so difficult to realize.

On the subject of age and death every one of us is at heart a heretic as stout as Luther. Into this deception Nature throws all her beguiling force—the whitening hair, the failing strength, the un-

tempering mind, aye, the hearse next door, are impotent to persuade us. Nay, do we not, if we would but confess it, hug the darling thought that we are somehow exempt from the Universal Sentence? It is true, we are convinced at the very end when Age and Death settle the matter between them. But of this we are happily unconscious, and so we quit life without striking our flag.

Only the other day I held our first babe on my knee, and now he opens that door and looks upon me, a man almost in his years and strength. Believe, then, believe that this strong heir of thy youth, whose unspringing both gladdens and troubles thy heart, spells age for thee! . . . No, I will not confess to a single year more than when he came, for have I not said it was but the other day? The other day!—ah, time that stays and we that go, 'twill soon be twenty year! . . .

I reject the trite and foolish proofs of age that some persons of a grave or sexton turn of mind will still be offering you; ancients with eyes purging thick amber and plum-tree gum, who out of envy would claim you of their fellowship. Proofs, quotha?—as that you love your indoor ease more and your outdoor faring less; or that the spirit of adventure that once knew no alien horizon and would have flown with you on the wings o' the morning, now leaves you, weary and disenchanted, scarce three miles from home; or that you are become pettish

about your sleep and unduly concerned about your health; or that you measure your days with a jealous economy to which you never gave a thought when life was at the Spring.

Foolish proofs, I say again. What signify these things and the like but that a man has grown wiser—not of necessity older! Does the sublime ignorance we call Youth know anything of the value of life which it so carelessly wastes? Does life really begin for us until we have a sense of its value and plan to use it accordingly? In your beard, good Master Sexton, I fling your silly proofs, your dotting dogmas, your graveyard moralities, your headstone quips, your texts of shroud and tomb. Keep them for your own sort, Old Mortality, and do not thrust them upon me—an Immortal! . . .

Alack and alas!—

“Time stays and we go.”

THE LOST GOD: A FABLE OF TO-DAY

And it came to pass at noon that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked.

Kings, XVIII, 27.

THERE is fear in the Great City and the hum of its mighty life seems strangely suspended. Even the reckless ones who dance ever after pleasure to the Fiddles of Death, play now with an unwonted languor. A sense of calamity impends, as it were visibly, above the miles and miles of towering structures, the ways of granite and steel, the monstrous hive wherein some millions of human ants have imprisoned themselves. Here and there, about the streets, men gather in groups and talk, with anxious faces; mostly their speech is low and grave, but sometimes it rises high and threatening. These groups are not so preoccupied, however, but that whenever a newcomer approaches all stop their talk and look eagerly unto him, as for some expected tidings. He shakes his head gloomily, and what word he brings seems only to sharpen their discontent.

Men and boys, carrying bundles of papers, run wildly about the streets and up and down, crying something unintelligible in loud alarming tones. People snatch the papers from them with frenzied eagerness, yet in a moment throw them away with curses. I pick up one which a furious man has tossed at my feet, and I read in flaring type across the front page, that the people should not despair, as their God has not really abandoned them; that He is with them even now, but for His own inscrutable purpose elects not to show Himself during a little while; that He is a good God and a grateful, and will not do a bad turn to a people who have so devotedly served Him, to the exclusion of all other gods; and further, the people are exhorted not to blaspheme their God, nor to speak harshly of Him, nor even doubtingly, lest He take umbrage and go away in very truth.

All this and much more to the same purport is set forth in big black type and in characters of divers tongues, so that the many races of the Great City may gather the warning, each for itself. The most passionate and fearful anxiety is thereby expressed lest the people in their frenzy give mortal offence to the God in hiding. And amongst the strange legends printed hugely across these papers, I recognize the letters of a most ancient people, who once upon a far time, in despite of their God, set up on high and worshipped a Golden Calf. . . .

I follow a slowly moving crowd through a magnificent street which is literally paved with wealth and lined on either hand with the palaces of trade, daunting the heart with their giant massiveness of stone and steel. Many policemen are deployed here and there to govern the movements of the crowd; but there is little enough need of their services, for the people, though stern and sad, are quiet of mien and their talk portends no violence.

Perhaps the policemen are there only because wealth without a policeman to guard it would be such a sight as has never yet been seen in this world. The rulers of this people are wise and would save them from sudden shock. . . .

We are moving on always, the crowd swelling as it proceeds, but still maintaining its orderly mien that seems to rebuke the presence of the police. An extraordinary crowd in its composition as in its manners. Mostly rich appearing and well-dressed, with all outward signs and symbols of prosperity to accentuate the anxiety—nay, terror!—written in their faces. I ask myself, what means this impassive yet sternly determined concourse? A rising of respectabilities! A mob of the moneyed! Law and order threatened by those favored ones for whose protection Law and Order were made! And I laugh aloud. Why, the thing seems too wildly absurd even for a dream! . . .

I now perceive that the crowd's objective point

is a splendid marble building, stately and high as a cathedral, with doors and windows defended as if against Titans by massive outer doors and shutters of wrought steel. Before this strong house the moving mass of people in which I find myself stops, fronting a like crowd from the opposite direction and one, it is plain to see, with the same intent. They meet like two strong but peaceful currents and flow over the broad street, filling every inch of sidewalk and roadway and extending for a considerable space north and south of the white marble structure.

All eyes are fixed on that with painful eagerness, as if it contained some magical relief for the great fear which weighed upon the multitude—as if (I could not but think) God Himself was there in person to make answer to their distress.

And then at last it came to me that it was in truth their God whom this people sought and whom they feared they should not find in the Marble House. Their God whom they love and serve with such a fulness of love and service as no other god has ever known. How else account for such panic and terror among the rich and respectable, unless it came from a fear of losing their God?

But now a strong guard of police massing themselves at the entrance of the Marble House, and another force governing the wings and flanks of the crowd, a thin line of people is suffered to enter at

one door, reissuing presently from another. And I see that those who come out have something clutched very tightly in their hands, and on their faces the rapt look of the beatified. Evidently, I think, they have seen their God, and they bear a gift or amulet from Him.

Strange to tell, the joy of these fortunate ones has no apparent effect in allaying the fear and anxiety of the great multitude that heaves and struggles like a rising sea outside the Marble House; rather they fight the harder to get near it, for their impassiveness is now at an end, and they rage like a furious tide against the unyielding barrier of police.

Amongst them I see men and women too old (I should think) to have any doubt of God; yet I despair of finding words to convey an image of the wild terror they display: some are heard to *curse their God that He denies Himself to them!* I see beautiful young women whose beauty is seared by the same horrible fear as by a Devil's hand. I see pious men in black dress whose duty it is to preach faith in God—and they vie with the most eager and panic-stricken in the crowd.

Then suddenly a man comes out on the steps of the Marble House and speaks some words which I take to mean that God has no more to give for this day, and that the doors will be closed until further notice.

A howl of long suppressed rage and despair bursts from the many-throated respectable crowd, the farthest stragglers seeming to gather the man's words as by intuition. The police spring to the doors, and not an instant too soon,—the human mass coming against them with tremendous impact. But the gates are builded strong where this God keeps Himself, and hard indeed it is to see Him if the warders say He is sleeping, or not at home, or on a journey.

So the baffled crowd learn to their bitter spite, and they fall back cursing and despairing from the iron doors and the iron police, with hoarse cries of "Liquidation!" . . . "Robbery!" . . . "Ruin!" . . .

I could not at first explain to myself the significance of these terrible words and the blind fury of the crowd . . . until again I realized that these people had been actually seeking their God!

A NOTE ON OSCAR WILDE

A FEW years ago I wrote an essay * on the downfall of Oscar Wilde, inspired as it was by the publication of his "De Profundis." The few American critics who did me the honor to notice my article referred to above, took exception to the fact that I had accepted Wilde's repentance as sincere, and they were at somewhat scandalous pains to point out his relapse into his old evil courses—an accusation which, at the time, I believed to rest only upon such idle gossip as the poet's disgrace and conviction would naturally give rise to.

The charitable view held by these critics, and I believe still held by too many people, was that the man's name should be blotted from memory and his literary legacy annulled since, after his public punishment and professed penitence, he had again fallen into the ways of sin.

They, and many with them, seem to have forgotten the precept of Him who said that even the just man shall fall not seven times but seventy times seven!

As I have said, I did not at the time of writing

* See Palms of Papyrus.

"Oscar Wilde's Atonement" believe that in his last miserable days he had succumbed to those fatal, in-born propensities which had brought him to ruin. Unfortunately, it is only too well known now that he did so succumb, and I am even willing to admit that, things being as they are, British justice which destroyed him, was what the world calls vindicated by his final relapse into shame and ill-doing. For had he not so fallen again and again, unable to resist the curse of temptation laid upon him, or the innate plague of his blood, it would have been easy enough to class his repentance with so much else that was affected and insincere in his life.

But, mark you, I do not the less hold that the atonement of Oscar Wilde was exemplary and effective, and that the world is not a whit the less indebted to him for the legacy and lesson of "De Profundis." For that he was sincere when he penned this testament of sorrow (in spite of its literary art and beauty), no humane mind will question a moment. It is written in the tears of the heart; it witnesses the most tragic humiliation of a man of genius that ever found literary expression; nor is its truth and sincerity to be suspected because the indomitable God-given pride of genius breathes through it all.

But it seems the doubtful public that had previously cried "Crucify him!" wanted to be very sure ere they would believe in the penitence of this great

sinner; like Thomas surnamed Didymus, they would put their fingers in his wounds and their hands in his side to verify for themselves that his heart was really and truly broken—aye, and they would even taste his tears to make sure if these were salt!

You were not cheated, O charitable British Christian public!—the man was verily a great sinner, as the judge and jury had said, as he had himself confessed, and especially as he proved toward the wretched end by sinning again and again when sin had lost the evil grace and beauty which he was wont to perversely fancy in it, and had become perhaps only a means of self-destruction. And his heart was surely broken, too, for he died soon after your justice was done with him, and the doctors could see no other cause for it. Absolutely, the whole affair was without fraud and conducted in strict accordance with British Christian principles!

And now I have but one word more to say on the still mooted question of Oscar Wilde's repentance—a word that will not fail to shock the literary Pharisees. It is this: the sincerity of his repentance—the truth of "De Profundis"—the measure of his irremediable sorrow—the validity of his atonement—were attested beyond question forevermore *by the fact of his relapse into sin*, and were sealed with the sovereign seal of death. The man's expiation was, in truth, supreme—he could give no more than his life, executing judgment upon himself,

as he seems to have anticipated in the most memorable of his poems:

*For he who sins a second time
Wakes a dead soul to pain,
And draws it from its spotted shroud,
And makes it bleed again,
And makes it bleed great goutts of blood,
And makes it bleed in vain!*

Conventional morality sees only the stock retribution of the sinner in the fate of Oscar Wilde—it is unable to conceive that the end was of his own choosing. Yet to read it otherwise were to slur the meaning of the most extraordinary spiritual tragedy of our time. Had Wilde's repentance been insincere, his sorrow a pose, his anguish a literary artifice (as the critics are still contending) the man would not have sinned and died as he did—and the story for us would lack much of its terrible truth and half of its tragedy. . . .

Still another word, which perhaps it is even more needful to say. I have been taken to task by a certain critic for printing so much about Oscar Wilde. In this person's view the offence of Wilde was so great and his fall of such unmitigated horror and disgrace that it were better to leave his name to the charity of oblivion.

My friend seems to ignore the fact that it is

the work of Wilde which we seek to honor and perpetuate, and not the man himself, with his sin and shame. But I will agree that, in a true sense, the man cannot be dissociated from his work. What then? Shall we refuse the beautiful and worthy gift of a sinner? Or shall we take what is good and leave what is evil? In such a choice indeed the world is never long doubtful, and it has already pronounced its will in the case of Oscar Wilde.

Replying to a like censure lately, Lord Alfred Douglas said, with as much truth as beauty, that whatever Wilde's faults, he wrote "on the side of the angels." This is the literal as well as the poetic fact. The best of Wilde's work, by which he has a right to be judged, is free from moral blemish. Our literature has hardly anything to compare with his exquisite fables, which evince a fancy as pure as the pool that mirrored Narcissus. Many of his poems are as spiritual as those of Wordsworth and touch the soul to as fine issues. His essay, "The Soul of Man Under Socialism," is such an expression of true humanity as Mazzini would have greeted with praise and tears. And what is "De Profundis" if not a spiritual confession of the utmost poignancy and pathos, relieved only by the consummate literary art of which the sinner could not divest himself?

This man indeed wrote on the side of the angels, and the world is not so rich in such treasures of

beauty that it can afford to throw even one of his pearls away.

Let me remind my severely judging critic that good literature has the privilege of living down the worst reputation.

The infamy of Bacon is all but forgotten in the glory of his literary testament.

In his time Lord Byron was the scandal of Europe, and the rumors about his domestic life were such as to threaten him with the rude justice of the London mob. He was believed to be a murderer and he was known to be a seducer. Virtuous poets like Southey and Wordsworth denounced him as the head of the Satanic School. He once drew up a list of the names applied to him by the hostile English critics; it included Lucifer, Cain, Judas, Belial and other disreputable personages of both worlds. Long years after his death, the most horrible accusation of all was brought against him—he was publicly accused of a crime the worst that can be proposed to a Christian conscience, and with such evidence as seemed likely to convince the world of his guilt.

We know now that Byron's fame was not blackened by the infamy with which Mrs. Stowe had charged herself, in order to execute the vengeance of an implacable woman. Few people could now say what the accusation precisely was; the majority of reading people know nothing about it.

The other day I picked up a copy of Mrs. Stowe's book on a second-hand bookstall. It has long since been out of print, but the fact was not considered in the price I paid for it. You need not ask a better proof of the rule which I formulated above and which I dare believe is original with me:

Good literature has the privilege of living down the worst reputation.

*T*O my mind there is nothing so enviable as the true literary character, neither is there anything so much counterfeited. The *servum pecus*, the base horde of literary pretenders upon whom Horace vented his scorn two thousand years ago, are, thanks to the universal printing press, more numerous in the world than ever before. In high places sit the unspeakable gods of smugness, giving their inane code and precept to a blindly credulous multitude. There is even more sham literature than sham religion. Each has its muftis and high priests, its hierarchies and consistories. Each deals out its anathemas and excommunications, and each is doing its utmost against the Spirit of Light.

Would I might believe that I have some claim, however slight, to the true literary character—that which has wrought so powerfully for truth and justice, for liberty and humanity in the world. No, I should not dare to believe that the torch has been committed to my weak hand—too happy shall I be if a ray of its light fall upon me! . . .

MY RELIGION

No sensible man tells.—Disraeli.

SOME kind person sends me a religious print, thoughtfully marked with a blue pencil, wherein I find myself dubbed an Atheist! And in pica!!

Is it not to smile? Readers, I appeal to you—I mean all of you who have followed me from book to book—am I not the most believing man in the world? I do not say the most orthodox, mind you, for there is a difference 'twixt belief and orthodoxy, 'twixt faith and dogma. Now I was born for worship—my soul is always consciously worshipping—but I can't do it in a strait-jacket, that is to say, in a theological formula. But for true religion, let me say of my unknown censors what a great man once said of his:

*Some nameless casuists are pleased to say
In nameless print, that I have no devotion,
But set those persons down with me to pray,
And you shall see who has the properest notion
Of getting into heaven the shortest way.*

People who cherish a religion of words, words, words, find it easy in their uncharitableness to call such names as Atheist. Plainly, I don't believe there is an atheist in the world, worth taking into account—those who call the name and those who accept it have the same loose habit of thinking. Even Huxley rejected it and adopted the more scientific designation of Agnostic—*one who does not know*; and with this even the uncompromising Ingersoll was content. The greatest fool in the world were he who should say, "There is no God."

I do not care to be so written down, even in an obscure religious print, and so I beg leave to restate here, in a modified form, my personal Confession of Faith, published with sundry variations in "Papyrus" some years ago, and doubtless unknown to all but a few of my readers.

I believe in a Power Unknown that we call God and that we vainly seek in our finite way to understand by endowing It with human attributes.

I believe in that most ancient religion from which the world has drawn its moral code and its conception of the One God—from whose bosom Christianity sprang and in whose Sacred Books it claims to read its own title and warrant.

I believe in the Holy Roman Catholic Church, One and Apostolic, in which I was born and baptized some forty odd years ago near the town of

Mallow, in the famous and pleasant County of Cork, Ireland. I was duly inducted into the faith nine days after my birth—pious Irish parents lose no time in giving their children about the only thing very many have to give them. I can't claim to remember very much about it, but my dear mother used to say that I behaved with great dignity and supernatural intelligence—(a little strong this, but family legends are to be respected). It seems that when the priest pronounced the solemn interrogation—

“Michael, dost thou renounce the Devil with all his works and pomps?”—

I looked at him in a knowing way that astounded my sponsors. And not once did I whimper when I felt the cold water on my head and breast and the baptismal salt in my mouth, which I liked least of all. Ah, but I was a grand Catholic that day, whatever might be said of me afterward! . . .

Well, to resume: I believe in the sane and vigorous Protestantism which has done so much for the cause of human liberty—to my mind the dearest and worthiest object in the world. I do not pretend, like so many others, to forecast a time when it shall have outlived its usefulness or its original motive, the emancipation of the human reason and conscience. In other words, I believe that the law of opposing forces in religion, as throughout nature generally, works for good. Protestantism is as old

as Paul—Catholicism as old as Peter. I believe they are mutually necessary, and I believe further that their union to-morrow or next day would be the worst possible disaster to religion, leading in no long time to a new Reformation and a new Protestantism.

I believe in the simple faith of Francis of Assisi and Thomas à Kempis, and I believe no less in the liberal faith of Spinoza, Voltaire, Tom Paine, Goethe, Emerson and Renan.

I believe it was the same God who sent Darwin on his quest of the Missing Link and Damien to win a martyr's crown at Molokai.

I believe in the Inspired authority of the Scriptures, even to swallowing the ass of Balaam of Beor, and I also believe in the Higher Criticism of the same—which sometimes brings it very low indeed.

I do not believe in the Dhokabors, the Holy Ghosters, the Seven Men of Tarsus, the Sanctified Rollers, the Hook-and-Eye Baptists, and the made-over Mormon Dispensation.

I believe in the religion of Leo Tolstoy and think that he is nearer the pure truth of the Gospel than any church or creed now extant.

I believe that we need religion much, very much, but human love, justice, forbearance and toleration far more.

I believe that God has a sense of humor, though

it cannot be proved out of the Bible. I had rather laugh than weep with my God.

Hear the end of this matter: I believe in the good of every religion and the evil of none, and I do not believe that it is given to any one religion to possess the whole truth. I do not believe that man was made, without his consent, to be damned by a Creator who botched his work—I wish to believe in God as a power benign. Therefore, I shall not believe that God would do what I, the least of His creatures, would not—condemn a human soul to everlasting pain.

Lastly, I believe that love has supplied us with a surer clue than we shall gain from all the creeds. This truth I have learned from my own heart—not from any church; but wherever it is taught or learned, there I believe we are very near to God.

COME what may, come what will,
let us be faithful to the dream—
the poor, unfriended and re-
pulsed, beloved and betrayed, cursed and
rejected, defeated and despised, yet ever
glorious and immortal dream,—to make
this hard world a better and kinder place
for all the children of men.

THE DEVIL

DR. PAUL CARUS hath a devil. Also he hath a literary style, which is perhaps not so easy a thing to come by. The Doctor is one of the few really learned men in this country and of its half-dozen best writers. He knows many languages, including the ancient Oriental tongues, and he carries his vast erudition with as easy a grace as Renan,—whom in his philosophic habit of mind he much resembles. No German, with the possible exception of the late Carl Schurz, has ever written such pure idiomatic English or evinced so perfect a mastery of our language. He offers a complete refutation of Bernard Shaw's curious dictum, that no man fully capable of the resources of his own tongue can master another.

But about his devil: it is to write on the Devil. In his excellent magazine, "The Open Court," Dr. Carus has published many learned essays on the Devil and he has gathered these into an ample work which he calls the "History of the Devil." There is no other book in the world like it, and the Devil and Dr. Carus have reason to plume themselves upon the work.

Now you would not suspect a German, especially so learned a one, of a humorous intent in writing such a book; yet Dr. Carus's history is one of profound and ironic humor. For, strange to say, Dr. Carus does not believe in the Devil, though he writes about him with such fulness of learning and presents the most remarkable collection of portraits of him that can be seen anywhere. Oh, he believes that the world long believed in the Devil—still does to some extent—and the origins and consequences of that belief are perhaps better told in this work than ever before.

It is, in truth, a strange history, and looking it over, one realizes what an effort it cost the world to shake off the Devil—again to a certain extent, for the Roman Catholic Church still clings to him and has not cut down the number of its holy water fonts in our time. The Presbyterian Devil is also very well, thank you, and doing business at the old stand. The Greek Catholic Devil is as merry as a grig, utterly believed in as he is by the millions of Holy Russia whose light is the darkness of the Middle Ages. All in all, in a world of departing divinities and fading faiths, the Devil is holding his own better than might be expected.

It was religion, of course, that invented the Devil to scare the wicked and sinful. It was a highly useful invention, and if there ever was a Devil, his labors in this respect would have regained Heaven

for him long ago. Who will deny that the fear of the Devil has saved more souls than the love of God? . . .

The real mischief began when, through the working of human malignity, superstition and fear, good people who had no business with the Devil and wanted none, forsooth, were sacrificed to him in their own despite. And in such numbers as it is most difficult to believe. Thus from 1320 to 1350, in Carcassonne alone, there were four hundred persons, mostly women, put to death for what was called witch-craft or commerce with the Devil. But it was not until 1484 that the Christian world—all of one fold and faith then,—went stark mad on the subject. In that memorable year Pope Innocent VIII issued his bull against all those “who indulged in the dark arts of sorcery or were otherwise agents of Satan.” Naturally this “unloosed the dogs of hell,” and there quickly followed such scenes of horror throughout Europe as we are loth to credit, though vouched for by the gravest historians.

The victims were chiefly women. That sex being regarded by the clergy as the fount of evil, had to bear the brunt of the fearful superstition. Many poor creatures partaking of the universal frenzy, accused themselves and were sent to the fire. But nothing was so easy as to be accused of the impossible crime of witchcraft. We read that in Spain a great number of people were condemned to the

flames upon the testimony of two little girls of nine and ten years old, who "declared they could see the Devil in the right eye of any one possessed of him, a sorcerer or a witch." Hundreds of suspects were marched before them and they picked out the victims, some of whom were little children of only six or seven years!

Death-fires were blazing merrily all over Europe, but still things looked rather slow to Pope Adrian VI, and he in 1523 followed up Innocent's bull with another which completely lifted witchcraft or devil-worship out of the class of infant industries. Every city in Europe then and thereafter had its quota of executions—in Italy a city of ten thousand people would furnish a hundred such every year. In 1607 the pious and learned Nicholas Remy (otherwise known as Remigius) judge under the Duke of Lorraine, boasted with pardonable pride that in the space of fifteen years he had sent nine hundred witches and sorcerers to the flames, eight hundred of whom were women! This was in Lorraine alone.

By the way, the same learned Remy or Remigius wrote a book on witchcraft wherein he piously avows having done all "for the glory of God." And through a strange and most just coincidence, he was seized with the madness of which he had convicted so many and was himself burned at the stake, accusing himself as a servant of Satan. This was perhaps a joke of the Devil's!

The proof or test of witchcraft or demoniac possession was worthy of those remote ages of faith and often consisted of this very simple process: The hands and feet of the accused were tied and she was then thrown into the water. If she sank and was drowned, she was innocent. If she floated, she was held to be guilty and burned alive. Many of the greatest minds of the age, fortified with the True Faith and all the learning then to be had, were content with this idiotic demonstration. Truly the world does move!

Cruelty begets cruelty, madness begets madness. We find that in many places women were accused of having sexual relations with the Devil and confessed as much, the same being set down, with very curious particulars, in the record of their trials. They confessed many other things as wild and monstrous—there was really nothing they would not confess in face of the torture and the fire. A valuable lesson, but one which it took the world overlong to learn.

So entirely had this monstrous delusion taken possession of the minds of the people, under the precept of priests and judges, that they went one step farther and believed in the demoniac possession of animals. At Basle in 1470 a rooster was tried upon the charge of having laid an egg!—any fool could have told you that only rooster eggs were used in making witch ointment! It is edifying to read that the fowl was convicted of this foul offence and

burned with all due solemnity in the town square. Even as late as 1740 a cow was tried and convicted of being possessed by a Devil. The exorcism of locusts, snakes, rats, vermin, etc., was in these times a regular priestly function. Whether it was effectual or not made no difference to speak of—if you have faith you shall move mountains! For some ages, certainly, the Church was quite as much concerned with the Evil One as with God Himself, and her history during many blood-stained years was filled with the works of the Devil. Strange to say, when the cruelty and madness and wild absurdity of it all at last struck upon the minds of men—and it is but fair to admit that one or two good priests did much to destroy the common superstition of witchcraft—the Devil at once disappeared from the world, with the Church's unwilling consent. Disappeared, I mean, with respect to the atrocities above glanced at—the Devil can never be ejected from the Doctrine of Atonement and the Scheme of Salvation.

To conclude. It is only now beginning to dawn upon the world that there never was and never will be a Devil—excepting the perfectly human creation of ignorance, cruelty, superstition and fear. These four qualities, principally personified in the popular fiction known as the Devil, caused the destruction of thousands upon thousands of innocent lives during several hundred years. They are still active enough, but they are not suffered to kill in the old

way. To this extent, then, it may be said that the Devil is dead. But I miss my guess if he will not bear watching a while longer.

Get Dr. Paul Carus's book* and read all about the most stupendously maligned character since the dawn of Christendom—the Devil!

* Some of the facts referred to above I have drawn from other sources and earlier reading, but I regard Dr. Carus's work as the best on the subject.

I F I am sure of any one thing it is this—that every man and every woman should have the right to think for themselves. The most intolerable tyranny in the world is that of mind over mind, and were the doors and windows thrown wide open, we should see it at work in every house. Complete mental freedom will be the last emancipation.

VOLTAIRE

AS the acute reader will have suspected, I place this article next to the one preceding because of the association of Voltaire and the Devil in the minds of many worthy Christian people. And yet the wisest, kindest, wittiest man that ever lived was Voltaire! Were the world such a place as he would have made it, we should not see a prison or a scaffold, a soldier or a slave, a murderer or a drunkard or a thief, a fool or a fanatic, a priest or a prostitute.

God so loved the world, as we read, that he suffered His only begotten Son to die for it. Voltaire so loved men that he would not suffer the shedding of a single tear, or the effusion of one drop of blood, or the denying of light to a solitary mind. His passion for righteousness was as great as that of any of the Hebrew prophets, but far saner. The thought of cruelty and injustice put his mind on the rack, and from his pains were born some of the great evangels of Liberty.

As men have learned to improve Nature in many of her processes, so Voltaire sought to better the character of God. This had been framed by rude and savage men in a barbarous age; with some sub-

lime traits, it bore such brutish and terrible features as its makers would naturally conceive in an exaggeration of themselves. But the priests declared the same to be a true likeness of the Only Living God, and it was death to doubt or question what they affirmed. People might not like the picture, but a simple prudence warned them to keep their notions to themselves. They commonly did.

It was death even in Voltaire's day, but he was more than a match for the priests in cunning, and so he contrived to say his say in one fashion or another. And all the years of his long life he labored at making a better and kinder and more humane God, knowing well that if he succeeded, the same would react upon the characters of men and they in turn would become better and kinder and more humane. For since the beginning of time men have been as their gods—the creation more often of their fear and hatred than their pity and tenderness.

It cannot be denied that Voltaire succeeded by dint of prodigious labor in vastly improving the character of God; but, strange to say, in doing so he lost his own! This is one of the subtle paradoxes of history.

Does a man write himself down an enemy of true religion by refusing to join in the Ghost Dances of a spurious emotionalism and by firmly keeping his hat on amid all the grinning fakeries of the Holy Fair?

Not so! The greatest service that could possibly be rendered the cause of true religion were to free it from the things which bring it under contempt. From time to time, something is actually done in this way, but strange to say, the effort usually comes from the outside. Thus, Voltaire did more real good to religion by pitilessly cutting away the frauds and fakeries that had gathered about it, than any other man that has ever lived. Stern surgery it was, but effective, for it saved the patient. In truth, Voltaire was more salutary than the Reformation and his work will carry farther. It is, of course, the fashion to represent him as an enemy—in fact, the Arch-Enemy—of religion. This is one of those historical canards which the haters of truth have conspired to perpetuate. But the wise church well knows that Voltaire did her good, and I believe she will quietly slip him into the calendar one of these fine days, when the world isn't looking—but as Saint Arouet, of course, in order to avoid scandal!

Of Voltaire Morley writes:

“Voltaireism may stand for the Renaissance of the Eighteenth century. . . . The rays from Voltaire's burning and far-shining spirit no sooner struck upon the genius of the time, seated dark and dead like the black stone of Memnon's statue, than the clang of the breaking chord was heard through Europe, and men awoke in new day and more spacious air. . . .

“Yet Voltaire was the very eye of Eighteenth-

century illumination. It was he who conveyed to his generation, in a multitude of forms, the consciousness at once of the power and the rights of the human intellect. Another might well have said of him what he magnanimously said of his famous contemporary, Montesquieu, that humanity had lost its title-deeds, and he had recovered them. . . .

“Voltaire was a stupendous power, not only because his expression was incomparably lucid, or even because his sight was exquisitely keen and clear, but because he saw many new things after which the spirits of others were unconsciously groping and dumbly yearning. Nor was this all. . . . Voltaire was ever in the front and centre of the fight. His life was not a mere chapter in a history of literature. He never counted truth a treasure to be discreetly hidden in a napkin. He made it a perpetual war-cry and emblazoned it on a banner that was many a time rent but was never out of the field.” . . .

Notwithstanding, there be many sleek, round-headed men in collars that button behind who will ask you posingly, “Who now reads Voltaire?”—and forthwith evade you, declining, like Pilate, to stay for an answer. I speak without prejudice to the cloth, for it is my privilege to count among my friends and readers many clergymen of different denominations, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, etc., with a sizeable contingent from the Universal Church of Man. The more enlightened of these are no doubt gratefully cognizant of the fact that

Voltaire has made it possible for them to wear the livery of creed without complete mental abasement.

The vulgar calumny that Voltaire was an atheist is not, I am sure, entertained by any intelligent reader of mine, be he lay or cleric. If his acute common sense withheld him from the aberrations of pietism, the man was none the less essentially religious. As Morley says, "he had perhaps as little of the skeptic in his constitution as Bossuet or Butler, and was much less capable of becoming one than de Maistre or Paley."

Let us never forget that Voltaire's humanity was of a temper that honored God in an age when the living images of God were still defaced by fiendish tortures and cruelties executed in the name and under the sanction of religion.

Sirven—Calas—La Barre—these names which the burning genius of Voltaire traced in the sky in letters that cannot fade, forever answer for his religion as for his humanity. For it is now agreed—though it would have been damned as heresy most rank in Voltaire's day—that religion without humanity is the fellest curse that ever has been known in this world.

What other writer that has ever lived deserves such a tribute as this, from the pen of Macaulay:

"BIGOTS AND TYRANTS, WHO HAD NEVER BEEN MOVED BY THE WAILING AND CURSING OF MILLIONS, TURNED PALE AT HIS NAME."

But to return to the only point which I meant to take up in this brief note: Is Voltaire read to-day?

Mr. Morley thinks he is, and he points out that attention has been called by every writer on Voltaire to the immense number of the editions of his works, a number probably unparalleled in the case of any author within the same limits of time. He adds: "The reasons for this vitality are, that Voltaire was himself thoroughly alive when he did his work, and that the movement which that work began is still unexhausted."

Victor Hugo said that Voltaire was not a man, but an Age. He is also the best witness of his time—on many counts the most interesting figure that has ever appeared in the tide of human events. His personality is still the freshest and most vital in the world of letters—one hates to write of him because the subject always demands the superlative. Goethe called him "perhaps the greatest of all literary men." Morley pronounces him "the most puissant man of letters that has ever lived." He wrote a hundred books, but he is never tiresome. To read him is to acquire a complete liberal education and an abiding wonder at the resources of the human intellect. Literary men rejoice in his fertility, his wit, his sanity, his unrivalled richness in the blended fruit of thought and experience, his *savoir vivre*—in which perhaps he excelled all men

of the quill. His letters (to which Mr. Morley says there is no equal or second) are fascinating beyond the power of words to express—even the notes of instruction to the worthy abbé who collected his due-bills among the profligate aristocracy and looked after various business and personal commissions (Voltaire, no doubt, had his own motives in thus employing a limb of the Church) have no small share of that peculiar charm which seems inseparable from the most careless product of this man's mind.

I cannot conceive of a happier holiday than to be very slightly ill abed during a whole round month with the volumes of the Philosophical Dictionary. If you limit me to an evening or two, then I should say the Treatise on Toleration or the Notes to the History of Louis XIV.

But indeed that feast of mind is so varied and abundant that one may choose at random and not go away unfilled or disappointed.

Many worthy people still believe that the works of Voltaire were written by the devil. At this we may smile; but it is at least true as there is but one God and one Devil, so there is but one Voltaire.

A MATHEMATICAL MYSTIC

I HAVE been reading about a singular religious ecstatic, one indeed of a new order. He was an Englishman named George Boole, and the interesting account of him which I have seen was written by his widow and published lately in an English magazine. She believed in him, of course—what poor bewildered groper after the Unknown has ever failed to attach to himself at least one loving, undoubting woman? And if he be a Christ and rise again from the dead, will he not show himself first to her?—Nay, will she not believe it, even though the thing should not have come to pass—for this is the highest proof of faith? Did not Schlatter, the grotesque yet piteous and tragical Messiah, have his Magdalen? Has she not written me that he will come back to her from his grave in the Mojave Desert? Does not she await him always with such fervor of love and faith as is only granted to women? . . .

Boole was one of the most recondite of mystics: that his wife understood the terms of his Message, is a great compliment to her intellect. He was a profound mathematician, which accounts for a cer-

tain logic in his wildest aberration. He wrote a book on "The Laws of Thought," a psychologic study expressed in algebraic notation, in which he sought to show the precise nature of the relation of the human mind to the "doctrine of Cosmic unity." He also wrote a text-book on "Differential Equations," in which he pretended to give the key to all religious doctrines connected with the idea of miracle. Poor man! No doubt he had convinced himself—the first step needful to Messiahship—for his wife says that, when writing a demonstration on a blackboard, he looked not like a professor, but like an artist painting from a vision. So she calls him the Prophet of the Unseen Unity, and so rapt is she in his supernal attributes that, in her devout memorial, she offers scarce a hint as to his human personality. She does, indeed, refer to glowing letters that he wrote her at one time; but what was the burden of these letters? I looked eagerly to see something of the heart of the husband, the lover, the man. Alas! I found only this: "*I have made out what puts the whole subject of Singular Solutions into a state of Unity!*" . . .

Every hierophant, be he a fakir or a sincere enthusiast, ends by identifying himself more or less boldly with his conception of Deity: if he should fail to do this, his followers would do it for him. But usually he begins with the claim that God speaks through him; and then, as a kind of economy, he

talks as God himself. Perhaps that is why the Hebrew noun which stands for God means also "I am." In the Bible, too, we find that the remarks of Moses are often mixed with those of the Lord, and it is not easy to say which are which. I suspect there was method in the confusion, and no doubt it was useful to Moses, for it kept the children of Israel guessing.

This fact, that the hierophant ends by thinking himself like unto God, stands out in all the history of religious imposture as well as in the lives of the saints. It is the one feature common alike to the false prophets and the true prophets. It is the history in little of all the mad Messiahs of the past and of the future. It was true of the divine Francis of Assisi, who was called the Second Christ (*sic*), and it was true of that other Francis of our time, who died in the western desert and who used to receive, without embarrassment, letters addressed: *Jesus Christ, Denver, Colo.* It is the tie that unites characters so diverse as Ignatius of Loyola and John Bunyan. It was true of Savonarola and it was equally true of Martin Luther. It was true of Ludowick Muggleton, the mad tailor, and it was true of Alexander Elijah Dowie, the cunning fakir. It was true also of George Boole.

A man cannot add a cubit to his stature by thinking about it, neither can he, even in his own mind, become God in a day. The self-apotheosis of Boole

came only at the close of his life, after many years of intense meditation and spiritual travail. The fact itself of this man's delusion is in no way extraordinary, but the manner of his arriving at it is, I believe, unique in the history of religious mania. "He suddenly realized," says his wife, "that the passage in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel about the wind, really referred only to the geometric figure of the dust-whirl or circular storm, with its system of tangents and normals. Then burst upon him the discovery that the historic Jesus of Nazareth, whatever else he may have been, *must have been at least a mathematical psychologist of great brilliancy and power.*"

Ha!—you see He was none other than Boole himself, and by consequence Boole was none other than He! Excellent foolishness!—what wonder that the poor man took to his bed, shortly after reducing Jesus to a geometric formula, and "never rose again"? . . .

Boole's memory, it should be added, is piously regarded by a small sect of his followers in London. The God whom they worship is the Christ of the Spiral!

*I*N every man's life pilgrimage, however unblest, there are holy places where he is made to feel his kinship with the Divine; where the Heavens bend low over his head and angels come and minister unto him.

These are the places of sacrifice, the meeting ground of mortal and immortal, the tents of trial wherein are waged the great spiritual combats of man's life. Here are the tears and the agonies and the bloody sweat of Gethsemane. Happy the man who, looking back, can say of himself: Here, too, was the victory!

BEING HAPPY THOUGH RICH

“**I** COULD never make my clients understand,” says Heine, “that the great millionaire called me his friend because I never asked him for money. Had I done so our friendship would soon have been at an end!”

Among the privileges and immunities which pertain to the happy state of being rich, surely there is nothing more enviable than this—never to be asked for money by those who wish to retain your friendship. And yet simple-minded people, such as philosophers and social reformers, wonder that the worship of money forever increases! Of course, no poor man could afford to hold his friends on such a condition, for the poor are always asking and giving—loaning to the Lord they call it—among themselves; and this it is which sweetens their hard lot. It is noble of the rich that they do not wish to deprive the poor of their greatest pleasure, and so leave them a monopoly of this virtue.

Heine’s remark may, at the first glance, seem trite enough, but it really holds a striking truth which we should all take to our bosoms—those of us, at least, who may be favored with the friendship of the rich. It is sadly exemplified by the experience

of a friend of mine, a publisher, who had in a social way achieved the friendly regard of a very rich man. Their intimacy had not lasted long when the publisher's business began to decline, and he was soon on the point of failure. I have often figured to myself the agony of my poor friend while he sat, devoured with secret anxiety, at the rich table of Dives, who could have relieved him by a few strokes of the pen, yet whom for the soul of him he dared not ask for such relief, owing to the unwritten compact between them. I must believe that the sword of Damocles was as nothing compared to the trial which this unlucky little brother of the rich was compelled to undergo. Still, there must be immense compensation in the mere society of the rich, and my friend may have found a kind of voluptuous pleasure in his torment, for he has never confessed any regret to me. It did not, however, prevent him from making a handsome liquidation. . . .

But to go on: I believe that this whole subject of rich and poor—the subject that chiefly occupies us through life and never becomes wearisome—is generally misunderstood, and this misunderstanding makes for the greater comfort, safety and convenience of the well-to-do. We are brought up on copy-book maxims which utterly fail us at the touch of reality, and yet we persist in our delusions, as the old woman goes on hugging the lucky stone under her oxters. The rich are not the same rich of the

popular fables—the poor are not the same poor. Worst of all, the qualities of the one class are often put for those of the other, and even this confusion most of us can not see for the blinders of false and foolish education. These blinders are fastened upon us early in life, and most people wear them contentedly, nor dream that it would be possible to see better without them.

Take, for example, that hallowed phrase, the “thrifty and industrious poor.” How many generations have been fooled by that!—have put on their blinders, grown up, lived their lives and passed away without discovering the fraud. Why, I have never known any thrifty and industrious poor who could hold a candle to the thrifty and industrious rich of my acquaintance! I will grant, indeed, that industry and thrift are not unknown among the poor, but the perversion of the popular legend lies, I maintain, in the fact that we must go to the rich in order to find these admirable virtues in their full consummate flower.

Oh, the stern economy of the rich, the Spartanlike parsimony of which they alone are capable, when they do not wish to give up their money! What peasant’s hut has ever witnessed such heroic denial as many a lordly mansion shall afford? How bravely they can refrain from putting out the Almighty Dollar where their own interests or vanities are not concerned! How they applaud them-

selves for having withstood an appeal which perhaps would have troubled their conscience had not that vague attachment become identified with their bank account! Not even the sacred claim of friendship will move them; for, as we have seen, they do not give their friendship to any one who might wish to borrow their money. So a rich person must exercise the finest tact in making his choice of friends, and this is another of the unheralded virtues of the rich—inborn, I believe, like their thrift and industry.

Still they are less entitled to credit on this account than for their admirable frugality—their strength really lies in the weakness of the intending borrower. For the sacred character of money is now recognized as never before. It is the next thing to God in this world and many people pay it a vicarious worship. The rich man holds it as a divinely committed trust—not to be spent, except for himself. His poor friend, seeing the force of this solemn obligation, yet needing the money, is in the unfortunate condition of an advocate who despairs in advance of his own cause. He fails, of course, but he is not therefore incensed toward his rich friend. They part more in sorrow than in anger, each feeling that a higher Power has decided the matter.

It will thus be seen that there are more advantages in being rich to-day than ever before—that it is not only a comfortable but even a holy state.

Oh, yes! it's fine to have the money. At school, as I remember, the rich boy did not really spend, in treating, as much as some of his poorer playmates—the instinct to hang on early asserts itself and strengthens with the force of years and habit. He just kept his hands in his pockets, and the fact that he was Brown the rich grocer's son, toadied to by the teachers and all the school, made the other fellows fall over each other in their hurry to treat him. And he, the greedy cub, took it as a matter of course—delighted, too, in the mean passions which his enviable privilege excited. Unless I am wrong, I have lived to see men act in the same way, with this only difference, that the hoggishness and meanness were intensified. For such is the hypnotic power of money, or as the Good Book puts it, "To him who hath shall be given." . . .

That money, the object of all men's worship, should spend its divine self at all, is generally felt to be a phenomenon, and so it happens that a rich person may easily and at small cost acquire a reputation for liberality. It is ten to one that such a person, in proportion to his means, does not give nearly as much as his far poorer neighbors, and you do not read of their humble benefactions in the public press. But it is very curious how by a little judicious "loosening up" and a skillful use of the newspapers a rich man may come to be regarded as a munificent giver.

There is another ancient superstition with regard

to the rich, which is held with almost Biblical reverence by many people. I hate to disturb it as I believe it is not without Scriptural warrant. I mean the idea that the rich are not as happy as the virtuous poor, or that they are not happy at all, but rather profoundly wretched, on account of their superfluous wealth.

This fable is also of the copy-book kind, and as a sample of cheap morality or gammon, nothing more popular could be quoted. It is always most sedulously inculcated where the poor are very poor and very many and the rich are very rich and very few. Often, in truth, this precious wisdom is the only kind of education or philosophy that is dinned into the poor. I will not deny that it is very useful teaching, for the rich, and it helps to keep peace and order in the best of all possible worlds. Here, too, the church lends a hand, for though on principle, it can not openly favor Mammon, in actual fact and more or less covertly, it never relaxes its own hunt for the dollar. For money is the god of this world, and if the churches do not preach this in the name of Christ, yet most of them acknowledge it by their practice.

But the unhappy rich?—I have never known any (outside of the copy-books) and I doubt if there be many such. I wish to make this point plain: The rich persons whom it is my privilege to know, or to have heard of in familiar report, are constantly and

uniformly happy in the mere contemplation of their money—most happy in not spending it, in following its accumulation with a loving care, in defending it against the appeals of charity, the petitions of human distress, the cries of struggling merit, the importunity of ill-chosen, i.e., needy friends. Of course, there are the better rich—and a few of these also I know—who find their chief happiness in doing good with the means which fortune has placed at their command—may their riches be an unfailling horn of plenty! But these are the exceptions and their goodness stands only for so much light in the picture—it can not redeem a whole class from reproach. I solemnly believe that the greatest unhappiness known to the rich, outside the common ills of humanity, is when they are coerced into giving up their money against their will—which, in the usual course of things, happens very seldom. The spectacle of the rich man, sleepless and sorrowing amid all that his wealth can purchase in the way of luxury and comfort and delight, is one of the oldest and most popular fables in the world. But though it has surely prevented many a riot and killed off many a revolutionist in the germ, I am bound in the interest of truth to denounce it as a fake, a swindle and a fraud! Let no man be afraid to get a little money together, lest he lose his good spirits. If his health is just middling now, I have no fear that he will begin to peak and pine as soon as he shall have gotten something at the Safe Deposit.

THE PEOPLE

Oh, that I could speak catapultæ! Oh, that I could shoot falaricæ out of my heart!—Heine.

I HAVE at different times about made up my mind to hate Nietzsche, for his attitude toward the people, but now I am beset with the horrible fear that I shall end by agreeing with him.

The people—that blind, brutal, stupid, cowardly, inert, slavish, ungrateful, many-headed Thing, to which the noblest spirits that have ever worn flesh have vainly sacrificed themselves.

The people—that generous enthusiasm of youth and killing disillusion of age. That maker of martyrdoms without recompense. That support of every tyranny and very superstition. That cruel hater of its friends. That fond lover of its foes. That dog which ever returns to its vomit. That offal! That carrion!

Look back over the ages past and see how the best and bravest blood of earth has ever been shed for this insensate monster—and shed in vain.

Agis of Sparta, Socrates of Athens, Jesus of Jerusalem, Gracchi of Rome, Tyler of England—you

and all the nameless uncounted heroes whose symbols you are, tell us what you purchased with your blood and tears!

Oh, yes! I know—to have your story told as an idle tale to the people—the same people who took from you without gratitude, deserted you without shame, denied you without remorse, crowded to see you suffer or die with a stupid wonder, and very soon thereafter forgot all about you.

Unquestionably Nietzsche was mad on some points, but as to the people and the place they should fill in his scheme of a perfected civilization with a superman at the top, I am more and more convinced that, like Hamlet, he knew a hawk from a handsaw.

I mean, of course, in my present mood.

For what is the people doing now everywhere in the world but the things it has always done?—propping up tyrannies, killing and imprisoning its friends, offering its back to the heaviest burden of the master, or bellying in the dirt before the idols created by its own ignorance and fear; ever betraying the hopes of those who would and do die to serve it; fearing and thrusting back the liberty which it has power to take; drinking itself drunk with the blood that was poured for its redemption.

But I am not always of this mood, and, perhaps, I never fully yield to it save when the holy and unquenchable light of Revolution seems to die out in the nighted baseness of humanity. Oftener, indeed,

I am of the old glowing faith that inspired my bosom at twenty, when I longed to die for the people, that my name might be written with the martyrs of the race. At such times I am wonderfully patient with the people and wish, with Heine, that I could speak catapultæ, that I could shoot falaricæ out of my heart at their enemies.

Yes: I will confess the truth—though they should slay me like so many who have loved their cause too well, still would I cry out with my latest breath—
“Long live the people!”

CELLINI

THE life of Benvenuto Cellini is rightly one of the world's favored books. It has ever more readers in each new age. It draws upon the many who merely like a roystering tale and upon the wiser few who are concerned with human nature and the ironies of history. It has, of a truth, incomparable interest as one of the addenda or *ana* of formal history; but its chief and abiding charm lies in this—it is Messer Benvenuto Cellini himself, to the very life of life!

Milton has nobly defined a good book as "the precious life blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." One would scruple to apply this description to Cellini's book, marvellous as it is in many ways. But that it is destined to such immortality as books may know, seems evident from its vigor and freshness, after a race of three hundred years. Few, indeed, are the English books which have run so long and find themselves in as good condition.

The fact signifies that there is nothing like life to beget life—a truth that critics sometimes ignore. Cellini was disreputable in several capital respects

of character, contemptible in not a few, and strictly admirable in none. But he was alive, all alive, thrilling and tingling with conscious vitality, with such heat of the blood as sometimes prompted him to homicide and, less abnormally, to create works of art.

That devil which is Italy was never more accurately incarnated than in our Benvenuto. His proneness to "see red" upon the least occasion of quarrel; his terrible tongue that he used even more readily than his dagger; his quick and facile remorse, also affording him satisfaction like his fits of fury; his piety that was not in the least put to blush by his crimes; his persuasion that God directly upheld and protected him; his vanity both as man and artist, which is like a sore that he is constantly dressing and tending and bespeaking our notice of; his blended cruelty and kindness to those near him, men, women and children alike; his love of display and prodigality alongside his shrewd talent for business and the grasping disposition he too often betrays, disguise it as he may; his fanfaronade so thinly warranted and his vulgar sensualism without the least grace of sentiment—all these qualities and much beside stamp him as a genuine product of his "good Tuscan land."

To exhibit these various qualities just as they were in nature, with incidents calculated to relieve and set them off in their proper contrast and at their full

value, was nothing less than a miracle of art. In this case, as so often, the builder builded better than he knew. Cellini never suspected the success his book was destined to have, else even he might have shrunk from the daring with which he set forth his titles both to glory and shame.

I want to show the vitality of Cellini's style—a vitality that has never been surpassed. Here is a paragraph describing one of his earliest scimmages (he was only about seventeen) that sets the fiery Florentine before us in a triumph of exact realism.

“At this I was furious, and in my rage I swelled like an asp, and resolved on a desperate thing. . . . Then I picked up a stiletto and rushed to my enemies' house, which was above their shop. I found them at table; and young Gherardo, who had been the beginning of the quarrel, threw himself upon me at my entrance. Thereupon I stabbed him in the breast, right through his doublet and vest to his shirt, but did not touch his flesh, nor do him any injury whatsoever. Only I thought I had wounded him sorely; and, as he fell from sheer terror to the ground, I shouted, ‘O, traitors, this is the day appointed unto me to murder you all!’ The father, mother and sisters, thinking it was the Day of Judgment, threw themselves at once on their knees, calling for mercy with all their lungs. Seeing they made no resistance, and looking at the man stretched out on the floor like a corpse, I felt it would be too vile a thing to lay hands on them. But, still furious, I rushed to the stairs and, having

reached the street, I found all the rest of the household assembled there, more than a dozen in all. One had an iron shovel, another carried a big iron pipe, others hammers, anvils and sticks. But as God in His mercy sometimes intervenes (*sic*) it so pleased Him that they did not do me, nor did I do them, the least harm in the world."

His quarrel with Luigi Pulci ("son of the Pulci beheaded for incest with his daughter") is of a like temper, Benvenuto being now in his early twenties. The trouble arose over "the lady Pantasilea who bore me that false and burdensome love"; but yet Benvenuto disliked that Luigi should partake of her favors. This he told him in a manner that makes one think of the fire and cunning of Iago—and in truth Cellini often reminds one of that honest person, showing how well Shakespeare knew his Italian. Here was the way of it.

"As soon as the brazen-faced whore (just a page before she had been 'the lady Pantasilea'!) set eyes on the fine youth, she had her designs on him. Seeing this, as soon as our supper was over, I called Luigi aside and told him that for the sake of the kindness he owed I had done him, he must never seek the company of that prostitute. His reply was, 'Alas, my friend Benvenuto, do you take me, then, for a madman?' . . . 'Not for a madman but for a young man,' I answered; 'and I swear to you I have no thought of her at all, but I should be very sorry if through her you broke your neck.' Whereupon he swore and called to God to witness that

if ever he spoke to her, he might break his neck upon the spot."

What Benvenuto feared came about very soon and is told as follows:

"Now it happened that one Sunday evening we were invited to supper with Michael Angelo, the Sienese sculptor; and it was summer time. . . . But just in the middle of supper she (Pantasilea) got up, saying she wished to retire, for she was in pain, but that she would soon return. In the meanwhile we went on pleasantly talking and supping, and she stopped away a long time. Now it happened that, being on the alert, I heard something like muffled laughter in the street. I had the knife in my hand which I had been using at table. The window was so near that by stretching a little I could see Luigi Pulci outside with Pantasilea, I heard Luigi saying, 'Oh, if that devil of a Benvenuto could only see, it would be the worse for us.' And she answered, 'No fear. Listen to the noise they are making.' . . . At this point I threw myself down from the window and seized Luigi by the cloak. With the knife in my hand I had certainly slain him had he not spurred the white horse he was riding and left his cloak in my hands, to escape with his life. Pantasilea ran for refuge to a neighboring church."

That same night the thoughtful Benvenuto waylaid and wounded them both with a sword. Luigi having been killed by a fall from his horse not long afterward, Cellini recalls the vow he had sworn to

refrain from Pantasilea, and piously concludes: "Thus it is seen that God keeps count of the good and the bad and to each man gives his deserts."

Cecchino, a younger brother of our Benvenuto, had been wounded to death by a guardsman after he had himself killed one of the latter's comrades. The guardsman had plainly acted in self-defence, and the quarrel was one which the fiery Cecchino had brought on himself. Nevertheless, the filial Benvenuto pined to avenge his brother and became so gloomy from brooding over this thought of blood that Pope Clement (for whom he was doing some artistic work at the time and who perhaps feared that it might suffer) rebuked him, saying: "Oh, Benvenuto, I did not know you were demented. Haven't you learnt before now that for death there is no remedy? You are doing your best to follow your brother."

How Cellini cured himself of this indisposition and "got his man" (as we are now saying) is thus told—and I wonder if there is anything more dramatically effective in the pages of Dumas. "Better to me than courting a sweetheart," he says with savage joy, "was watching that arquebusier who had killed my brother." But one evening he resolved once and for all to be done with the trouble. I here gladly give him the word.

"The man lived near a place called Torre Sanguigna, next door to a house where lodged one of

the most famous courtesans of Rome, called Signora Antea. The clock had just struck twenty-four. The arquebusier stood in the doorway after supper, sword in hand. I crept up stealthily and with a Pistojan dagger dealt him a back stroke, thinking to cut his head right off. But he wheeled round suddenly and the blow fell on the top of his right shoulder, cleaving the bone. Up he sprang and, dazed by the sore pain, he began to run. I followed after and came up with him in a step or two. Then, raising my dagger above his bent head, I struck him on the nape of the neck and the weapon went in so deep that I could not for all my efforts draw it out."

After this pleasant little affair Benvenuto took refuge in the palace of Duke Alessandro de' Medici (who would naturally protect so worthy a man and a Florentine to boot), and was told to go on with the Pope's work, since he was so anxious to have it; but that for eight days he had better keep within doors. His Holiness Clement the Seventh (who was also a Medici, by the left hand, and therefore a Florentine) "glowered" when Benvenuto again presented himself. "But when he examined my work, his face softened; he heaped praises on me and said I had done a very great deal in very little time. Then looking me straight in the face, he added: 'Now that you have recovered, Benvenuto, give heed to your way of life.' And I, catching his meaning, said I would do so."

A later and more daring piece of homicide (which was to have more serious consequences for our spirited friend), was the killing of Messer Pompeo, a Milanese and a sort of trade rival of Cellini. Believing his own life to be threatened, the latter with admirable forehandedness attacked Pompeo in the midst of a band of friends. "But with a little keen-edged dagger" (he was perhaps laudably partial to the national weapon)—"I forced their ranks and had my hands upon his breast so quickly and with such coolness that not one of them could hinder me. I was aiming at his face, but in his terror he turned his head, so that I plunged the poniard in just below the ear. It only needed two strokes, for at the second he fell dead, which had not been at all my intention. But as the saying is, 'There's no bargaining about blows.'"

Now although the great Cardinals Cornaro and de' Medici vied warmly in protecting him and the Pope then reigning, Paul the Third, observed (according to Benvenuto) that men like him, unique in their profession, were above the law, yet this matter laid the train of a long series of misfortunes for our pleasant hero. This same Pope Paul became his implacable enemy, egged on, Cellini avers, by his (the Pope's) bastard son, Signor Pier Luigi Farnese. In those days it seems the Popes had their misfortunes as well as other people, and among these were not infrequently offspring by the left

hand. This bastard Luigi was a bad enough egg, as his life and violent death proved, but it is not necessary to believe all that the excellent "Benvenuto my friend" alleges to his prejudice. Nor do I purpose to follow the story further, seeing that I would but spoil it for the presumably whetted reader.

I cannot, however, bring this article to a close without citing a few terse examples of the speech of Cellini—as vital and colored and pregnant with purpose, I venture to hold, as the best lines in Shakespeare.

"He had given the job (to murder Cellini) into the hand of one of his men, a little devil of a Corsican soldier, who said he would do the thing as easily as he would suck a new-laid egg." . . .

"Now let the world and every living man therein bear witness how evil stars and adverse fortunes work against us mortals!" (Is this not the very accent of Iago's "Take note, take note, oh world"?)

He believed that he saw a vision of the Godhead while in prison by the Pope's orders—O Saint Benvenuto!—and thus he describes a species of visible halo that remained to him for long afterward:

"From the time when I saw the great vision until now, there has remained a splendor—oh wondrous thing!—about my head; this plain to all to whom I have thought well to point it out—but these are very few. It is visible just above my shadow in

the morning at sunrise, and for two hours after, and still clearer when there is dew upon the grass. In the evening, too, at sunset, it can be seen." . . .

Saint Benvenuto thus tells of an unworthy revenge he took upon a compatriot by forcing him to marry a French girl who had been model and mistress to him (Cellini) during his sojourn in France:

"I own I made a mistake in revenging myself so violently upon Pagolo Micceri. For it was not enough for me that I made him take to wife this wicked hussy. Over and above that, I made her pose to me as model, naked, for thirty soldi a day. I paid her in advance and fed her well; but I used her for my pleasure out of revenge, and then cast this insult in her husband's teeth and her own."

Of another model, "a poor young girl about fifteen," he says: "She was lovely in shape and something of a brunette; and as she was a wild little thing, with hardly a word to say for herself, swift in her movements and sullen-eyed, I called her Scorzone; but her own name was Jeanne. . . . *The young thing was pure and virginal and I got her with child.*"

All this time he was wearing his halo—he tells us indeed that it could be seen to better advantage in France. Chaste and admirable Benvenuto!

A coveted block of marble having been given to Bandinello, a bad sculptor, through the influence of the Duchess, wife to de' Medici, Duke of Florence,

Cellini says: "I felt no jealousy of the Cavaliere Bandinello, but *pity seized me for that unlucky block of marble!*"

He describes Messer Lattanzio Gorini (paymaster to Duke Cosimo and therefore Benvenuto's natural enemy) as "a dried up scarecrow of a man, with spidery hands, and a tiny voice that hummed like a gnat, who crept about like a snail."

To the same Duke's major-domo he declared with habitual temper but rare dignity, that his (Benvenuto's) peers were worthy to speak with Popes and Emperors and great Kings; and that there were perhaps *not two of us in the world*, while a dozen of his sort could be met going out or in at any door.

The Duke having praised Cellini in the hearing of this major-domo, "he was always on the lookout how he could lay a trap to break my neck."

When, against the expectation of Duke Cosimo and the hope of Cellini's enemies, he succeeded in casting the Perseus, his most celebrated work, pitching in all the pewter he could find when the bronze had given out, we get this rare glimpse of him: "Then they (his helpers) saw my bronze was really melted and filling up my mould, and they gave me the readiest and most cheerful help and obedience. Now I was here, now I was there, giving orders, or putting my own hand to the work, while I cried, 'Oh God, who in Thy limitless strength didst rise from the dead, and glorious didst ascend to Heaven'

. . . In an instant my mould was filled up; and I knelt down and thanked God with all my heart."

Cosimo having demurred at paying ten thousand ducats for this statue, saying he could have cities and palaces built with ten thousands of ducats, Cellini rejoined that he could find any number of men capable of building cities and palaces, but maybe not one man in all the world who could make another Perseus.

We cannot leave the excellent Benvenuto Cellini at a more fitting or happier point than this, where he has completed his imperishable masterpiece and is at reasonable peace with all the world. He had indeed, just previous to the casting of the Perseus, met with his enemy and rival Bandinello in a desolate region near Florence, and first thought to "yerk him here under the ribs," like Iago on a somewhat like occasion. Bandinello, in truth, expected no less and became pale as death, shaking from head to foot. His fear was vain: the admirable Benvenuto's spirit had declined, and he contented himself with thanking God who by His own strength had kept him from such a deed of violence!

It will be no violence to the discreet reader to urge that he make the better and more deliberate acquaintance of Messer Benvenuto Cellini.

THE SABINE FARM

Non omnis moriar.

[Rome, Sept. 24th, 1910.—Prof. Pasqui has completed his explorations of the supposed site of Horace's Sabine farm. He discovered traces of mosaics and the remains of walls. The area of the land is two acres. It has been practically identified as the site of the poet's farm.—Cable despatch.]

SO, Horace, they have found the spot,
 Your *hoc erat in votis*,
 Where, by the Muses unforgot,
 You shunned proud Roma's notice;
 Content to work your vein benign,
 To have enough and spare it,
 A crust of bread, a cup of wine,
 And Cynara to share it.

Here, with your vines and bleating flock
 By friendly Faunus tended,
 Your Sabine aging in the crock,
 Your days from ill defended,—
 What happy care to weave the line
 That ever fresh delights us,
 Long after Rome has ceased to shine
 And History affrights us!

Here oft you sought with genial care
To mix your toil with pleasure,
And bade the faithful or the fair
To tread life's gayer measure.
O nights for friendship or for song
Or graceful follies chosen!—
With Varus none could be too long,
With Barine none frozen!

Here Venus came, her black-eyed boy,
And Mercury, oft bidden,
With smiling Youth and careless Joy,
To make a feast unhidden.
And graver gods looked jocund on,
Nor recked lest mortals see 'em—
Alack for those fair revels gone,
Noctes coenaque deum!

So when the blushing Autumn fell
And all the hills were golden,
And Bacchus walked the happy dell,
By your clear eyes beholden,—
Euvoe!—what joy your bosom smote
To mark the smiling plenty!—
'Twas then you sent that little note
And Tyndar came not *lente*.

Thrice happy bard! who chose of lite
And love the portion better,

Who shunned the frowning rock of strife,
Nor long wore passion's fetter.
Though Chloe might assume the prude,
And Lydia might tease you,
Phyllis was neither coy nor rude,
And Glycera could please you.

* * * * *

Horace! forgive this idle strain
From one who long hath owned thee
Chief minstrel of the lyric vein,
And his best hours hath loaned thee.
What armor for the breast like thine,
When cares crowd fast and faster!
What roses in thy festive line
When Joy again is master!

And this I know—the far world o'er
One pulse of love is fleeting,
And men look to Italia's shore,
The pleasant tale repeating:—
His little house!—his Sabine farm!—
The hillside and the river!—
There beat his kindly heart and warm:
There died—to live forever!

AT POE'S COTTAGE

MY mind was possessed with the mournful image of the Poet, the romance and tragedy of his life. This was the very air he breathed. Here were the scenes amid which he passed his last years with her, the Child-Wife, whose memory still mingles with his like a consecration. All that sad story of the rare genius fettered by poverty which eats out the soul—chained, too, in the deadlier bonds of evil habit—came upon me with the poignant force that the association of locality alone can give.

It had rained intermittently all week, ending at last in a furious night of storm—such a night, I could not but think, in which his unquiet spirit would have rejoiced to walk abroad. The morning rose, calm, refreshed and beautiful, with the added peace of the Sabbath. I was early on the Kingsbridge road, and—without ever having seen the place, or even a picture of it, without any direction, verbal or otherwise—something led me straight to the humble little cottage which had been the home of Poe.

Homely and poor indeed it is; but, thrilled as I was by the first glimpse of it, penetrated by a sudden

realized sense of that immortal failure, the low small house speaking silently of the

*“Master
Whom unmerciful disaster followed fast and fol-
lowed faster,”*

took in my eyes the dignity and pathos of a shrine. How much more potent, after all, is a living memory than a mere literary reminiscence! Elsewhere one might think of Poe in the conventional manner: of his undoubted genius, yet unequal literary product; of his fickleness, his egotism, his constant recourse to friends in time of need and repudiation of them with the first ray of returning prosperity; of the legacy of many devils he had inherited, bringing to naught all his nobler resolves and ambitions; lastly, of that fatal curse of drink and drugs which dogged him from defeat to defeat until it wrought out his untimely death. All of which is true as truth—for have not many sage moralists told us so, and doth it not delight the whole Tribe of Dulness to be able to point the finger of scorn at the faults and the failures of Genius? . . .

But look you, friend, here is not a place for harsh judgments, however condign they may be, upon the Man and Brother whom this humble roof once sheltered. Through this narrow gateway on which I lean, how often he passed, bearing his earth-burden of toil and sorrow and deferred hope that

maketh the heart sick! His feet have worn these stones with their daily imprint. This small world was his to whom imagination opened realms without bound. This poor cot afforded lodgment to a head that could have beggared the dreams of *Prospero*. Here he was often happy with the wife of his youth, who came to him a child, and still young and lovely, was called away. Through this very gateway—not changed at all—they carried her wasted form. One feels the hush upon the curious, pitying throng of bystanders, after a lapse of fifty years. She died of want, it is said—I am glad to believe that heart-hunger had nothing to do with it. . . .

The little house stands with its shoulder to the street and is neighbored by some rather imposing villa residences. It has one fairly large window looking on a small grass-plot in front, and two tiny windows which light the low sleeping-room upstairs—for there is an “upstairs,” although the cottage is practically of only one story. Over the large window is an effigy of a raven, which looks as if it might have been dashed off by a handy boy. There is, besides, an inscription stating that the house was occupied by Edgar Allan Poe from 1845 to 1849; also, that it is now the property of E. J. Chauvet, D. D. S., Fordham, N. Y. The said Chauvet, D. D. S., lives next door in one of the imposing residences I have mentioned. This house is five times

larger and cost many times more money than Poe's; but people in the neighborhood say he wants a good deal more money than *that* before he will yield to the City of New York his title in the Poe cottage.

After a brief conversation with the doctor, I decided he was not the man to furnish off-hand a luminous estimate of the Poet's genius, or even to supply a bibliography of the Poet's works. One could not, however, praise too highly his zealous desire that the city should take the cottage off his hands—at his own price—and I readily fell in with his view touching the too common neglect of genius, without being entirely blind to his interested application of it. It is a world of irony at best—is it not, my masters?—and in such a world Chauvet, D. D. S., with his fine big house and his patronage of the dead Poet, with *his* poor little house, holds a place in strict accord with the eternal unities. The humor of this observation would probably be lost upon the doctor—I fear it impressed me so strongly as to make me lose a great part of his valuable conversation.

Before the cottage is a blasted cherry tree, half of which has been cut down, leaving a blackened trunk upon which the penknives of relic-hunters have wrought additional havoc. It stands not an unworthy symbol of the man whose eyes often rested on it in its greenness and vigor. Across the street a pleasant park, named after the Poet, has been

set out. Thither it is proposed to move the historic cottage when a settlement shall have been made with the present owner. Knowing the mind of Chauvet, D. D. S., I should recommend the committee having the negotiation in charge, to come to terms with that gentleman as soon as practicable. They will not better the bargain by waiting.

The cottage is now tenanted by an Irish lady named Kenealy, who has no part or lot in its traditions, and who is obviously in doubt whether the public interest in her domicile is to be ascribed to a proper motive. In the course of a very brief conversation, she contrived to make me understand that whatever "goings on" might have taken place in the house when "other people" lived there, nothing could be urged in reproach of *her* tenancy! As I stood musing at the gate, a good-natured countryman of Mrs. Kenealy's joined me, and at once volunteered some surprising information touching the house and its former celebrated tenant. Lowering his voice cautiously as a party of ladies drew near, "Do ye know, sir," he said, "that the ould boss wrote 'The Raven' sitting at the little windy there furninst ye—one night afther a dhrunk!" And he added, with true Milesian humor, "Would ye wondher at it?" . . .

Going away slowly and turning more than once to look again—I suspect that Chauvet, D.D.S., thought I was trying to get a better view of *his*

house—my mind dwelt upon the strange fortune of Poe's literary fame. The chequered history of letters affords no more striking contrast than the present literary estate of this writer, as compared with the sordid failure of his life. To the despised literary hack, the job-man of newspapers and magazines, who was never able to command a decent subsistence by his pen, has fallen an aftermath of reputation such as few of his contemporaries enjoy. His works, translated into a more sympathetic language by a Frenchman of genius whose mind seems to have been a replica of his own, have yielded him a proud and enviable fame among the most appreciative and artistic people in the world. His name abroad is illustrious and honored, while many of his contemporaries who outshone him at home have gained no foreign suffrage.

Nor is this all. Even at home, in the land where an evil destiny cast him in an epoch of brutal materialism, his fame is steadily rising. Whatever the awards of a factitious "Hall of Immortals," in the true pantheon of American letters no name is writ higher than his. Fortunes have been made by the publication of his books, edited with anxious scholarship, issued in sumptuous form—books which never yielded their author a living and might not avail to keep hunger and misery from the Beloved of his heart. The humble home in which he dwelt has become a veritable shrine that will ere long be

cared for by the State. Each succeeding year new biographies of him are put forth, new and ever-heightened estimates of his genius are made. The artist has survived the man; the immortal success the temporary failure. And the world is making for Edgar Allan Poe—as for so many other children of light whose fate it was to walk in darkness—its immemorial atonement.

REMEMBER that the true struggle of life is not to achieve what the world calls success, but to hold that Essential Self inviolate which was given you to mark your identity from all other souls. Against this precious possession—this Veriest You—all winds blow, all storms rage, all malign powers contend. As you hold to this or suffer it to be marred or taken from you, so shall be your victory or defeat.

LITERARY AMENITES

IT has been said (by some Italian, I think) that hate is a more exquisite passion than love. The stories of Ugolino and Paolo are the most vivid things we take out of Dante—we never forget the pleasant fable of the man eating his enemy's head in the infernal ice—and they are clearly those which the gloomy poet himself most enjoyed. Psychologists are agreed that the extremes of love and hate touch, and this is borne out by the experience of many in the matrimonial state and of some persons famous for gallantry. Certain keen judges of human nature like Swift and La Rochefoucault go so far as to deny that a man may love another as himself (love between men is actually very rare, when you think of it), and they sneer at the notion of universal benevolence. And surely we hear more than we see of the latter quality.

It seems to be agreed that the very finest, and, so to speak, most satisfactory hatreds are those which spring from sexual jealousy and literary envy. Next to these, and a very strong second, is the interesting species of hate that the French call *la rancune ecclésiastique* or priestly rancor, which gives so piquant a

salt to many pages of history. My present concern is with the antipathies of writing people—rivals and enemies of the quill.

Cut the hatreds out of literature and the residuum would be as vapid as the "Ladies' Home Journal" or a paper by Dr. Samuel Smiles. The fact is—though Prof. Barrett Wendell does not so teach it from his chair at Harvard—that literary men have in all ages cherished their enmities and antipathies as incentives to the making of copy. Not to go back of the Eighteenth Century, they fed Voltaire's long flickering candle. Pope's life was one long malignity—the force of malice could not further go than in the terrible lampoon on Hervey.

Sporus, that thin white curd of ass's milk.

Addison who showed his step-son "how a Christian could die," also proved during his life how a mild-mannered man could hate, in the case of Pope, who civilly returned the sentiment (see "Atticus," etc.). "As strong a beak, as fierce a talon as ever struck, belonged to Swift"—and the writer might have added, as rare a genius for hatred as ever was given to man. But much as he hated individuals, Swift seems to have hated humanity more, and died at last, old and mad, of a species of lycanthropy.

Old Sam Johnson loved an honest hater and said so, dealing about lustily with that stout cudgel of his. The letter to Chesterfield breathing a just hatred for the tardy and presumptuous Patron, is per-

haps the one piece of Johnson's writing that the world will not willingly let die.

The foppish malevolence of Walpole grins through all his works.

Byron was a splendid hater, and he himself inspired a Satanical aversion in the bosom of the gentle Southey, author of "Thalaba" and other forgotten epics. In the "Vision of Judgment," Byron paid his compliments to the said Southey, but the noble lord's masterpiece *en ce genre* is not to be found in his Collected Works. I allude to his attack on the poet Samuel Rogers, which has been pronounced the greatest of modern satirical portraits in verse, and which surely is not to be surpassed for cool malignity and happy imagery in the whole compass of English literature. Such praise may awaken a desire in my readers to see something of this extraordinary piece of versified hatred, the rather that it is not generally known. I quote a few lines.

"Nose and chin would shame a knocker,
Wrinkles that would baffle Cocker,
Mouth which marks the envious scorner,
With a scorpion in each corner;
Turning its quick tail to sting you,
In the place that most may wring you;
Eyes of lead-like hue and gummy,
Carcass picked out from some mummy;
Bowels, (but they were forgotten,
Save the liver, and that's rotten);

Skin all sallow, flesh all sodden,
Form the Devil would fright God in!

* * * * *

Vampire, ghost or ghoul, what is it?
I would walk ten miles to miss it.

* * * * *

He's the cancer of his species,
And will eat himself to pieces.
Plague personified and famine,
Devil, whose sole delight is damning!

* * * * *

This charming poem was written on the occasion of Roger's visiting Byron in Italy; it was not published during the author's lifetime, but found its way into print before the subject of its eulogy had departed this vale of sorrows. "I would give a trifle," said the terrible Maginn, "to have seen Sam's face the morning that satire was published."—Such were the amenities of literature less than a hundred years ago.

There was, by the way, something wounding even in Byron's friendship. He loved his brother poet Moore and yet he stung him with an immortal epigram—"Tommy dearly loves a lord."

To resume: The life of Heinrich Heine, another superb hater, was nothing but war, and war without quarter, to the end. The victims of his hatred, of his branding scorn, and torturing sarcasm, might

be cited by the score. It is enough to notice what he did to poor Ludwig Börne, after the latter's death.

Lover of Heine as I am, I grant this passage is the hardest to excuse in all his literary warfare. To say no word whilst the enemy could defend himself—to hang a dead man in chains—to pour forth the vials of hatred, and, worse yet, affected pity on a grave—we should turn away in horror from Heine, were this all that we knew of him. Such is, however, the strange privilege of genius that we admire even while we condemn this book on Börne. For it possesses in full measure the qualities which make Heine at his best the most charming, the most provoking and the most interesting of writers—at least, since Voltaire. Poor Börne!—honest man and true patriot, his name is forever embalmed in the bitterly ironic tribute of the gifted foe whom he long hailed as a brother in the holy cause of liberty. But it is some consolation that all Heine's wit and cleverness can not make it read otherwise than as a Libel and a Treason!

For sheer malice and cruelty this book out-Heines Heine. These references, for example, to the woman whom Börne loved and revered to his last hour:

“As soon as Börne had shown me Madame Wohl of the Wollgraben, he wished me to see the other curiosities of Frankfort.” . . .

“A thin person whose yellowish-white, pock-marked face resembled an old pancake.” . . .

“Concerning Börne’s connection with the lady in question, it was a matter of indifference to me whether that connection was warm or cold, moist or dry.” . . .

“It was difficult to say what was her proper title as regards her connection with Börne—whether she was his mistress or only his wife.” . . .

Madame Wohl’s marriage to another at length gave the lie to these whispered scandals. She and her husband came to Paris and took up their residence with Börne. Concerning which husband Heine makes this delicate innuendo: “He reminded one of that species of ass mentioned in the Indian tales of Ktesias. In India there are donkeys with horns, and while all other donkeys have no horns at all, these donkeys with horns have such a superfluity that it gives quite a bitter taste to their flesh.”

Heine’s humor is commonly thought to set him apart from the Germans, but he was a German and nothing more when he wrote this—

“I was never Börne’s friend, and I was also never his enemy.”

This he says in a book full of deadly scorn and calculated disparagement!

“While Börne lived,” he continued, “I never wrote a line against him”—how magnanimous to wait for his death! “I never gave him a thought,

I completely ignored him, and *that galled him beyond endurance.*"

No calculation of hatred in all this, of course; and so he could justify himself for not attending the funeral and fling this taunt at those who blamed him:

"The fools! they do not reflect that there is no pleasanter duty than to follow your enemy to the grave."

This book on Ludwig Börne is one that might be spared were it not so subtly biographical and spiritually photographic of Heinrich Heine.

So runs this chronicle of literary grudges. The relations of Dickens and Thackeray were a kind of armed truce—each hated but feared the other. Carlyle hated the whole world—except when he needed the money; then he equivocated in the Scotch manner. He also hated his biographer Froude, who returned the compliment with a vengeance by lifting the great man's breech-clout, thereby adding to the stern delights of literature. Even the placid Emerson had a feeling closely akin to hatred for the unfortunate Poe (whom he called the "Jingle Man"), and the latter was so busy making enemies (and hating them) that it is a marvel how he ever found time to write anything. In short, the history of literature, read candidly, is very much more of an Anvil Chorus than a Grand Sweet Song of Harmony. . . .

To these notes I might add what the amiable Daudet has written at the end of his "Thirty Years

of Paris," regarding his acquaintance with Tourgueneff. Before meeting the great Russian novelist the Frenchman had read him deeply, so that, as he tells us, Tourgueneff had reigned for a long time on an ivory throne among the ranks of his Deities. They became friends and met often at a little *cénacle* including Flaubert, Zola and Edmond de Goncourt. Not less frequently the Russian giant—as he was both in mind and bodily stature—sought Daudet at his home, where he was made much of by the gracious Mrs. Daudet and the children. Daudet himself, by universal testimony, was one of the kindest and frankest hearted of men and authors. Let us here give him the word:

“While I am correcting the proof of this article (dealing with Tourgueneff, his last days, etc.), a book of ‘Souvenirs’ is brought to me in which Tourgueneff, from the other side of the grave, criticizes me without mercy. As an author, I am beneath all criticism; as a man I am the lowest of my kind! My friends were well aware of it and told fine stories about me! What friends did Tourgueneff allude to, and could they remain my friends if they held such an opinion of me? And himself, that excellent Slav, who obliged him to assume so cordial a manner with me? I can see him at my home, at my table, gentle, affectionate, kissing my children. I have in my possession many exquisite, warm-hearted letters from him. And this was what lay beneath that kindly smile. Good Heavens! how

strange life is, and how true that charming word of the Greek language, Eironeia!" . . .

Irony is in truth the fittest word to apply to those literary enmities that so deeply corrode the soul, and that often are masked by a seeming friendship until death and a manuscript bring the ugly secret to light. But it cannot be disputed that the hatreds of certain authors add much interest to their works. A position I took in beginning this essay.

CONSULE PLANCO

TIME was when I could nurse a hate
 As keen as ever stalked a foe,
 And bide the moment soon or late
 When he the hungry steel should know.
 Yea, I have felt the pleasing glow
 That waits a fatted grudge upon
 And doth a heavenly peace bestow—
 But that was ten years past and gone.

Time was when I a blow could strike
 Hard and straight as a sledger's mall,
 And some that met me then belike
 Chose not with ease their place to fall,
 Nor spared for quarter soon to call
 When hope of fighting there was none,—
 The same tale had they each and all—
 But that was ten years past and gone.

And time there was when I did love
 Mine enemy e'en as my friend,
 Nay, held him at some price above,
 For that with him I must contend

*And all my trained sinews bend
While Hate's fierce pulses urged us on
Our last resource of strength to spend—
But that was ten years past and gone.*

*In love as hate 'twas much the same,
A foeman fierce, a wooer bold;
For me the rigor of the game,
The passion that nor let nor hold
Would bide until the tale was told
And ended, oft, 'twixt dark and dawn,
When my desire fell dead and cold—
But that was ten years past and gone.*

*Certes, I dipped a careless hand
In peace, that fair but fulsome dish,
Whereat sits Age with drooling-band
And ever hath his darling wish.
Porridge for babes and dotards—pish!
It served me not for blood and brawn,
When I in Youth's fine pool did fish—
But that was ten years past and gone.*

L' Envoi

*Prince, mark you how the years decline
With Youth and Fame alike that shone:
The glory and the punch were mine—
But that was ten years past and gone.*

HENRIETTE RENAN

I HAVE been reading, not for the first time, the story of her love, her sacrifice and devotion, in the memoir written by her brother Ernest Renan. I doubt if there be a finer page, one in which the heart speaks with a truer accent, in the lists of biography.

Great as her brother was, interest in this woman so modest and self-effacing, whose whole life was a tragedy of duty, will deepen as time goes on. But for her influence it is conceivable that the world would not have gained the ablest liberal scholar of modern times, and the Church would not have had to reckon with its most deadly yet suavest antagonist. She was his intellectual mate—he admitted it, and he compares his distress of mind at the loss of her co-operation to the “anguish of a patient who has suffered amputation and who has the limb he was deprived of constantly within his sight.” Her letters to him, written during the period of his spiritual struggle at Issy and St. Sulpice, are scarcely less interesting than his own, and they will perhaps be read in some remote time when the “Life of Jesus” shall be neglected, if not forgotten (he him-

self has said that after the lapse of a thousand years only two books, the Bible and Homer, will be reprinted).

Yes, even on intellectual grounds, Henriette well deserves that her name should live with that of the brother to whom she gave all the treasures of her loving soul, whose character she helped to form, and whose career she made possible. But it is at the purely human side of the relation which united Henriette and Ernest Renan that I should wish to glance in this little paper. The world knows enough of his intellectual glory; it knows, too, that she suffered herself to be absorbed in him and his work, that her mind was hardly inferior to his, nay, that his spirit was not seldom content to rest on lower levels than those to which she easily ascended. Let us, then, look at them merely as brother and sister—it is so, we may be sure, that she would prefer to be regarded.

Renan was in the habit of attributing the Gascon in his nature to his mother, who, as he tells us, carried a gay, witty and lively disposition even into her vigorous old age. The charming traditions and anecdotes of Tréguier in the forepart of the "Recollections of My Youth," were chiefly drawn from the well-stocked memory of his mother. One of the happiest impressions I have myself derived from that delightful book, is the picture of Renan listening to

his mother's chat at evening in her room at his Paris home. On these occasions, he tells us, a light was never brought in, the rays of a friendly street lamp serving to make a kind of twilight in the room, highly favorable to the legends of the old lady, which were always concerned with *le vieux temps* in Brittany. I am not sure that the great man has given us anything more memorable than this as literature, or more worthy of that fine sympathy which was the distinctive note of his character.

But Henriette had inherited her father's temperament, which was of the melancholy Breton cast—the son seems not to preclude the painful supposition that the poor man sought his own death, as the easiest escape from his troubles. "Did he forget himself," he asks, "in one of those long dreams of the Infinite, which in that Breton race often verge upon the eternal slumber? Did he feel that he had earned repose? . . . We know not."

Henriette's melancholy deepened with her years. In later life her brother says she had a sort of worship of sorrow and almost welcomed every opportunity of shedding tears. Herein she differed greatly from the author of the "Life of Jesus," whose uniform good spirits and mildly satiric gaiety gave nearly as much scandal as his writings to the strictly orthodox.

In her youth Henriette was much admired for her modest beauty—her brother speaks of the peculiar

softness of her eyes and the delicate shapeliness of her hands. Even before leaving Tréguier, all undowered as she was, she might have married well once or twice but for the idea of duty which bound her to her family. The religious atmosphere of Tréguier, an ancient episcopal city, confirmed her natural sadness and strongly inclined her toward a life of retirement. At twelve years, her brother says, she was grave in thought and appearance, borne down with anxiety, haunted by melancholy presentiments. And here is one of the tenderest pages of the memoir, written when the sense of her loss was still poignantly fresh with Renan: "I came into the world in February, 1823. The advent of a little brother was a great comfort to my sister. She attached herself to me with all the ardor of a shy and tender nature, endued with an immense longing to love something. I remember yet the petty tyrannies I practised on her and against which she never revolted. When she was going out in full dress to attend gatherings of girls of her own age, I would cling to her gown and beseech her to remain. Then she would turn back, take off her holiday attire and stay with me. One day, in jest, she threatened she would die if I were not a good child, and pretended to be dead, in fact, sitting in an arm-chair. The horror caused me by the feigned immobility of my dear sister is perhaps the strongest impression ever made upon me, whom fate did not per-

mit to witness her last sigh. Beside myself, I flew at her and bit her terribly on the arm. I can hear the shriek she gave even now. To all the reproaches showered on me I could make only one answer, 'But why were you dead? Are you going to die again?' "

Henriette was seventeen when the father's death threw upon her a large share of the burden of supporting the little family. She had thought much of entering the conventual life and she was especially drawn to a convent in a near-by town (Lannion) which was part hospital and part seminary. To Lannion the family removed after the catastrophe which had plunged them into poverty, but Henriette at once gave up her dream of a religious vocation. She looked upon herself as being responsible for her brother's future, and she set herself not only to aid in supporting the family but also to clear off the heavy debts which her father had left them.

The family returned to Tréguier and Henriette took up the work of a professional teacher. Alain, the elder brother, had gone to try his fortune in Paris. Henriette failed after a trial of much bitterness, and no resort was left her but to follow Alain into exile. She obtained a position in Paris, as under-mistress in a small school for girls. Her brother records that the beginning of her Paris life was terrible. "That cold and arid world, so full of imposition and imposture, that populous desert

where she counted not one single friend, drove her desperate." The homesickness which causes the Breton conscript to die without any apparent malady, assailed her cruelly, but her resolution stood firm. After a time of many hardships and great labor she secured a better place. Her brother observes that during this period she attained a "prodigious mental development," working sixteen hours a day and successfully passing all the prescribed public examinations. She became especially strong in history, and at the same time her religious ideas underwent a change. Like her brother, afterward, she rejected the supernatural, but as he himself records, "the fundamental religious sentiment which was hers by nature, as well as by reason of her early education, was too deep to be shaken."

* * * * *

I pass quickly over those five years in Paris, the most important result of which was her procuring for Ernest a scholarship in the Catholic seminary of St. Nicholas du Chardonnet and thus opening for him a career which has received as much of the "fierce white light" that beats upon an intellectual throne as any in modern times. Renan's account of the matter is as follows:

"Educated at Tréguier by some worthy priests who managed a sort of seminary there, I had early given signs of an inclination toward the ecclesiasti-

cal state of life. The prizes I won at school delighted my sister who mentioned them to a kind-hearted and distinguished man, physician to the school in which she taught and a very zealous Catholic, Dr. Descuret. He reported the chance of getting a good pupil to Monseigneur Dupanloup, then the brilliantly successful manager of the small seminary of St. Nicholas du Chardonnet, and came back to my sister with the news that he had the offer of a scholarship for me. I was then fifteen and a half years old." Renan admits that even thus early his sister was inclined to view the decided clerical bent of his education with some regret. Her own religious convictions were tottering; but, he says, she knew the respect due to a child's faith and never at this time sought to dissuade him from the path which he was following, "of his freest volition." And he records with a touch for which we may be grateful: "She came to see me every week, still wearing the plain green woollen shawl which had sheltered her proud poverty far away in Brittany."

Thus Henriette gave him to the Church, as it was Henriette who later influenced him to renounce the priestly calling.

After five years in Paris, her meagre salary being all inadequate to the demands upon it, Henriette decided upon a further sacrifice. To pay off her father's debts and to secure the little homestead at Tréguier, she accepted a more distant and far less

hopeful exile than that to which she had now in some degree grown accustomed. Leaving France, which she was not again to see for ten long years—this was in the winter of 1841—she crossed the greater part of Europe and entered the service of a noble family in Poland, as governess and private teacher.

In 1845 Ernest Renan declined the vows that would have made him a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedec, and left the Seminary of St. Sulpice. He was not then a priest, as many have wrongly supposed, though he had assumed the tonsure and taken minor orders. It is also important to note that he renounced the Church and the Christian faith on purely scientific grounds. Renan never dreamt of taking up any other form of Christianity, still less of joining those inconsistent sectaries who call themselves Liberal or Neo-Catholics and whose delusion seems proof against the most constant discouragement and even an occasional excommunication. His Catholicism, as he said, was the Catholicism of the Fathers, of the revered dogmatists of the Church, from whose canon and interpretation there is henceforth no appeal. Being unable to accept it, he separated himself from it—there was no middle course for him. Casuistically regarded, this ought to give Renan, in the Catholic view, a preferred position among agnostics; yet no man, not even Voltaire, has been more bitterly assailed by the

rancor ecclesiastical. And of all kinds of human malevolence, it has long since been agreed that this is the very worst.

* * * * *

The story of Renan's doubts and his final determination by which Tréguier may have lost a bishop who would have revived her ancient traditions, is powerfully told in the "Recollections." There indeed it has its meditated literary form, but I prefer the simpler, artless version in the "Letters," which were not published until after the death of Ernest Renan. I prefer it also because these "Letters" lay bare the very soul of Henriette and exhibit such an example of devotion to truth and duty as is rarely given to the world. The crowning obligation which Ernest Renan owed to the love and devotion of his sister is best told in his own words:

"My sister advanced me a sum of twelve hundred francs to enable me to wait and to supplement whatever insufficiency of income such a position (that of usher or under-teacher) might at first present. That sum was the corner-stone of my whole life. I never exhausted it, but it secured me the calm of mind so indispensable if I was to think in peace, and saved me from being overwhelmed by taskwork which would have broken me down."

Brave Henriette! Her reward was to come in the six years of perfect happiness and peace during

which she and her brother lived together in Paris after her return from Poland. Her greatest trial, too, belongs to the close of this period, when Ernest married and his heart was shared by another. Let no one think to censure Henriette because it cost her a terrible struggle to divide her brother's love. There is no great love that is not selfish and exclusive by its very nature, and that of Henriette was no exception. God knows her long years of bitter exile, her youth wasted in labor and self-sacrifice, her prayers, and tears, and devotion, gave her the first title in this brother's affections. So he recognized and so he told her at last, after a season of misunderstanding that sorely tried both their hearts; offering to relinquish in her favor this other love. Ah, but this was to challenge the nobility of her nature—she whose life had been all sacrifice would accept none at his hands. So the marriage took place and the tact and graciousness of the young wife * soon brought about a perfect union and reconciliation of all three. It was Henriette's savings that set the young housekeeping on foot—without her, Renan confesses, he could never have coped with his new responsibilities. The birth of one child and the untimely death of another still closer drew these loving hearts. After her own death he wrote:

“Oh, my God, have I done all that in me lay to

*Renan married Cornélie Scheffer, niece of the famous painter Ary Scheffer.

ensure her happiness? With what bitterness do I now reproach myself for my habit of reserve toward her, for not having told her oftener how dear I held her, for having yielded too easily to my love of silent meditation, for not having made the most of every hour in which she was spared to me? But I take that rare soul to witness that she was always first in my heart of hearts, that she ruled my whole moral life as none other ever ruled it, that she was the constant beginning and end of all my existence in sorrow and in joy."

Let us hope that the dead are not denied the consolation of hearing such avowals!

* * * * *

Henriette Renan died in Syria in the year 1860. With Madame Renan she had accompanied her brother on a scientific mission to the country known in ancient times as Phœnicia. This honorable function had been intrusted to Renan by the Emperor Napoleon III, and it had the most important results upon his career. Readers of the "Life of Jesus" will remember the beautiful dedication—perhaps the most beautiful ever penned—"to the pure soul of my sister Henriette." For it was amid the scenes consecrated by the Gospel that he wrote the greater part of his most celebrated work. In this congenial task brother and sister passed a short period of great happiness. The village of Ghazir,

high above the sea at the far end of the bay of Kesrouan, is especially identified with this sojourn. Renan describes it as one of the loveliest spots in the world. It is surrounded by exquisite green valleys, and the mountains are more beautiful, he says, than anything he had seen in the Lebanon.

Henriette shared to the full his labor and his enthusiasm in writing the "Life of Jesus." All day they worked together in silence and at night they planned the morrow's task. "I shall love this book," she said, "because we have done it together, first of all, and then because I like it for itself." She had never been so happy and her communion with her brother had never been so intimate. Often she remarked that those days at Ghazir were passing by as in a Paradise. Alas! it is in such ideal moments that Fate prepares her worst. Poor Henriette's pride and pleasure were short-lived. In the midst of their preoccupation sister and brother were attacked by the terrible fever which is endemic along the Syrian coast. They were now at the village of Amschit, which they had previously made their headquarters while in the Byblos region. Sister and brother were alone together in this last solemn scene, Madame Renan having been recalled to Europe a short time before. Henriette's weakened constitution speedily yielded to the dread malady: she passed away while her brother lay unconscious in the next room. "We may have bidden each other

farewell," he says, "for all I know. She may have spoken some precious parting word which the terrible hand of Fate has wiped from the tablet of my brain." His own state was so desperate that the doctor would suffer no delay, but ordered that he be carried away at once in a litter which had been intended for Henriette, and placed on board a French ship that lay in waiting. The physician remained behind to superintend her funeral. The simple villagers of Amschit, who had learned to love her, followed her to the grave. She was laid to rest in the tomb of a kindly Maronite. There she still reposes. "I shrink from the idea of taking her from the beautiful mountains where she had been so happy," wrote her brother; "from the midst of the worthy folk she loved, to lay her in one of those dreary modern cemeteries she held in such deep horror. Some day, of course, she must come back to me, but who can tell what corner of the world shall hold my grave? Let her wait for me, then, under the palms of Amschit, in the land of the antique mysteries, by sacred Byblos!" . . .

Such is, too hastily sketched, the portrait of one of the most beautiful souls that ever came from God. Not less valuable was her life than her brother's, in its lofty courage and devotion to duty—of a higher value, indeed, as he himself confessed, in its idealistic attachment to pure virtue.

Hers was no cloistered sanctity refining upon it-

self and practising a supreme egoism in the name of religion. Her truth was tried by every test of sacrifice, by the crucible of a bitter experience with the world, by an utter renunciation of self. She loved much, truly, and through the wondrous power of a great love, her life attained harmony and completeness. . . .

Saint Henriette!

BALLADE OF POOR SOULS

SWEET Christ, who gavest Thy blood for us,
Tho' we have missed its healing grace,
And by temptations tenebrous,
Come all to meet in the Evil Place:
Turn not from us Thy tender face,
Now when the Pit yawns foul and sheer;
Ah, think how long th' Eternal Space—
And Hell hath been our portion here!

Poor souls are we that might not climb,
Ensnared by the world's iron gin,
Yet have we known the Tale Sublime
Of Him who died our souls to win;
And oft-times we were sick of sin,
Yea, heard that call so sweet and clear,
But sank again our toils within—
For Hell hath been our portion here!

Strong bonds of circumstance have made
The Prison-House that held us fast;
And some have cursed and some have prayed,
But few the outer doors have passed:

And some do watch with mien aghast,
The while their fellows flout and flee,
But hope leaves all alike at last—
For Hell hath been our portion here!

Yet God's o'er all—and Christ doth know
Why this unequal doom we bear,
That some, like plants, in virtue grow,
And others damn themselves with care:
Mayhap His providence is there,
The Riddle Dark at last to clear,
And change to hope this Fell Despair—
For Hell hath been our portion here!

Sweet Mary's Son, turn not from us,
Tho' we have missed Thy saving grace,
And by temptations tenebrous,
Come all to meet in the Evil Place:
Thy mercy shall our sins efface,
E'en at the Pit's mouth yawning sheer,
For pity of our woeful case—
Since Hell was aye our portion here!

IN THE SHADOW

LATELY I was in a drab mood. Though not what you would call a melancholy man, I have, like other people, my ups and downs. Nothing particular the matter this time. A little brain fag. I had been forcing the pace, and the mind is a sullen rebel under the spur. Besides, it had fed too long on itself, and now my Evil Genius, in revenge, was propounding the old problem, What's the use? . . . Oh, such an old problem, one that every man is threshing out for himself from the cradle to the grave!

I have got to know well what that bodes, and am quick to take my cue when I see that the E. G. means business.—*Cut it out and do something else.* It took me many years to learn that, but it's really the only way to avoid an unprofitable argument, and one in which I am always worsted.

So I measured the thin pile of copy before me with a sigh. No promise of a holiday in that. Not nearly enough for my share of a single number of "Papyrus." Too much leeway for the distinguished contributors. People will say I am running out.

What a curse is this tardy, reluctant coinage of the brain! Why do you plague yourself with a task that brings you neither money nor tupennyworth of fame. Youth is gone and you still chase the *ignis fatuus* in the cold lights of advancing middle age. If you *had* to do this, if you couldn't turn to something else, there might be an excuse, but it is *not* so—you wield the lash over yourself and are become your own bondsman, or rather the slave of a foolish egotism. And to what purpose? Yes, you poor, concentrated, self-deluded idiot, face the truth!—to waste the little of life that may remain (you know it can't be much, for you were a fine spendthrift of your best days) with the utterly ridiculous and unfounded hope (you dare not in lucid intervals confess it even to yourself) of leaving a small literary name behind you—so your deprecating mock-modesty would phrase it. Bosh! Fiddlesticks! Tommyrot!—will you NEVER have sense? . . .

Here the voice of the E. G. rises clamantly and I abandon the dispute by taking up the few sheets of copy and hiding them in a drawer. Internal silence follows and a cowardly sort of self-approval. The E. G. never abuses his victories, but I know the game is his to-day, and I turn with another sigh to my letters. I really had promised myself a good stint of work . . . oh, well—*Manana!*

And this, as it chanced, was the first letter I opened:

St. Luke's Hospital, New York, Dec. 26, '08.

Dear Mr. Editor:

Your *Palms of Papyrus*—(a worthy companion to *Benigna Vena*) reached me here a few days ago, and I thank you for your attention. I came here about the first of August with an incurable case of cancer of the throat, for which the operation of tracheotomy was performed. It prolonged my life, but it is a most disagreeable and loathsome affliction. How long it may last cannot be told, but I am growing weaker day by day. I will send the *Palms* to a dear friend of mine who can and will enjoy it, as a Christmas present. He will bless me for it, I know.

Wishing you a merry Christmas and that the new guest—

Whose step is at the door, my friend,

Whose step is at the door,

—may bring to you divine blessings every day of the New Year, I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

* * *

To say that I wept over this letter is nothing, for only a man without a heart or the sense of human kinship could restrain his tears. But the sweet patience of my unknown friend, the kindly thought for others, the quiet bravery under the very hand of death—and such a death!—these things smote upon me with such a rebuke of my own cowardly petulance—I in health, free to go or come, to do or leave undone—that I was fairly driven to my knees by this

touching and utterly unlooked-for message from one in the Valley of the Shadow.

Then from my soul I sent a prayer of encouragement to that poor stricken one fighting the fight that in one shape or another is destined unto us all. And in my pity for him it seemed that I had cast off half my own burden, for I felt strangely lightened, and found myself saying unawares:

“Oh, life is good, and health is good, and good it is to have leave to work at one’s heart’s desire; but better, far better and higher than these, is the courage of the human heart that takes from the grave its sting and from Death his victory!”

I PLANTED a tiny palm tree with anxious care, nursing it with my hopes, strengthening it with my prayers, watering it with my tears. It grew and spread until—oh, marvel!—many weary ones came and sat in the shade thereof. Allah be praised!

EASTER

EASTER Sunday: cool, bright and beautiful. I am trying to work at a long deferred task, but the spirit of the day overcomes me and I sit at my desk, idly musing.

The sun is warm, as of the resurrection of all life, while the air holds yet a chill, as of the death or winter scarce past. Truly an ideal Easter.

He is risen.

Believe or believe not, it is impossible to refuse entrance to this thought; in spite of your most resolute refusal, it *will* come in.

From my window I see many children in bright dresses and hats gay with ribbons faring homeward from church. My own little girl, the darling of my heart, comes in quietly to see if I approve of her Easter hat and frock and to give me the kiss of peace—she is only five. I look into her shining eyes with the love that innocence alone can awaken, and the thought comes, as ever in the presence of what we hold most dear—of losing her. Instantly the words recur—

He is risen.

Then, as I return her kiss, I think of her little

brother whom she never saw, for he grew weary and left us ere she was born. His eyes were blue and hers are vivid dark-brown with glints of fire in them; his hair was light as the corn-tassel and hers matches her eyes. My heart swells with the pain of an old sorrow as I think of that tiny little grave so pathetic in its loneliness, while my house rings with the mirth of joyous children. Involuntarily my lips frame that question which Love has ever been asking since Death first came into the world. Yet hardly is it framed when it dies in the thought—*He is risen.*

Now by a natural association, my mind travels to the famous writer who passed away on Good Friday last, in the foreign land where he had long made his home. Stricken in the fulness of his fame and the vigor of his strength, when many years seemed yet to await him, he at first, with no unmanly weakness, grieved over the sudden blow of fate. Then, fortifying his spirit with the faith he had ever held, he said to his loved ones with joyous resignation, remembering the day—"I am dying with Christ!"
. . . *He is risen.*

So I think of the countless millions who have lived and died in the consoling belief that One broke for them the iron gates of death—of the innumerable mothers of the race always looking to Him to restore their children—of the broken hearts that faith will have it, only He can heal; of the tears that only

He can dry—and though you prove to me that this Man never rose from the dead, I ask myself, has the world, after all, lost anything by the belief that He did? Would it be, in any respect, a happier and better world were that belief to perish? Is there not something in that belief to quicken the life of the spirit in all of us, whatever be our creed? Who would, had he the power, strike that belief dead to-day in the millions of hearts that cherish it? In a word, who would contradict and unsay the universal message of this happy day, tinkling in the church bells, shining in the bright eyes of the children, reflected in the calm content of the elders, breathing in the warm air and first fragrance of the reviving year, thrilling the hearts of the many in sick chambers and hospitals about to bid farewell to this brief life? . . .

He is risen!

Call it a mere childish fiction: are there not fictions more beautiful and consoling than facts? Call it a vision: is not the highest truth revealed to us in visions? Call it a dream: has humanity anything better than its dreams?

HAVE no fear, dear heart, of aught
the future may bring—God and thy
soul are the same forever. Far off
the days threaten, a hostile army, but near
they reach out friendly hands. Do but
smile on these portents and they will melt
like a dream at dawn. The past has no
terrors for thee—patience! time is ever
turning the future into the past.

THE TALISMAN

I DON'T mind telling you that I am one of those specially constituted—I dare not say favored—persons who never really grow old. Osler can not lay his hangman's hands upon me. I am immune from the terrible sentence under which the human race in general is laboring. I have struck a truce with Time and never waste a minute thinking about him. I do not watch the Great Clock and have no fear of its audit. I smile, heart-free, at the poor awkwardly dissembling antiquities around me, making their sorry pretence of not being under the hand of Time. In vain they seek to hide the livery of Age, whilst I bear in my bosom the consciousness of immortal Youth.

Oh, I was not always thus fortified against the universal fear. At the first gray hair, at the earliest light frost o' the blood, at the premier discord in Youth's sweet pipe, I was seized with a panic dread. What! abdicate Youth and all its sweet, ineffable privilege—the recurrent desire of Spring, the lustihood of Summer, the golden fruition of Autumn—all the glowing flower-enwreathed cornucopia of life! Ah, no!—I revolted at the thought, shuddering at

the apparition of Age as though it were Death himself with his unsparing scythe.

But soon, growing wiser, I learned in a rarely fortunate moment that to fear Age or Death or any other calamity is to invite it; that the true seat and source of Youth is in the mind and the spirit; that no misfortune can overcome us without the consent of the soul.

Once firmly possessed of this Talisman, I threw off all fear and entered upon the joyous life of an Immortal. My treasures were immensely increased; I was infinitely rich where I had deemed myself poor. The world was a thousand times more beautiful. I never wearied of day and the sun; never could have enough of night and the stars. For the first time I felt myself to be a part of this adorable universe which to so many poor earth-pilgrims seems only a fleeting mirage, seen through their tears. I said: I am at home in my Father's house, heir to all this Wonder and Beauty, and none shall rob me of my inheritance.

Each morning I touched my sovereign Talisman and looked into my heart to see that no lurking fear was seeking entrance there. Then I went forth as frank and unafraid as the sun. I was wrapt in Cosmic security; stars and systems were not safer than I. And I saw that the count of days but added to my vigor and renewed my freshness; that the years ceased to take away with thieving hand; that at an

age when spiritless men sit down to lament their lost youth, I was Lord of very Life indeed!

Something, I will confess, of my old eagerness was abated with my new wisdom. I no longer sought to pull aside the curtain betwixt day and day—Nature has her own penalty for him who would pry too curiously into her secrets. I schooled my restless heart to accept the Cosmic patience. I strove to make myself a part of the great unhurrying procession whose beginning no man saw—whose end perchance no human eye shall look upon. . . .

Would you be emancipated from the universal doom under which men sicken and die with the first cold breath of Time, or if they die not, lose that vital pulse without which life is but a lamentable, barren, hopeless counterfeit? I have shown you my Talisman; I have told you my secret.

Cast away fear! Learn to live in Nature. Attach your spirit to the Cosmic Law.

Death, decrepitude, old age, are only for those who will them. . . .

I once met with a little man who claimed to have hit upon the recipe for happiness—it was to look only at the bright side of things. There was nothing novel in this, surely, although the little man was convinced that he had made an original discovery. The novelty lay in the fact that he set out to live up to his theory and got the credit of doing so. He formed "Sunshine Societies" in different parts of the

country and became somewhat famous under the nickname of Sunshine Seward. When I knew him he was trying to worry a little money for his "cause" from a philanthropist whom we both knew. He didn't get it, and he told me afterward that the effort was about as hopeless as the scheme of the chemist in "Gulliver," who sought to extract sunbeams from cucumbers. He was not cast down by his failure, however, for that were to discredit his own system; and so he tripped, or perhaps I would better say, rayed merrily away to other pastures.

I wonder is he still in the land of the living? There was snow on his head when I knew him, but his gay spirits and lightheartedness would not have misbecome a brown-haired youth. I call to mind also his rippling speech, so happily unlike the dry talk of men of his age, in whom the fountains of the spirit seem congealed. Lightly enough I dismissed him at the time of our parting, but often since have I thought of him, when I have felt the need of his buoyant philosophy. For the hardest thing in the stress of life is to be at the same time sane and cheerful; to bid farewell once and forever to *Atra Cura* and all her sullen progeny of the Night, and to face victoriously the hope and splendor of the Dawn. To do this, I would say, and yet not to intermit or stifle that faculty of reflection which bespeaks the Divinity within us. For there are many things which admonish us that it is the

fool's part to be merry always, as it is the misanthrope's to suck ever his black humors.

I am not sure that my friend Sunshine Seward would favor considering the matter so deeply. The sunshine program, as he defined it, was simply to cut out the dark side of things, and this was to be effected by getting and holding the right mental attitude. No doubt it can be done, for long before Sunshine Seward rayed out of the Infinite, Hamlet told the world that "there is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so."

Let us be cheerful—that is to say without fear—and then nothing can or will harm us.

AN OLD BOY

YES, that's what I am—*an old boy!* You fancy these three short words carry a humorous, jovial implication, as in the more vulgar use of the phrase? Wait until the iron has entered your soul that pierces mine. Wait until you become—if you ever do become—an old boy.

To bear upon you the visible marks of age, the insignia that Time has noted you for his own, as a railway conductor sticks a check in your hatband; to look old or at least aging (alack! with what euphemism we would fain dulcify or unstring or at least make tolerable the harsh truth!), whilst we still wear the heart of youth as eager, as simple, as untaught, as tremblingly responsive to love and hope and happiness as when we were young indeed . . . ah! that is a sorrow which never has been rightly told.

People say of an Old Boy, "How young he looks for his years! Why, bless me, he must be forty or forty-five." They will even say this to your face, meaning that you shall take it as a compliment! You dare not show how they hurt you and, as a class, the Old Boy is not permitted to resent

such insults. It would be deemed unpardonable and would disqualify him for his title of Old Boy. And nobody sees the irony of it!

Why this cursed, itching preoccupation with people's ages, which is universal in society? Is there a more personal, a more offensive species of scandal? Why are we so damnably concerned to know how old such or such a man is? (I am leaving women out of the question, for obvious reasons.) This coquetry among men over forty is as ridiculous as anything that may be alleged of the weaker sex. But it is, besides, a harrowing curiosity, as vulgar as it is disgusting and low-bred. Hear a group of men talking of somebody not present and it's ten to one the first question out of the box will be, "How old is he?" Nay, I have met men for the first time (they were neither Scotchmen nor Jews) who had the hardihood to address the query to *me*, after a very brief interchange of commonplaces. From this intolerable impudence, to open a person's mouth in order to "size up" his teeth, and *ergo* his age, as you would that of a horse, is but a slight step. I warn these gentry that there is one Old Boy with whom they may easily carry their civilities too far. Let them have a care!

To recur to the more tragical part of my situation. I early resolved to set my face against the approaches of age, owing to an inborn aversion to gaffers, grave-diggers and all others of the tribe of

Polonius. The pitying tolerance, mixed with contempt, extended to doddering old men, has always struck me as the saddest sight in the human spectacle. Age and Death are the great tragedies of the human lot, and I'm not sure which is the worst. As I have said, I firmly resolved to avoid senility for my part, and so in process of time I became . . . an Old Boy.

An imagination beyond the ordinary, the keenest possible zest of life, a mind which constantly renewed its power and freshness by congenial study or original effort, and a heart ever seeking to love with an unsated hunger (I sometimes think the seat of age is in the heart) enabled me to achieve my purpose in a *marked and extraordinary degree*. I did not become nor am I becoming *old*, in the usual degrading sense of the word or state. I shall not tell you my age and thereby countenance the barbarous vulgarity which I have rebuked above. But I will say this:—I meet occasionally men of thirty five who, in respect of that joyous animation which is the most envied privilege of youth—that dew of the heart (I may say) which I have never suffered to dry up—that freshness of the mind and buoyancy of spirit which I have so jealously watched over and preserved—seem aged in comparison with me.

My singularity in this respect serves to bring me some delicious as well as painful experiences.

Lately, for instance . . . it is a delicate matter, but I must make you understand . . . I was thrown into company with a charming young girl. Were I an ordinary man I should say that she might have been my daughter. Though I did not intend to trifle with the child, my cursed indefeasible youth had an instant effect upon her. Oh the sweetness and the peril of it! What would I not have given to have gone back into the Garden of Youth with that exquisite girl? Her eyes sought mine with undefinable yearning; her lips were wistful with unspoken avowals; her straying hands were constantly meeting mine and filling me with a delicious terror. "Ah, if you were but older," I said, awkwardly aiming to show her the folly of it. "Older!" she echoed, with a pretty frowning perplexity, "Why, I am seventeen." Seventeen!—good God! . . .

Perhaps now you will understand why I ask myself, have I done wisely, after all, in electing to become and to remain what the world so hatefully calls an Old Boy? I have told you my victory: here is my defeat and the bitter in my cup.

I am unfit for the company of Age, and yet I may not associate overmuch with real Youth, on account of certain indicia of time (deceptive in my case, as you know) and perhaps too because of the *felt but unseen* barrier between those of widely disparate years. Also, I must allow, the quite young some-

times bore me and even get on my nerves—but this, of course, is not in me an effect of time. So I am neither of the first nor the second table. I abhor Age, with all the idiot moralities made to console it, and with all my gift to please, Youth is shy of me and latterly, I begin to note, yields a more and more reluctant conquest. I have declassified myself in the lists of humanity by evading the common lot. I am and must remain until the end—God help me!—an Old Boy.

DEAR Heart, I know the day will come when I shall smile at all my old heartaches and sorrows, as at the vain griefs of a petulant child. When I shall wonder why I was ever angry or injured in spirit, or believed that any harm could come to me, save through myself. When I shall hardly understand how I could have suffered this one to vex me or that one to mortify me, and shall weep with shame that I returned not always good for evil. When I shall ask tenderly for old enemies and shall tell them, oh so eagerly! that our quarrel was all a mistake and I alone to blame—

But when that hour comes, true heart, you will have a pious duty to perform in closing my weary eyes, since it will mean for me the end of the Great Joke!

Finito Libro sit Laus et Gloria Christo.

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