

WALTER H. PATER

NOT INCLUDED IN THE LIBRARY EDITION OF HIS WORKS

Reviews, Articles, Introductions
An Essay *and* An Imaginary Portrait

edited by E. J. MOREIRA DA SILVA

VOLUME 1: TEXTS



WALTER H. PATER

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1. Texts

Pater, Walter, was born in London, Aug. 4, 1839, and educated at The King's School, Canterbury. He entered the University of Oxford, at Queen's College, in 1858; took B. A. degree (2nd class in Classics) in 1862; was elected to an open Fellowship at Brasenose, in which college he has since held various offices, and took the degree of M. A. in 1865. His first contribution to literature was an essay on the Writings of Coleridge, in The Westminster Review Jan. 1866. In 1873 he published "The Renaissance a series of studies in art and poetry; 4th edition, 1893. In 1885 appeared Marino "On Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas"; 2nd editions for England and America were printed the same year; 3rd edition in 1892. In 1887 he published "Imaginary Portraits" (2nd edition in 1891), and in 1890, "Appreciations, with an Essay on Style," reprinted the same year; and in 1893, "Plato and Platonism as a Series of Lectures".

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1. Texts

EDITED, WITH TEXTUAL, CRITICAL, AND EXPLANATORY NOTES, BY
E. J. MOREIRA DA SILVA



PONTA DELGADA | AÇORES
2022

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Vol. I: Texts

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Centro de Estudos Humanísticos

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UAc

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Editor's Preface

WHEN Water Pater died, in 1894, he had published seventy-one of his writings in periodicals.

Of these, he had included twenty-one in the books he himself had published: six in *The Renaissance* (1873, 1877, 1888, 1893); four in *Imaginary Portraits* (1887, 1890); eight in *Appreciations* (1889, 1890), and 3 in *Plato and Platonism* (1893).

Another thirty-one of such writings were included in his books that were published posthumously: nine in *Greek Studies* (1895), by Charles Lancelot Shadwell; eight in *Miscellaneous Studies* (1895), also by Charles Lancelot Shadwell; six in *Gaston de Latour* (1895), likewise by Charles Lancelot Shadwell; eight in *Essays from "The Guardian"* (1897), in Portland, Maine, by T. B. Mosher.

Of the other nineteen writings (published by Pater in periodicals), all of which are included in the present edition, T. B. Mosher assembled eleven in his *Uncollected Essays* (1903). With the numbers (in the order) and the (authorial) titles which they bear in the present volume, they are the following.

I. Reviews:

4. RENAISSANCE IN ITALY: THE AGE OF THE DESPOTS (1875);
8. THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF GUSTAVE FLAUBERT (1888);
9. THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH . . . (1889);
10. A POET WITH SOMETHING TO SAY (1889);
11. IT IS THYSELF (1889);
12. CORRESPONDANCE DE GUSTAVE FLAUBERT (1889);
13. A NOVEL BY MR. OSCAR WILDE (1891);
14. MR. GEORGE MOORE AS AN ART CRITIC (1893).

II. Articles:

2. M. LEMAÎTRE'S *SERENUS*, AND OTHER TALES (1887);
3. TOUSSAINT GALABRU (1889);

4. A CENTURY OF REVOLUTION (1889).

With the numbers (in the order) and the (authorial) titles which they bear in the present volume, seven other writings (published by Pater in periodicals) are the following.

I. Reviews:

1. COLERIDGE'S WRITINGS (1866)
2. POEMS BY WILLIAM MORRIS (1868)
3. CHILDREN IN ITALIAN AND ENGLISH DESIGN (1872)
5. LOVE IN IDLENESS (1883)
6. THE ENGLISH SCHOOL OF PAINTING (1885)
7. VERNON LEE'S *JUVENILIA* (1887)

II. Articles:

1. ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITIES (1886)

COLERIDGE'S WRITINGS was reprinted twice in its entirety, in 1910 and 1916, and was partially included in *Sketches and Reviews* (1919), with the editorial title "Coleridge as a Theologian" (pages 87–115).

POEMS BY WILLIAM MORRIS was reprinted in 1973, titled "Unsigned Review", and in 1998, with its authorial title.

CHILDREN IN ITALIAN AND ENGLISH DESIGN was reprinted in 1980, likewise with its authorial title and accompanied by Textual and Explanatory notes.

As far as the present Editor knows, LOVE IN IDLENESS, THE ENGLISH SCHOOL OF PAINTING, and VERNON LEE'S *JUVENILIA* are reproduced in the present volume for the first time.

ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITIES was reprinted in its entirety, titled "Letter to PMC", in 1998, and was partially reprinted, titled "from 'English at the Universities.–IV'", in 2012.

Except for CHILDREN IN ITALIAN AND ENGLISH DESIGN, the above mentioned eight remaining writings are, then, republished in the present volume for the first time—all of the writings included here being, again except for CHILDREN IN ITALIAN AND ENGLISH DESIGN, as well as for RENAISSANCE IN ITALY:

THE AGE OF THE DESPOTS, republished with textual and critical notes for the first time.

Of the nineteen writings (published by Pater in periodicals) mentioned above, there remains one. It is the essay "On Wordsworth" (1874), which Pater partially incorporated, heavily revised, in his subsequent writings on Wordsworth—including "Wordsworth", the version that he inserted in *Appreciations* (1889, 1890).

This *Urtext* (1874) of Pater's rewritings on Wordsworth—which, as far as the present Editor is aware, has not been republished in this its original version—is included in this volume for four major reasons: because it considerably differs, in detail, from the just mentioned *Appreciations* version; because the Editor thought that it might be of use to have it published *side by side* with the 1889 review (THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH...); because the Editor estimates that, as a literary critic, Pater was at and *near* his best in his first three writings on literature, the other two of these writings being COLERIDGE'S WRITINGS (1866) and POEMS BY WILLIAM MORRIS (1866); because, finally, an attentive look at the variants between this *Urtext* (1874) and its *Appreciations* version (1889, 1890) will undoubtedly disclose much about Pater's subliminal use of words—or, to put it otherwise, about the *secunda facie* register of Pater's writings, taken generally.

The second of these four reasons applies likewise to the inclusion in this volume of COLERIDGE'S WRITINGS (1866)—the *Urtext* of Pater's writings, now, on Coleridge—and the introduction "Samuel Taylor Coleridge" (1880).

Pater wrote three Introductions: the just mentioned "Samuel Taylor Coleridge" (1880); "Dante Gabriel Rossetti" (1883), and the opening text of "*The Purgatory*" of Dante Alighieri (1892).

Two of them are included in this volume: the first one ("Samuel Taylor Coleridge"), on account of what has been said in the penultimate paragraph; the other (the opening text of "*The Purgatory*" of Dante Alighieri), on account of its having been reprinted, as far as the present Editor is aware, only in *Uncollected Essays*—far back in 1903.

It remains to mention “An English Poet”, the Imaginary Portrait which, likewise, is included in the present volume.

As it is widely known, Pater left it unfinished, and, since it was first published, in 1931, by May Ottley, it has been reprinted (only) quite recently: in 2019, edited by Lene Østermark-Johansen, in the third volume (*Imaginary Portraits*) of *The Collected Works of Walter Pater* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019).

The reason why the Editor decided to include it (“Imaginary Portraits. 2. An English Poet”) in this volume is not, therefore, its unavailability (or the difficulty in accessing it): it is the Editor’s hope that the critical notes that pertain to it, side by side with some of those that pertain to “On Wordsworth” and other writings, will somehow be of help to readers interested in Pater’s subliminal *exposing* of his subliminal use of words: in Pater’s use of lexemes (signifiers) as if they were *pigments* in a painter’s pallet, and, therefore, in his recourse to the old *ut picture poesis* signifying technique.

In hoping that it be so, the Editor, of course, does not cherish the hope that such readers—or any others for that matter—will necessarily be in agreement with him, concerning his understanding of Pater’s *style*.

Now, the present Editor no less is aware that a chance encounter with the present volume may elicit two questions in particular. Namely:

Why, one volume of Pater’s writings edited by a foreigner, even if it assemble writings not included in the New Library edition of Pater’s works?

Why now, one volume of Pater’s writings not included in the New Library edition of his works—now, that an authoritative edition of his Collected Works is about to become full reality?

In answer to the first question, the present writer makes known that, while preparing this volume and the two others which accompany it (volume two, *Textual Notes*, and volume three, *Critical and Explanatory Notes*), he kept foremost in his mind the following lines of Alexander Pope’s *Essay on Criticism*:

The gen'rous critic fann'd the poet's fire,
And taught the world with reason to admire.
Then criticism the Muse's handmaid prov'd,
To dress her charms, and make her more belov'd ...

It is not, most certainly, that this Editor think that the *poet* Pater—the long departed *poet* Pater—be, at the present time, in lack of critics and editors fit to teach the world with reason to admire his works.

It is, on the contrary, that, although he fear for fools rushing in where angels fear to tread, he did not wish to relinquish the complacent contentment of once more proving himself to be a handmaid humbly at the service of Pater: humbly contributing, not to make him more beloved, but, at least, to dress his charms.

In answer to the second of those two hypothetical questions, the Editor likewise makes known that, if the circumstance of his not having been born an Englishman did not deter him from authoring the present volume and the two which accompany it, that happened in great part because he found great encouragement in Pater himself— who ended his brief review of *It is Thyself* reminding its Russian author of the following: that “the natural function of a foreigner, however clever”, is not “To add to the great body of English literature”,

but rather the critical one of reporting, of making known at home or abroad the real flowers, as distinguished from many imitation ones, the real graces of existence, to be gathered in the more fortunate regions of... [the] English civilisation.

Well, this is exactly the “natural function” which, as a foreigner, the present Editor wished to make his own—and, in case the “English civilisation” assess that, in spite of Pater, he has overstepped his native boundaries, perhaps he will be assessed quite differently in “the more fortunate regions” in which he may find himself “at home or abroad”!

In any case, remember, reader: if it is true that a book should not to be judged by its cover, it is no less true that it should not to be judged by its author (or editor).

All books should, indeed, be judged by themselves.

This volume, as well as the two which accompany it (again, volume two, *Textual Notes*, and volume three, *Critical and Explanatory Notes*) are, from inception to completion (in all respects), a single man's work—and, therefore, it will be no surprise if they contain imperfections which the advice and help of others would, at least, have contributed to attenuate.

In spite of such imperfections, the Editor hopes to have been successful enough in his attempt to be of service not only to Pater himself, but also to all those readers who may happen to admire the exceptional intelligence to which his prose as well as his prose-poetry testify, and, as a result, may cherish the man's memory.

The Editor wishes to acknowledge all the information that was given him by the Wikipedia—from whose pages, as will be noticed, he has benefited substantially,—as well as the outstanding bibliographic resources that the Internet Archive has put at his disposal gratuitously.

Without one and the other, the present collection of the writings of Walter Pater that were not included in the New Library edition of his works would not have been made possible.

Ponta Delgada, Açores.

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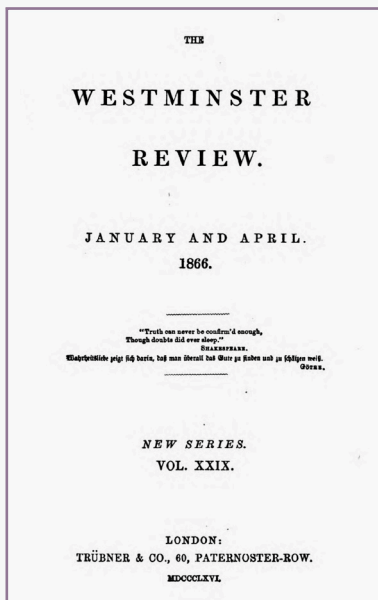
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I.
Reviews

1.

Coleridge's Writings

The Westminster Review NS.
Vol. XXIX, no. 57 (Jan. 1866), pp. 106–132.



LETTERS,
CONVERSATIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS
OF
S. T. COLERIDGE.

WITH A PREFACE BY THE EDITOR,

THOMAS ALLSOP,

"LATE OF NUTFIELD, IN THE COUNTY OF SURREY, AND FORMERLY OF THE STOCK
EXCHANGE AND ROYAL EXCHANGE BUILDINGS."

Pliny writ his Letters for the Public; so did Seneca, so did Balzac, Voiture, &c. &c.; Tully did not: and therefore these give us more pleasure than any which have come down to us from antiquity. When we read them we pry into a secret which was intended to be kept from us. That is a pleasure. We see Cato and Brutus and Pompey and others such as they really were, and not such as the gaping multitude of their own age took them to be, or as Historians and Poets have represented them to ours. That is another pleasure.—BOLINGBROKE TO SWIFT.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON :
FREDERICK FARRAH, 232, STRAND.

1864.

Coleridge's Writings



FORMS of intellectual and spiritual culture often exercise their subtlest and most artful charm when life is already passing from them. Searching and irresistible as are the changes of the human spirit on its way to perfection, there is yet so much elasticity of temper that what must pass away sooner or later is not disengaged all at once even from the highest order of minds. Nature, which by one law of development evolves ideas, moralities, modes of inward life, and represses them in turn, has in this way provided that the earlier growth should propel its fibres into the later, and so transmit the whole of its forces in an unbroken continuity of life. Then comes the spectacle of the reserve of the elder generation exquisitely refined by the antagonism of the new. That current of new life chastens them as they contend against it. Weaker minds do not perceive the change, clearer minds abandon themselves to it. To feel the change everywhere, yet not to abandon oneself to it, is a situation of difficulty and contention. Communicating in this way to the passing stage of culture the charm of what is chastened, high-strung, athletic, they yet detach the highest minds from the past by pressing home its difficulties and finally proving it impossible. Such is the charm of Julian, of St. Louis, perhaps of Luther; in the narrower compass of modern times, of Dr. Newman and Lacordaire; it is also the peculiar charm of Coleridge.

Modern thought is distinguished from ancient by its cultivation of the "relative" spirit in place of the "absolute." Ancient philosophy sought to arrest every object in an eternal outline, to fix thought in a necessary formula, and types of life in a classification by "kinds" or genera. To the modern spirit nothing is or can be rightly known except relatively under conditions. An ancient philosopher indeed started a philosophy of the relative,

but only as an enigma. So the germs of almost all philosophical ideas were enfolded in the mind of antiquity, and fecundated one by one in after ages by the external influences of art, religion, culture in the natural sciences, belonging to a particular
5 generation, which suddenly becomes pre-occupied by a formula or theory, not so much new as penetrated by a new meaning and expressiveness. So the idea of "the relative" has been fecundated in modern times by the influence of the sciences of observation. These sciences reveal types of life evanescent into
10 each other by inexpressible refinements of change. Things pass into their opposites by accumulation of undefinable quantities. The growth of those sciences consists in a continual analysis of facts of rough and general observation into groups of facts more precise and minute. A faculty for truth is a power of distinguishing and fixing delicate and fugitive details. The moral
15 world is ever in contact with the physical; the relative spirit has invaded moral philosophy from the ground of the inductive sciences. There it has started a new analysis of the relations of body and mind, good and evil, freedom and necessity. Hard
20 and abstract moralities are yielding to a more exact estimate of the subtlety and complexity of our life. Always as an organism increases in perfection the conditions of its life become more complex. Man is the most complex of the products of nature. Character merges into temperament; the nervous system re-
25 fines itself into intellect. His physical organism is played upon not only by the physical conditions about it, but by remote laws of inheritance, the vibrations of long past acts reaching him in the midst of the new order of things in which he lives. When we have estimated these conditions he is not yet simple and
30 isolated; for the mind of the race, the character of the age, sway him this way or that through the medium of language and ideas. It seems as if the most opposite statements about him were alike true; he is so receptive, all the influences of the world and of society ceaselessly playing upon him, so that every hour in
35 his life is unique, changed altogether by a stray word, or glance, or touch. The truth of these relations experience gives us; not the truth of eternal outlines effected once for all, but a world of fine gradations and subtly linked conditions, shifting intricate-

ly as we ourselves change; and bids us by constant clearing of the organs of observation and perfecting of analysis to make what we can of these. To the intellect, to the critical spirit, these subtleties of effect are more precious than anything else. What is lost in precision of form is gained in intricacy of expression. To suppose that what is called “ontology” is what the speculative instinct seeks is the misconception of a backward school of logicians. Who would change the colour or curve of a roseleaf for that οὐσία ἀχρώματος, ἀσχημάτιστος, ἀναφύς. A transcendentalism that makes what is abstract more excellent than what is concrete has nothing akin to the leading philosophies of the world. The true illustration of the speculative temper is not the Hindoo, lost to sense, understanding, individuality; but such an one as Goethe, to whom every moment of life brought its share of experimental, individual knowledge, by whom no touch of the world of form, colour, and passion was disregarded.

The literary life of Coleridge was a disinterested struggle against the application of the relative spirit to moral and religious questions. Everywhere he is restlessly scheming to apprehend the absolute; to affirm it effectively; to get it acknowledged. Coleridge failed in that attempt, happily even for him, for it was a struggle against the increasing life of the mind itself. The real loss was, that this controversial interest betrayed him into a direction which was not for him the path of the highest intellectual success; a direction in which his artistic talent could never find the conditions of its perfection. Still, there is so much witchery about his poems, that it is as a poet that he will most probably be permanently remembered. How did his choice of a controversial interest, his determination to affirm the absolute, weaken or modify his poetical gift?

In 1798 he joined Wordsworth in the composition of a volume of poems—the *Lyrical Ballads*. What Wordsworth then wrote is already vibrant with that blithe *élan* which carried him to final happiness and self-possession. In Coleridge we feel already that faintness and obscure dejection which cling like some contagious damp to all his writings. Wordsworth was to be distinguished by a joyful and penetrative conviction of the existence of certain latent affinities between nature and the hu-

man mind, which reciprocally gild the mind and nature with a kind of “heavenly alchemy.”

—My voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual mind
5 (And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species,) to the external world
Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too,
The external world is fitted to the mind:
And the creation, by no lower name
10 Can it be called, which they with blended might
Accomplish.

In Wordsworth this took the form of an unbroken dreaming over the aspects and transitions of nature, a reflective, but altogether unformulated, analysis of them.

15 There are in Coleridge’s poems expressions of this conviction as deep as Wordsworth’s. But Coleridge could never have abandoned himself to the dream as Wordsworth did, because the first condition of such abandonment is an untroubled quietness of heart. No one can read the “Lines composed above
20 Tintern” without feeling how potent the physical element was among the conditions of Wordsworth’s genius:—“felt in the blood and felt along the heart,”—“My whole life I have lived in quiet thought.” The stimulus which most artists require from nature he can renounce. He leaves the ready-made glory
25 of the Swiss mountains to reflect a glory on a mouldering leaf. He loves best to watch the floating thistle-down, because of its hint at an unseen life in the air. Coleridge’s temperament, ἀεί ἐν σφοδρᾷ-ὀρέξει, with its faintness, its grieved dejection, could never have been like that.

30 My genial spirits fail;
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
It were a vain endeavour,

1 Preface to the *Excursion*.

Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life whose fountains are within.

It is that flawless temperament in Wordsworth which 5
keeps his conviction of a latent intelligence in nature within the
limits of sentiment or instinct, and confines it to those delicate
and subdued shades of expression which perfect art allows.
In sadder dispositions, that is in the majority of cases, where
such a conviction has existed, it has stiffened into a formula, 10
it has frozen into a scientific or pseudo-scientific theory. For
the perception of those affinities brings one so near the absorb-
ing speculative problems of life—optimism, the proportion of
man to his place in nature, his prospects in relation to it—that
it ever tends to become theory through their contagion. Even 15
in Goethe, who has brilliantly handled the subject in his lyrics
entitled *Gott und Welt*, it becomes something stiffer than poet-
ry; it is tempered by the “pale cast” of his technical knowledge
of the nature of colours, of anatomy, of the metamorphosis of
plants. 20

That, however, which had only a limited power over Col-
eridge as sentiment, entirely possessed him as a philosophical
idea. We shall see in what follows how deep its power was, how
it pursued him everywhere, and seemed to him to interpret
every question. Wordsworth’s poetry is an optimism; it says 25
man’s relation to the world is, and may be seen by man to be, a
perfect relation; but it is an optimism that begins and ends in
an abiding instinct. Coleridge accepts the same optimism as a
philosophical idea, but an idea is relative to an intellectual as-
sent; sometimes it seems a better expression of facts, sometimes 30
a worse, as the understanding weighs it in the logical balances.
And so it is not a permanent consolation. It is only in the rarer
moments of intellectual warmth and sunlight that it is entirely
credible. In less exhilarating moments that perfect relation of
man and nature seems to shift and fail; that is, the philosophical 35
idea ceases to be realizable; and with Coleridge its place is not

supplied, as with Wordsworth, by the corresponding sentiment or instinct.

What in Wordsworth is a sentiment or instinct, is in Coleridge a philosophical idea. In other words, Coleridge's talent
5 is a more intellectual one than Wordsworth's, more dramatic, more self-conscious. Wordsworth's talent, deeply reflective as it is, because its base is an instinct, is deficient in self-knowledge. Possessed by the rumours and voices of the haunted country, the borders of which he has passed alone, he never thinks of
10 withdrawing from it to look down upon it from one of the central heights of human life. His power absorbs him, not he it; he cannot turn it round or get without it; he does not estimate its general relation to life. But Coleridge, just because the essence of his talent is the intuition of an idea, commands his talent.
15 He not only feels with Wordsworth the expression of mind in nature, but he can project that feeling outside him, reduce it to a psychological law, define its relation to other elements of culture, place it in a complete view of life.

And in some such activity as that, varied as his wide
20 learning, in a many-sided dramatic kind of poetry, assigning its place and value to every mode of the inward life, seems to have been for Coleridge the original path of artistic success. But in order to follow that path one must hold ideas loosely in the relative spirit, not seek to stereotype any one of the many modes
25 of that life; one must acknowledge that the mind is ever greater than its own products, devote ideas to the service of art rather than of γνῶσις, not disquiet oneself about the absolute. Perhaps Coleridge is more interesting because he did not follow this path. Repressing his artistic interest and voluntarily dis-
30 colouring his own work, he turned to console and strengthen the human mind, vulgarized or dejected, as he believed, by the acquisition of new knowledge about itself in the *éclaircissement* of the eighteenth century.

What the reader of our own generation will least find
35 in Coleridge's prose writings is the excitement of the literary sense. And yet in those grey volumes we have the production of one who made way ever by a charm, the charm of voice, of aspect, of language, above all, by the intellectual charm of new,

moving, luminous ideas. Perhaps the chief offence in Coleridge is an excess of seriousness, a seriousness that arises not from any moral principle, but from a misconception of the perfect manner. There is a certain shade of levity and unconcern, the perfect manner of the eighteenth century, which marks complete culture in the handling of abstract questions. The humanist, he who possesses that complete culture, does not weep over the failure of a theory of the quantification of the predicate, nor shriek over the fall of a philosophical formula. A kind of humour is one of the conditions of the true mental attitude in the criticism of past stages of thought. Humanity cannot afford to be too serious about them, any more than a man of good sense can afford to be too serious in looking back upon his own childhood. Plato, whom Coleridge claims as the first of his spiritual ancestors, Plato, as we remember him, a true humanist, with Petrarch and Goethe and M. Renan, holds his theories lightly, glances with a blithe and naïve inconsequence from one view to another, not anticipating the burden of meaning “views” will one day have for humanity. In reading him one feels how lately it was that Croesus thought it a paradox to say that external prosperity was not necessarily happiness. But on Coleridge lies the whole weight of the sad reflection that has since come into the world, with which for us the air is full, which the children in the market-place repeat to each other. Even his language is forced and broken, lest some saving formula should be lost—“distinctities”, “enucleation,” “pentad of operative Christianity”—he has a whole vocabulary of such phrases, and expects to turn the tide of human thought by fixing the sense of such expressions as “reason,” “understanding,” “idea.”

Again, he has not the jealousy of the true artist in excluding all associations that have no charm or colour or gladness in them; everywhere he allows the impress of an inferior theological literature; he is often prolix and importunate about most indifferent heroes—Sir Alexander Ball, Dr. Bell, even Dr. Bowyer, the coarse pedant of the Blue-coat School. And the source of all this is closely connected with the source of his literary activity. For Coleridge had chosen as the mark of his literary egotism a kind of intellectual *tour de force*—to found a religious

philosophy, to do something with the idea in spite of the essential nature of the idea. And therefore all is fictitious from the beginning. He had determined, that which is humdrum, insipid, which the human spirit has done with, shall yet stimulate and
5 inspire. What he produced symbolizes this purpose—the mass of it *ennuyant*, depressing: the *Aids to Reflection*, for instance, with Archbishop Leighton’s vague pieties all twisted into the jargon of a spiritualistic philosophy. But sometimes “the pulse of the God’s blood” does transmute it, kindling here and there a
10 spot that begins to live; as in that beautiful fragment at the end of the *Church and State*,¹ or in the distilled and concentrated beauty of such a passage as this,—

The first range of hills, that encircles the scanty vale of human life, is the horizon for the majority of its inhabitants. On its ridges the common sun is born and
15 departs. From them the stars rise, and touching them they vanish. By the many, even this range, the natural limit and bulwark of the vale, is but imperfectly known. Its higher ascents are too often hidden by mists and clouds
20 from uncultivated swamps, which few have courage or curiosity to penetrate. To the multitude below these vapours appear now as the dark haunts of terrific agents, on which none may intrude with impunity; and now all a-glow, with colours not their own, they are gazed at as
25 the splendid palaces of happiness and power. But in all ages there have been a few who, measuring and sounding the rivers of the vale at the feet of their furthest inaccessible falls, have learned that the sources must be far higher and far inward; a few who, even in the level streams, have
30 detected elements which neither the vale itself nor the surrounding mountains contained or could supply.—*Biographia Literaria*, vol. I. p. 247.

“I was driven from life in motion to life in thought and sensation.” So Coleridge sums up his childhood

¹ Page 208.

with its delicacy, its sensitiveness, and passion. From his tenth to his eighteenth year he was at a rough school in London. Speaking of this time, he says:—

When I was first plucked up and transplanted from my birthplace and family, Providence, it has often occurred to me, gave me the first intimation that it was my lot, and that it was best for me, to make or find my way of life a detached individual, a *terræ filius*, who was to ask love or service of no one on any more specific relation than that of being a man, and as such to take my chance for the free charities of humanity. 5
10

Even his fine external nature was for years repressed, wronged, driven inward—"at fourteen I was in a continual state of low fever." He becomes a dreamer, an eager student, but without ambition. 15

This depressed boy is nevertheless, on the spiritual side, the child of a noble house. At twenty-five he is exercising a wonderful charm, and has defined for himself a peculiar line of intellectual activity. He had left Cambridge without a degree, a Unitarian. Unable to take orders, he determined through Southey's influence to devote himself to literature. When he left Cambridge there was a prejudice against him which has given occasion to certain suspicions. Those who knew him best discredit these suspicions. What is certain is that he was subject to fits of violent, sometimes fantastic, despondency. He retired to Stowey, in Somersetshire, to study poetry and philosophy. In 1797 his poetical gift was in full flower; he wrote "Kubla Khan," the first part of *Christabel*, and the *Ancient Mariner*. His literary success grew in spite of opposition. He had a strange attractive gift of conversation, or rather of monologue, as De Staël said, full of *bizarrierie*, with the rapid alternations of a dream, and here and there a sudden summons into a world strange to the hearer, abounding with images drawn from a sort of divided, imperfect life, as of one to whom the external world penetrated 20
25
30

1 *Biographical Supplement to Biographia Literaria*, chap ii.

only in part, and blended with all this passages of the deepest
obscurity, precious only for their musical cadence, the echo
in Coleridge of the eloquence of the older English writers, of
whom he was so ardent a lover. All through this brilliant course
5 we may discern the power of the Asiatic temperament, of that
voluptuousness which is perhaps connected with his apprecia-
tion of the intimacy, the almost mystical *rappport* between man
and nature. "I am much better," he writes, "and my new and ten-
der health is all over me like a voluptuous feeling."

10 And whatever fame, or charm, or life-inspiring gift he
has had is the vibration of the interest he excited then, the pro-
pulsion into years that clouded his early promise of that first
buoyant, irresistible self-assertion: so great is even the indirect
power of a sincere effort towards the ideal life, of even a tem-
15 porary escape of the spirit from routine. Perhaps, the surest
sign of his election—that he was indeed, on the spiritual side,
the child of a noble house—is that story of the Pantisocratic
scheme, which at this distance looks so grotesque. In his enthu-
siasm for the French Revolution, the old communistic dream
20 with its appeal to nature (perhaps a little theatrical), touched
him, as it had touched Rousseau, Saint-Pierre, and Chateau-
briand. He had married one, his affection for whom seems to
have been only a passing feeling; with her and a few friends he
was to found a communistic settlement on the banks of the
25 Susquehanna—"the name was pretty and metrical." It was one
of Coleridge's lightest dreams; but also one which could only
have passed through the liberal air of his earlier life. The later
years of the French Revolution, which for us have discredited
all such dreams, deprived him of that youthfulness which is the
30 preservative element in a literary talent.

In 1798, he visited Germany. A beautiful fragment of this
period remains, describing a spring excursion to the Brock-
en. His excitement still vibrates in it. Love, all joyful states of
mind, are self-expressive; they loosen the tongue, they fill the
35 thoughts with sensuous images, they harmonise one with the
world of sight. We hear of the "rich graciousness and courtesy"
of Coleridge's manner, of the white and delicate skin, the abun-
dant black hair, the full, almost animal lips, that whole physi-

ogonomy of the dreamer already touched with fanaticism. One says of the text of one of his Unitarian sermons, "his voice rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes;" another, "he talks like an angel, and does—nothing."

Meantime, he had designed an intellectual novelty in the shape of a religious philosophy. Socinian theology and the philosophy of Hartley had become distasteful. "Whatever is against right reason, that no faith can oblige us to believe." Coleridge quotes these words from Jeremy Taylor. And yet ever since the dawn of the Renaissance, had subsisted a conflict between reason and faith. From the first, indeed, the Christian religion had affirmed the existence of such a conflict, and had even based its plea upon its own weakness in it. In face of the classical culture, with its deep wide-struck roots in the world as it permanently exists, St. Paul asserted the claims of that which could not appeal with success to any genuinely human principle. Paradox as it was, that was the strength of the new spirit; for how much is there at all times in humanity which cannot appeal with success for encouragement or tolerance to any genuinely human principle. In the Middle Ages it might seem that faith had reconciled itself to philosophy; the Catholic church was the leader of the world's life as well as of the spirit's. Looking closer we see that the conflict is still latent there; the supremacy of faith is only a part of the worship of sorrow and weakness which marks the age. The weak are no longer merely a majority, they are all Europe. It is not that faith has become one with reason; but a strange winter, a strange suspension of life, has passed over the classical culture which is only the human reason in its most trenchant form. Glimpse after glimpse, as that pagan culture awoke to life the conflict was felt once more. It is at the court of Frederick II. that the Renaissance first becomes discernible as an actual power in European society. How definite and unmistakable is the attitude of faith towards that! Ever since the Reformation all phases of theology had been imperfect philosophies, reluctant philosophies—that is, in which there was a religious *arrière pensée*; philosophies which could never be in the ascendant in a sincerely scientific sphere. The two elements had never really mixed. Writers so different as Locke and Taylor

have each his liberal philosophy, and each has his defence of the orthodox belief; but, also, each has a divided mind: we wonder how the two elements could have existed side by side; brought together in a single mind, but unable to fuse in it, they reveal
5 their radical contrariety. The Catholic church and humanity are two powers that divide the intellect and spirit of man. On the Catholic side is faith, rigidly logical as Ultramontanism, with a proportion of the facts of life, that is, all that is despairing in life coming naturally under its formula. On the side of humanity is
10 all that is desirable in the world, all that is sympathetic with its laws, and succeeds through that sympathy. Doubtless, for the individual, there are a thousand intermediate shades of opinion, a thousand resting-places for the religious spirit; still, τὸ διορίζειν οὐκ ἔστι τῶν πολλῶν, fine distinctions are not for the
15 majority; and this makes time eventually a dogmatist, working out the opposition in its most trenchant form, and fixing the horns of the dilemma; until, in the present day, we have on one side Pius IX., the true descendant of the fisherman, issuing the Encyclical, pleading the old promise against the world with a
20 special kind of justice; and on the other side, the irresistible modern culture, which, as religious men often remind us, is only Christian accidentally.

The peculiar temper of Coleridge's intellect made the idea of reconciling this conflict very seductive. With a true
25 speculative talent he united a false kind of subtlety and the full share of vanity. A dexterous intellectual *tour de force* has always an independent charm; and therefore it is well for the cause of truth that the directness, sincerity, and naturalness of things are beyond a certain limit sacrificed in vain to a factitious interest.
30 A method so forced as that of Coleridge's religious philosophy is from the first doomed to be insipid, so soon as the temporary interest or taste or curiosity it was designed to meet has passed away. Then, as to the manner of such book as the *Aids to Reflection*, or *The Friend*:—These books came from one whose
35 vocation was in the world of art; and yet, perhaps, of all books that have been influential in modern times, they are farthest from the classical form—bundles of notes—the original matter inseparably mixed up with that borrowed from others—the

whole just that mere preparation for an artistic effect which the finished artist would be careful one day to destroy. Here, again, we have a trait profoundly characteristic of Coleridge. He often attempts to reduce a phase of thought subtle and exquisite to conditions too rough for it. He uses a purely speculative gift in direct moral edification. Scientific truth is something fugitive, relative, full of fine gradations; he tries to fix it in absolute formulas. The *Aids to Reflection*, or *The Friend*, is an effort to propagate the volatile spirit of conversation into the less ethereal fabric of a written book: and it is only here and there that the poorer matter becomes vibrant, is really lifted by the spirit. At forty-two, we find Coleridge saying, in a letter:—

I feel with an intensity unfathomable by words my utter nothingness, impotence, and worthlessness in and for myself. I have learned what a sin is against an infinite, imperishable being such as is the soul of man. The consolations, at least the sensible sweetness of hope, I do not possess. On the contrary, the temptation which I have constantly to fight up against is a fear that, if annihilation and the possibility of heaven were offered to my choice, I should choose the former.¹

What was the cause of this change? That is precisely the point on which, after all the gossip there has been, we are still ignorant. At times Coleridge's opium excesses were great; but what led to those excesses must not be left out of account. From boyhood he had a tendency to low fever, betrayed by his constant appetite for bathing and swimming, which he indulged even when a physician had opposed it. In 1803, he went to Malta as secretary to the English Governor. His daughter suspects that the source of the evil was there, that for one of his constitution the climate of Malta was deadly. At all events, when he returned, the charm of those five wonderful years had failed at the source.

1 Quoted in Gillman's *Life of Coleridge*.

De Quincey said of him, "he wanted better bread than can be made with wheat." Lamb said of him that from boyhood he had "hungered for eternity." Henceforth those are the two notes of his life. From this time we must look for no more true
5 literary talent in him. His style becomes greyer and greyer, his thoughts *outré*, exaggerated, a kind of credulity or superstition exercised upon abstract words. Like Clifford, in Hawthorne's beautiful romance—the born Epicurean, who by some strange wrong has passed the best of his days in a prison—he is the
10 victim of a division of the will, often showing itself in trivial things: he could never choose on which side of the garden path he would walk. In 1803, he wrote a poem on "The Pains of Sleep." That unrest increased. Mr. Gillman tells us "he had long been greatly afflicted with nightmare, and when residing with
15 us was frequently aroused from this painful sleep by any one of the family who might hear him."

That faintness and continual dissolution had its own consumptive refinements, and even brought as to the "Beautiful Soul," in *Wilhelm Meister*, a faint religious ecstasy—that
20 singing in the sails which is not of the breeze. Here, again, is a note of Coleridge's:—

In looking at objects of nature while I am thinking, as at yonder moon, dim-glimmering through the window-pane, I seem rather to be seeking, as it were asking,
25 a symbolical language for something within me that already and for ever exists, than observing anything new. Even when that latter is the case, yet still I have always an obscure feeling, as if that new phenomenon were the dim awaking of a forgotten or hidden truth of my inner
30 nature.

Then,

while I was preparing the pen to write this remark, I lost the train of thought which had led me to it.

What a distemper of the eye of the mind! What an almost bodily distemper there is in that!

Coleridge's intellectual sorrows were many; but he had one singular intellectual happiness. With an inborn-taste for transcendental philosophy, he lived just at the time when that philosophy took an immense spring in Germany, and connected itself with a brilliant literary movement. He had the luck to light upon it in its freshness, and introduce it to his countrymen. What an opportunity for one reared on the colourless English philosophies, but who feels an irresistible attraction towards metaphysical synthesis! How rare are such occasions of intellectual contentment! This transcendental philosophy, chiefly as systematized by Schelling, Coleridge applies with an eager, unwearied subtlety, to the questions of theology and art-criticism. It is in his theory of art-criticism that he comes nearest to true and important principles; that is the least fugitive part of his work. Let us take this first; here we shall most clearly apprehend his main principle.

What, then, is the essence of this criticism? On the whole it may be described as an attempt to reclaim the world of art as a world of fixed laws—to show that the creative activity of genius and the simplest act of thought are but higher and lower products of the laws of a universal logic. Criticism, feeling its own unsuccess in dealing with the greater works of art, has sometimes made too much of those dark and capricious suggestions of genius which even the intellect possessed by them is unable to track or recall. It has seemed due to their half-sacred character to look for no link between the process by which they were produced and the slighter processes of the mind. Coleridge assumes that the highest phases of thought must be more, not less, than the lower subjects of law.

With this interest, in the *Biographia Literaria*, he refines Schelling's "Philosophy of Nature" into a theory of art. "Es giebt kein Plagiat in der Philosophie," says Heine, alluding to the charge brought against Schelling of unacknowledged borrowing from Bruno;¹ and certainly that which is common to Coler-

¹ *Zur Geschichte der Religion und Philosophie in Deutschland*, buch 3..

idge and Schelling is of far earlier origin than the Renaissance. Schellingism, the "Philosophy of Nature," is indeed a constant tradition in the history of thought; it embodies a permanent type of the speculative temper. That mode of conceiving nature
5 as a mirror or reflex of the intelligence of man may be traced up to the first beginnings of Greek speculation. There are two ways of envisaging those aspects of nature which appear to bear the impress of reason or intelligence. There is the deist's way, which regards them merely as marks of design, which separates the informing mind from nature as the mechanist from
10 the machine; and there is the pantheistic way, which identifies the two, which regards nature itself as the living energy of an intelligence of the same kind as, but vaster than, the human. Greek philosophy, finding indications of mind everywhere,
15 dwelling exclusively in its observations on that which is general or formal, on that which modern criticism regards as the modification of things by the mind of the observer, adopts the latter, or pantheistic way, through the influence of the previous mythological period. Mythology begins in the early necessities
20 of language, of which it is a kind of accident. But at a later period its essence changes; it becomes what it was not at its birth, the servant of a genuine poetic interest, a kind of vivification of nature. Played upon by those accidents of language, the Greek mind becomes possessed by the conception of nature as living,
25 ing, thinking, almost speaking to the mind of man. This unfixed poetical prepossession reduced to an abstract form, petrified into an idea, is the conception which gives a unity of aim to Greek philosophy. Step by step it works out the substance of the Hegelian formula: "Was ist, das ist vernunftig; was vernunftig ist, das ist"—Whatever is, is according to reason; whatever
30 is according to reason, that is. A science of which that could be the formula is still but an intellectual aspiration; the formula of true science is different. Experience, which has gradually saddened the earth's colour, stiffened its motions, withdrawn
35 from it some blithe and debonair presence, has moderated our demands upon science. The positive method makes very little account of marks of intelligence in nature; in its wider view of phenomena it sees that those incidents are a minority, and

may rank as happy coincidences; it absorbs them in the simpler conception of law. But the suspicion of a mind latent in nature, struggling for release and intercourse with the intellect of man through true ideas, has never ceased to haunt a certain class of minds. Started again and again in successive periods by enthusiasts on the antique pattern, in each case the thought has seemed paler and more evanescent amidst the growing consistency and sharpness of outline of other and more positive forms of knowledge. Still, wherever a speculative instinct has been united with extreme inwardness of temperament, as in Jakob Böhme, there the old Greek conception, like some seed floating in the air, has taken root and sprung up anew. Coleridge, thrust inward upon himself, driven from “life in thought and sensation” to life in thought only, feels in that dark London school a thread of the Greek mind vibrating strangely in him. At fifteen he is discoursing on Plotinus, and has translated the hymns of Synesius. So in later years he reflects from Schelling the flitting tradition. He conceives a subtle co-ordination between the ideas of the mind and the laws of the natural world. Science is to be attained not by observation, analysis, generalization, but by the evolution or recovery of those ideas from within by a sort of ἀνάμνησις, every group of observed facts remaining an enigma until the appropriate idea is struck upon them from the mind of Newton or Cuvier, the genius in whom sympathy with the universal reason is entire. Next he supposes that this reason or intelligence in nature gradually becomes reflective—self-conscious. He fancies he can track through all the simpler orders of life fragments of an eloquent prophecy about the human mind. He regards the whole of nature as a development of higher forms out of the lower through shade after shade of systematic change. The dim stir of chemical atoms towards the axes of a crystal form, the trance-like life of plants, the animal troubled by strange irritabilities, are stages which anticipate consciousness. All through that increasing stir of life this was forming itself; each stage in its unsatisfied susceptibilities seeming to be drawn out of its own limits by the more pronounced current of life on its confines, the “shadow of approaching humanity” gradually deepening, the latent in-

telligence working to the surface. At this point the law of development does not lose itself in caprice; rather it becomes more constraining and incisive. From the lowest to the highest acts of intelligence there is another range of refining shades. Gradually
5 the mind concentrates itself, frees itself from the limits of the particular, the individual, attains a strange power of modifying and centralizing what it receives from without according to an inward ideal. At last, in imaginative genius, ideas become effective, the intelligence of nature, with all its elements connected
10 and justified, is clearly reflected; and the interpretation of its latent purposes is fixed in works of art.

In this fanciful and bizarre attempt to rationalize art, to range it under the dominion of law, there is still a gap to be filled up. What is that common law of the mind of which a work of art
15 and the slightest acts of thought are alike products? Here Coleridge weaves in Kant's fine-spun theory of the transformation of sense into perception. What every theory of perception has to explain is that associative power which gathers isolated sensible qualities into the objects of the world about us. Sense, without
20 an associative power, would be only a threadlike stream of colours, sounds, odours—each struck upon one for a moment and then withdrawn. The basis of this association may be represented as a material one, a kind of many-coloured “etching” on the brain. Hartley has dexterously handled this hypothesis. The
25 charm of his “theory of vibrations” is the vivid image it presents to the fancy. How large an element in a speculative talent is the command of these happy images! Coleridge, by a finer effort of the same kind, a greater delicacy of fancy, detects all sorts of slips, transitions, breaks of continuity in Hartley's glancing
30 cobweb. Coleridge, with Kant, regards all association as effected by a power within, to which he gives a fanciful Greek name.¹ In an act of perception there is the matter which sense presents, colour, tone, feeling; but also a form or mould, such as space, unity, causation, suggested from within. In these forms we
35 arrest and frame the many attributes of sense. It is like that simple chemical phenomenon where two colourless fluids uniting

1 Esemplastic, εἰς ἓν πλάτειν.

reflect a full colour. Neither matter nor form can be perceived
asunder, they unite into the many-coloured image of life. This
theory has not been able to bear a loyal induction. Even if it
were true, how little it would tell us; how it attenuates fact!
There, again, the charm is all in the clear image; the image of 5
the artist combining a few elementary colours, curves, sounds
into a new whole. Well, this power of association, of concen-
trating many elements of sense in an object of perception, is
refined and deepened into the creative acts of imagination.

We of the modern ages have become so familiarized with 10
the greater works of art that we are little sensitive of the act
of creation in them; they do not impress us as a new presence in
the world. Only sometimes in productions which realize im-
mediately a profound emotion and enforce a change in taste,
such as *Werther* or *Emile*, we are actual witnesses of the mould- 15
ing of an unforeseen type by some new principle of association.
By imagination, the distinction between which and fancy is so
thrust upon his readers, Coleridge means a vigorous act of as-
sociation, which, by simplifying and restraining their natural
expression to an artificial order, refines and perfects the types 20
of human passion. It represents the excitements of the human
mind, but reflected in a new manner, "excitement itself imitat-
ing order." "Originally the offspring of passion," he somewhere
says, "but now the adopted children of power." So far there is
nothing new or distinctive; every one who can receive from a 25
poem or picture a total impression will admit so much. What
makes the view distinctive in Coleridge are the Schellingistic
associations with which he colours it, that faint glamour of the
philosophy of nature which was ever influencing his thoughts.
That suggested the idea of a subtly winding parallel, a "rapport" 30
in every detail, between the human mind and the world without
it, laws of nature being so many transformed ideas. Converse-
ly, the ideas of the human mind would be only transformed
laws. Genius would be in a literal sense an exquisitely purged
sympathy with nature. Those associative conceptions of the 35
imagination, those unforeseen types of passion, would come
not so much of the artifice and invention of the understanding
as from self-surrender to the suggestions of nature; they would

be evolved by the stir of nature itself realizing the highest reach of its latent intelligence; they would have a kind of antecedent necessity to rise at some time to the surface of the human mind.

5 It is natural that Shakespeare should be the idol of all such criticism, whether in England or Germany. The first effect in Shakespeare is that of capricious detail, of the waywardness that plays with the parts careless of the impression of the whole. But beyond there is the constraining unity of effect, the unef-
10 faceable impression of *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*. His hand moving freely is curved round by some law of gravitation from within; that is, there is the most constraining unity in the most abundant variety. Coleridge exaggerates this unity into something like the unity of a natural organism, the associative act that effected it into something closely akin to the primitive power of
15 nature itself. "In the Shakespearean drama," he says, "there is a vitality which grows and evolves itself from within."

Again,

20 He, too, worked in the spirit of nature, by evolving the germ from within by the imaginative power according to the idea. For as the power of seeing is to light, so is an idea in mind to a law in nature. They are correlatives which suppose each other.

Again,

25 The organic form is innate; it shapes, as it develops, itself from within, and the fulness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form. Such as the life is, such is the form. Nature, the primitive genial artist, inexhaustible in diverse powers,
30 is equally inexhaustible in forms; each exterior is the physiognomy of the being within, and even such is the appropriate excellence of Shakespeare, himself a nature humanised, a genial understanding, directing self-consciously a power and an implicit wisdom deeper even than our consciousness.

There “the absolute” has been affirmed in the sphere of art; and thought begins to congeal. Coleridge has not only overstrained the elasticity of his hypothesis, but has also obscured the true interest of art. For after all the artist has become something almost mechanical; instead of being the most luminous and self-possessed phase of consciousness, the associative act itself looks like some organic process of assimilation. The work of art is sometimes likened to the living organism. That expresses the impression of a self-delighting, independent life which a finished work of art gives us; it does not express the process by which that work was produced. Here there is no blind ferment of lifeless elements to realize a type. By exquisite analysis the artist attains clearness of idea, then by many stages of refining clearness of expression. He moves slowly over his work, calculating the tenderest tone, and restraining the subtlest curve, never letting his hand or fancy move at large, gradually refining flaccid spaces to the higher degree of expressiveness. Culture, at least, values even in transcendent works of art the power of the understanding in them, their logical process of construction, the spectacle of supreme intellectual dexterity which they afford.

Coleridge’s criticism may well be remembered as part of the long pleading of German culture for the things “behind the veil.” It recalls us from the work of art to the mind of the artist; and after all, this is what is infinitely precious, and the work of art only as the index of it. Still, that is only the narrower side of a complete criticism. Perhaps it is true, as some one says in Lessing’s *Emilia Galotti*, that, if Michael Angelo had been born without hands, he would still have been the greatest of artists. But we must admit the truth also of an opposite view: “In morals as in art,” says M. Renan, “the word is nothing,—the fact is everything. The idea which lurks under a picture of Raphael is a slight matter; it is the picture itself only that counts.”

What constitutes an artistic gift is first of all a natural susceptibility to moments of strange excitement, in which the colours freshen upon our threadbare world, and the routine of things about us is broken by a novel and happier synthesis. These are moments into which other minds may be made to

enter, but which they cannot originate. This susceptibility is the element of genius in an artistic gift. Secondly, there is what may be called the talent of projection, of throwing these happy moments into an external concrete form—a statue, or play, or picture. That projection is of all degrees of completeness; its facility and transparency are modified by the circumstances of the individual, his culture and his age. When it is perfectly transparent, the work is classical. Compare the power of projection in Mr. Browning's *Sordello*, with that power in the *Sorrows of Werther*. These two elements determine the two chief aims of criticism. First, it has to classify those initiative moments according to the amount of interest excited in them, to estimate their comparative acceptability, their comparative power of giving joy to those who undergo them. Secondly, it has to test, by a study of the artistic product itself, in connexion with the intellectual and spiritual condition of its age, the completeness of the projection. These two aims form the positive, or concrete side of criticism; their direction is not towards a metaphysical definition of the universal element in an artistic effort, but towards a subtle gradation of the shades of difference between one artistic gift and another. This side of criticism is infinitely varied; and it is what French culture more often achieves than the German.

Coleridge has not achieved this side in an equal degree with the other; and this want is not supplied by the *Literary Remains*, which contain his studies on Shakespeare. There we have a repetition, not an application, of the "absolute" formula. Coleridge is like one who sees in a picture only the rules of perspective, and is always trying to simplify even these. Thus: "Where there is no humour, but only wit, or the like, there is no growth from within." "What is beauty?" he asks. "It is the unity of the manifold, the coalescence of the diverse." So of Dante:—"There is a total impression of infinity; the wholeness is not in vision or conception, but in an inner feeling of totality and absolute being." Again, of the *Paradise Lost*:—"It has the totality of the poem as distinguished from the *ab ovo* birth and parentage or straight line of history."

That exaggerated inwardness is barren. Here, too, Coleridge's thoughts require to be thawed, to be set in motion. He is admirable in the detection, the analysis and statement, of a few of the highest general laws of art-production. But he withdraws us too far from what we can see, hear, and feel. Doubtless, the idea, the intellectual element, is the spirit and life of art. Still, art is the triumph of the senses and the emotions; and the senses and the emotions must not be cheated of their triumph after all. That strange and beautiful psychology which he employs, with its evanescent delicacies, has not sufficient corporeity. Again, one feels that the discussion about Hartley, meeting us in the way, throws a tone of insecurity over the critical theory which it introduces. Its only effect is to win for the terms in which that Criticism is expressed the associations of one side in a metaphysical controversy.

The vagueness and fluidity of Coleridge's theological opinions have been exaggerated through an illusion, which has arisen from the occasional form in which they have reached us. Criticism, then, has to methodize and focus them. They may be arranged under three heads: the general principles of supernaturalism, orthodox dogmas, the interpretation of Scripture. With regard to the first and second, Coleridge ranks as a Conservative thinker; but his principles of Scriptural interpretation resemble Lessing's; they entitle him to be regarded as the founder of the modern liberal school of English theology. By supernaturalism is meant the theory of a divine person in immediate communication with the human mind, dealing with it out of that order of nature which includes man's body and his ordinary trains of thought, according to fixed laws, which the theologian sums up in the doctrines of "grace" and "sin." Of this supernaturalism, the *Aids to Reflection* attempts to give a metaphysical proof. The first necessity of the argument is to prove that religion, with its supposed experiences of grace and sin, and the realities of a world above the world of sense, is the fulfilment of the constitution of every man, or, in the language of the "philosophy of nature," is part of the "idea" of man; so that when those experiences are absent all the rest of his nature is unexplained, like some enigmatical fragment, the construc-

tion and working of which we cannot surmise. According to Schelling's principle, the explanation of every phase of life is to be sought in that next above it. This axiom is applied to three supposed states of man's reflective life: Prudence, Morality, Religion. Prudence, by which Coleridge means something like Bentham's "enlightened principle of self-preservation," is, he says, an inexplicable instinct, a blind motion in the dark, until it is expanded into morality. Morality, again, is but a groundless prepossession until transformed into a religious recognition of a spiritual world, until, as Coleridge says in his rich figurative language, "like the main feeder into some majestic lake, rich with hidden springs of its own, it flows into and becomes one with the spiritual life." A spiritual life, then, being the fulfilment of human nature, implied, if we see clearly, in those instincts which enable one to live on from day to day, is part of the "idea" of man.

The second necessity of the argument is to prove that "the idea," according to the principle of the "philosophy of nature," is an infallible index of the actual condition of the world without us. Here Coleridge introduces an analogy:

In the world, we see everywhere evidences of a unity, which the component parts are so far from explaining, that they necessarily presuppose it as the cause and condition of their existing as those parts, or even of their existing at all. This antecedent unity, or cause and principle of each union, it has, since the time of Bacon and Kepler, been customary to call a law. This crocus for instance; or any other flower the reader may have before his sight, or choose to bring before his fancy; that the root, stem, leaves, petals, &c., cohere to one plant is owing to an antecedent power or principle in the seed which existed before a single particle of the matters that constitute the size and visibility of the crocus had been attracted from the surrounding soil, air, and moisture. Shall we turn to the seed? there, too, the same necessity meets us: an antecedent unity must here, too, be supposed. Analyze the seeds with the finest tools, and let the solar microscope

come in aid of your senses, what do you find?—means and instruments; a wondrous fairy tale of nature, magazines of food, stores of various sorts, pipes, spiracles, defences; a house of many chambers, and the owner and inhabitant invisible.—*Aids to Reflection*, p. 68.

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Nature, that is, works by what we may call intact ideas. It co-ordinates every part of the crocus to all the other parts; one stage of its growth to the whole process; and having framed its organism to assimilate certain external elements, it does not cheat it of those elements, soil, air, moisture. Well, if the “idea” of man is to be intact, he must be enveloped in a supernatural world; and nature always works by intact ideas. The spiritual life is the highest development of the idea of man; there must be a supernatural world corresponding to it.

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One finds, it is hard to say how many, difficulties in drawing Coleridge’s conclusion. To mention only one of them—the argument looks too like the exploded doctrine of final causes. Of course the crocus would not live unless the conditions of its life were supplied. The flower is made for soil, air, moisture, and it has them; just as man’s senses are made for a sensible world, and we have the sensible world. But give the flower the power of dreaming, nourish it on its own reveries, put man’s wild hunger of heart and susceptibility to *ennui* in it, and what indication of the laws of the world without it would be afforded by its longing to break its bonds?

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In theology people are content with analogies, probabilities with the empty schemes of arguments for which the data are still lacking; arguments, the rejection of which Coleridge tells us implies “an evil heart of unbelief,” but of which we might as truly say that they derive all their consistency from the peculiar atmosphere of the mind which receives them. Such arguments are received in theology because what chains men to a religion is not its claim on their reason, their hopes or fears, but the glow it affords to the world, its “*beau idéal*.” Coleridge thinks that if we reject the supernatural, the spiritual element in life will evaporate also, that we shall have to accept a life with narrow horizons, without disinterestedness, harshly cut off

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from the springs of life in the past. But what is this spiritual element? It is the passion for inward perfection with its sorrows, its aspirations, its joy. These mental states are the delicacies of the higher morality of the few, of Augustine, of the author of the *Imitation*, of Francis de Sales; in their essence they are only the permanent characteristics of the higher life. Augustine, or the author of the *Imitation*, agreeably to the culture of their age, had expressed them in the terms of a metaphysical theory, and expanded them into what theologians call the doctrines of grace and sin, the fluctuations of the union of the soul with its unseen friend. The life of those who are capable of a passion for perfection still produces the same mental states; but that religious expression of them is no longer congruous with the culture of the age. Still, all inward life works itself out in a few simple forms, and culture cannot go very far before the religious graces reappear in it in a subtilized intellectual shape. There are aspects of the religious character which have an artistic worth distinct from their religious import. Longing, a chastened temper, spiritual joy, are precious states of mind, not because they are part of man's duty or because God has commanded them, still less because they are means of obtaining a reward, but because like culture itself they are remote, refined, intense, existing only by the triumph of a few over a dead world of routine in which there is no lifting of the soul at all. If there is no other world, art in its own interest must cherish such characteristics as beautiful spectacles. Stephen's face, "like the face of an angel," has a worth of its own, even if the opened heaven is but a dream.

Our culture, then, is not supreme, our intellectual life is incomplete, we fail of the intellectual throne, if we have no inward longing, inward chastening, inward joy. Religious belief, the craving for objects of belief, may be refined out of our hearts, but they must leave their sacred perfume, their spiritual sweetness, behind. This law of the highest intellectual life has sometimes seemed hard to understand. Those who maintain the claims of the older and narrower forms of religious life against the claims of culture are often embarrassed at finding the intellectual life heated through with the very graces to which they

would sacrifice it. How often in the higher class of theological writings—writings which really spring from an original religious genius, such as those of Dr. Newman—does the modern aspirant to perfect culture seem to find the expression of the inmost delicacies of his own life, the same yet different! The spiritualities of the Christian life have often drawn men on little by little into the broader spiritualities of systems opposed to it—pantheism, or positivism, or a philosophy of indifference. Many in our own generation, through religion, have become dead to religion. How often do we have to look for some feature of the ancient religious life, not in a modern saint, but in a modern artist or philosopher! For those who have passed out of Christianity, perhaps its most precious souvenir is the ideal of a transcendental disinterestedness. Where shall we look for this ideal? In Spinoza; or perhaps in Bentham or in Austin.

Some of those who have wished to save supernaturalism—as, for instance, Theodore Parker—have rejected more or less entirely the dogmas of the Church. Coleridge's instinct is truer than theirs; the two classes of principles are logically connected. It was in defence of the dogmas of the Church that Coleridge elaborated his unhappy crotchet of the diversity of the reason from the understanding. The weakness of these dogmas had ever been not so much a failure of the authority of Scripture or tradition in their favour, as their conflict with the reason that they were words rather than conceptions. That analysis of words and conceptions which in modern philosophy has been a principle of continual rejuvenescence with Descartes and Berkeley, as well as with Bacon and Locke, had desolated the field of scholastic theology. It is the rationality of the dogmas of that theology that Coleridge had a taste for proving.

Of course they conflicted with the understanding, with the common daylight of the mind, but then might there not be some mental faculty higher than the understanding? The history of philosophy supplied many authorities for this opinion. Then, according to the "philosophy of nature," science and art are both grounded upon the "ideas" of genius, which are a kind of intuition, which are their own evidence. Again, this philosophy was always saying the ideas of the mind must be true, must

correspond to reality; and what an aid to faith is that, if one is not too nice in distinguishing between ideas and mere convictions, or prejudices, or habitual views, or safe opinions! Kant also had made a distinction between the reason and the understanding. True, this harsh division of mental faculties is exactly
5 what is most sterile in Kant, the essential tendency of the German school of thought being to show that the mind always acts *en masse*. Kant had defined two senses of “reason” as opposed to “the understanding.” First, there was the “speculative reason,” with its “three categories of totality,” God, the soul, and
10 the universe—three mental forms which might give a sort of unity to science, but to which no actual intuition corresponded. The tendency of this part of Kant’s critique is to destroy the rational groundwork of theism. Then there was the “practical reason,” on the relation of which to the “speculative,” we may
15 listen to Heinrich Heine:—

“After the tragedy comes the farce. (The tragedy is Kant’s destructive criticism of the speculative reason.) So far Immanuel Kant has been playing the relentless
20 philosopher; he has laid siege to heaven.” Heine goes on with some violence to describe the havoc Kant has made of the orthodox belief—“Old Lampe,¹ with the umbrella under his arm, stands looking on much disturbed, perspiration and tears of sorrow running down his cheeks.
25 Then Immanuel Kant grows pitiful, and shows that he is not only a great philosopher but also a good man. He considers a little; and then, half in good nature, half in irony, he says, ‘Old Lampe must have a god, otherwise the poor man will not be happy; but man ought to be
30 happy in this life, the practical reason says that; let the practical reason stand surety for the existence of a god; it is all the same to me.’ Following this argument, Kant distinguished between the theoretical and the practical reason, and, with the practical reason for a magic wand,

1 The servant who attended Kant in his walks.

he brings to life the dead body of deism, which the theoretical reason had slain.

Coleridge first confused the speculative reason with the practical, and then exaggerated the variety and the sphere of their combined functions. Then he has given no consistent definition of the reason. It is “the power of universal and necessary convictions;” it is “the knowledge of the laws of the whole considered as one;” it is “the science of all as a whole.” Again, the understanding is “the faculty judging according to sense,” or “the faculty of means to mediate ends;” and so on. The conception floating in his mind seems to have been a really valuable one; that, namely, of a distinction between an organ of adequate and an organ of inadequate ideas. But when we find him casting about for a definition, not precisely determining the functions of the reason, making long preparations for the “deduction” of the faculty, as in the third volume of *The Friend*, but never actually starting, we suspect that the reason is a discovery in psychology which Coleridge has a good will to make, and that is all; that he has got no farther than the old vague desire to escape from the limitations of thought by some extraordinary mystical faculty. Some of the clergy eagerly welcomed the supposed discovery. In their difficulties they had often appealed in the old simple way to sentiment and emotion as of higher authority than the understanding, and on the whole had had to get on with very little philosophy. Like M. Jourdain, they were amazed to find that they had been all the time appealing to the reason; now they might actually go out to meet the enemy. Orthodoxy might be cured by a hair of the dog that had bitten it.

Theology is a great house, scored all over with hieroglyphics by perished hands. When we decipher one of those hieroglyphics, we find in it the statement of a mistaken opinion; but knowledge has crept onward since the hand dropped from the wall; we no longer entertain the opinion, and we can trace the origin of the mistake. Dogmas are precious as memorials of a class of sincere and beautiful spirits, who in a past age of humanity struggled with many tears, if not for true knowledge, yet for a noble and elevated happiness. That struggle is the sub-

stance, the dogma only its shadowy expression; received traditionally in an altered age, it is the shadow of a shadow, a mere τριτον ειδωλον, twice removed from substance and reality. The true method then in the treatment of dogmatic theology must
5 be historical. Englishmen are gradually finding out how much that method has done since the beginning of modern criticism by the hands of such writers as Baur. Coleridge had many of the elements of this method: learning, inwardness, a subtle psychology, a dramatic power of sympathy with modes of thought
10 other than his own. Often in carrying out his own method he gives the true historical origin of a dogma, but with a strange dullness of the historical sense, he regards this as a reason for the existence of the dogma now, not merely as reason for its having existed in the past. Those historical elements he could
15 not envisage in the historical method, because this method is only one of the applications, the most fruitful of them all, of the relative spirit.

After Coleridge's death, seven letters of his on the inspiration of Scripture were published, under the title of *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*. This little book has done more than
20 any other of Coleridge's writings to discredit his name with the orthodox. The frequent occurrence in it of the word "bibliolatry," borrowed from Lessing, would sufficiently account for this pious hatred. From bibliolatry Coleridge was saved by the
25 spiritualism, which, in questions less simple than that of the infallibility of Scripture, was so retarding to his culture. Bibliolators may remember that one who committed a kind of intellectual suicide by catching at any appearance of a fixed and absolute authority, never dreamed of resisting on the authority of
30 a book. His Schellingistic notion of the possibility of absolute knowledge, of knowing God, of a light within every man which might discover to him the doctrines of Christianity, tended to depreciate historical testimony, perhaps historical realism altogether. Scripture is a legitimate sphere for the understanding.
35 He says, indeed, that there is more in the Bible that "finds" him than he has experienced in all other books put together. But still, "There is a Light higher than all, even the Word that was in the beginning. If between this Word and the written letter I

shall anywhere seem to myself to find a discrepancy, I will not conclude that such there actually is; nor on the other hand will I fall under the condemnation of them that would lie for God, but seek as I may, be thankful for what I have—and wait.” Coleridge is the inaugurator of that *via media* of Scriptural criticism which makes much of saving the word “inspiration,” while it attenuates its meaning; which supposes a sort of modified inspiration residing in the whole, not in the several parts. “The Scriptures were not dictated by an infallible intelligence;” nor “the writers each and all divinely informed as well as inspired.” “They refer to other documents, and in all points express themselves as sober-minded and veracious writers under ordinary circumstances are known to do.” To make the Bible itself “the subject of a special article of faith, is an unnecessary and useless abstraction.”

His judgment on the popular view of inspiration is severe. It is borrowed from the Cabbalists; it “petrifies at once the whole body of Holy Writ, with all its harmonies and symmetrical gradations;—turns it at once into a colossal Memnon’s head, a hollow passage for a voice, a voice that mocks the voices of many men, and speaks in their names, and yet is but one voice and the same;—and no man uttered it and never in a human heart was it conceived.” He presses very hard on the tricks of the “*routiniers* of desk and pulpit;” forced and fantastic interpretations; “the strange—in all other writings unexampled—practice of bringing together into logical dependency detached sentences from books composed at the distance of centuries, nay, sometimes a millennium, from each other, under different dispensations, and for different objects.”

Certainly he is much farther from bibliolatry than from the perfect freedom of the humanist interpreters. Still he has not freed himself from the notion of a sacred canon; he cannot regard the books of Scripture simply as fruits of the human spirit; his criticism is not entirely disinterested. The difficulties he finds are chiefly the supposed immoralities of Scripture; just those difficulties which fade away before the modern or relative spirit, which in the moral world as in the physical traces everywhere change, growth, development. Of historical difficulties,

of those deeper moral difficulties which arise for instance from a consideration of the constitutional unverity of the Oriental mind, he has no suspicion. He thinks that no book of the New Testament was composed so late as A. D. 120.

5 Coleridge's undeveloped opinions would be hardly worth stating except for the warning they afford against retarding compromises. In reading these letters one never doubts what Coleridge tells us of himself: "that he loved truth with an indescribable awe," or, as he beautifully says, "that he would
10 creep towards the light, even if the light had made its way through a rent in the wall of the temple." And yet there is something sad in reading them by the light which twenty-five years have thrown back upon them. Taken as a whole, they contain a fallacy which a very ardent lover of truth might have detected.

15 The Bible is not to judge the spirit, but the spirit the Bible. The Bible is to be treated as a literary product. Well, but that is a conditional, not an absolute principle—that is not, if we regard it sincerely, a delivery of judgement, but only a suspension of it. If we are true to the spirit of that, we must wait
20 patiently the complete result of modern criticism. Coleridge states that the authority of Scripture is on its trial—that at present it is not known to be an absolute resting-place; and then, instead of leaving that to aid in the formation of a fearless spirit, the spirit which, for instance, would accept the results of M.
25 Renan's investigations, he turns it into a false security by anticipating the judgment of an undeveloped criticism. Twenty-five years of that criticism have gone by, and have hardly verified the anticipation.

The man of science asks, Are absolute principles attainable? What are the limits of knowledge? The answer he receives
30 from science itself is not ambiguous. What the moralist asks is, Shall we gain or lose by surrendering human life to the relative spirit? Experience answers, that the dominant tendency of life is to turn ascertained truth into a dead letter—to make
35 us all the phlegmatic servants of routine. The relative spirit, by dwelling constantly on the more fugitive conditions or circumstances of things, breaking through a thousand rough and brutal classifications, and giving elasticity to inflexible principles,

begets an intellectual finesse, of which the ethical result is a delicate and tender justness in the criticism of human life. Who would gain more than Coleridge by criticism in such a spirit? We know how his life has appeared when judged by absolute standards. We see him trying to apprehend the absolute, to stereotype one form of faith, to attain, as he says, “fixed principles” in politics, morals, and religion; to fix one mode of life as the essence of life, refusing to see the parts as parts only; and all the time his own pathetic history pleads for a more elastic moral philosophy than his, and cries out against every formula less living and flexible than life itself. 5 10

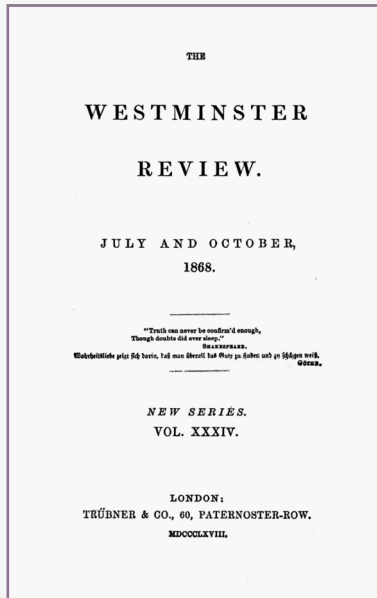
“From his childhood he hungered for eternity.” After all, that is the incontestable claim of Coleridge. The perfect flower of any elementary type of life must always be precious to humanity, and Coleridge is the perfect flower of the romantic type. More than Childe Harold, more than Werther, more than René, Coleridge, by what he did, what he was, and what he failed to do, represents that inexhaustible discontent, languor, and home-sickness, the chords of which ring all through our modern literature. Criticism may still discuss the claims of classical and romantic art, or literature, or sentiment; and perhaps one day we may come to forget the horizon, with full knowledge to be content with what is here and now; and that is the essence of classical feeling. But by us of the present moment, by us for whom the Greek spirit, with its engaging naturalness, simple, chastened, debonair, ἀβρότητος, χλιδῆς, χαρίτων, ἡμέρου, πόθου πατήρ, is itself the Sangraal of an endless pilgrimage, Coleridge, with his passion for the absolute, for something fixed where all is moving, his faintness, his broken memory, his intellectual disquiet, may still be ranked among the interpreters of one of the constituent elements of our life. 15 20 25 30



2.

Poems by William Morris

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THE
EARTHLY PARADISE
A POEM.



BY
WILLIAM MORRIS,
AUTHOR OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JASON.

Boston: ROBERTS, BROTHERS.

MDCCLXVIII.

Poems by William Morris



THIS poetry is neither a mere reproduction of Greek or medieval life or poetry, nor a disguised reflex of modern sentiment. The atmosphere on which its effect depends belongs to no actual form of life or simple form of poetry. Greek poetry, medieval or modern poetry, projects above the realities of its time a world in which the forms of things are transfigured. Of that world this new poetry takes possession, and sublimates beyond it another still fainter and more spectral, which is literally an artificial or “earthly paradise.” It is a finer ideal, extracted from what in relation to any actual world is already an ideal. Like some strange second flowering after date, it renews on a more delicate type the poetry of a past age, but must not be confounded with it. The secret of the enjoyment of it is that inversion of home-sickness known to some, that incurable thirst for the sense of escape; which no actual form of life satisfies, no poetry even, if it be merely simple and spontaneous. It is this which in these poems defines the temperament or personality of the workman.

The writings of the romantic school mark a transition not so much from the pagan to the medieval ideal, as from a lower to a higher degree of passion in literature. The end of the eighteenth century, swept by vast disturbing currents, experienced an excitement of spirit of which one note was a reaction against an outworn classicalism severed not more from nature than from the genuine motives of ancient art; and a return to true Hellenism was as much a part of this reaction as the sudden pre-occupation with things medieval. The medieval tendency is in Goethe’s *Götz von Berlichingen*, the Hellenic in his *Iphigenie*. At first this medievalism was superficial. Adventure, romance in the poorest sense, grotesque individualism—that

is one element in medieval poetry, and with it alone Scott and Goethe dealt. Beyond them were the two other elements of the medieval spirit; its mystic religion at its apex in Dante and Saint Louis, and its mystic passion, passing here and there into
5 the great romantic loves of rebellious flesh, of Lancelot and Abelard. That stricter, imaginative medievalism which recreates the mind of the middle age, so that the form, the presentment grows outward from within, came later with Victor Hugo in France, with Heine in Germany.

10 The *Defence of Guenevere: and Other Poems*, published ten years ago, are a refinement upon this later, profounder medievalism. The poem which gives its name to the volume is a thing tormented and awry with passion, like the body of Guenevere defending herself from the charge of adultery, and
15 the accent falls in strange, unwonted places with the effect of a great cry. These Arthurian legends, pre-Christian in their origin, yield all their sweetness only in a Christian atmosphere. What is characteristic in them is the strange suggestion of a deliberate choice between Christ and a rival lover. That religion
20 shades into sensuous love, and sensuous love into religion, has been often seen; it is the experience of Rousseau as well as of the Christian mystics. The Christianity of the middle age made way among a people whose loss was in the life of the senses only by the possession of an idol, the beautiful idol of the Latin
25 hymn-writers, who for one moral or spiritual sentiment have a hundred sensuous images. Only by the inflaming influence of such idols can any religion compete with the presence of the fleshly lover. And so in these imaginative loves, in their highest expression, the Provençal poetry, it is a rival religion with a new
30 rival cultus that we see. Coloured through and through with Christian sentiment, they are rebels against it. The rejection of one idolatry for the other is never lost sight of. The jealousy of that other lover, for whom these words and images and strange ways of sentiment were first devised, is the secret here of a triumphant colour and heat. It is the mood of the cloister taking
35 a new direction, and winning so a later space of life it never anticipated. Who knows whether, when the simple belief in them has faded away, the most cherished sacred writings may not for

the first time exercise their highest influence as the most delicate amorous poetry in the world?

Hereon, as before in the cloister, so now in the chateau, the reign of reverie set in. The idolatry of the cloister knew that mood thoroughly, and had sounded all its stops. For in that idolatry the idol was absent or veiled, not limited to one supreme plastic form like Zeus at Olympia or Athena in the Acropolis, but distracted, as in a fever dream, into a thousand symbols and reflections. Quite in the way of one who handles the older sorceries, the Church has a thousand charms to make the absent near. Like the woman in the idyll of Theocritus—

.... ἔλκε τὸ τῆνον ἐμὸν ποτὶ δῶμα

is the cry of all her bizarre rites. Into this kingdom of reverie, and with it into a paradise of ambitious refinements, the earthly love enters, and becomes a prolonged somnambulism. Of religion it learns the art of directing towards an imaginary object sentiments whose natural direction is towards objects of sense. Hence a love defined by the absence of the beloved, choosing to be without hope, protesting against all lower uses of love, barren, extravagant, antinomian. It is the love which is incompatible with marriage, for the chevalier who never comes, of the serf for the chatelaine, the rose for the nightingale, of Rudel for the Lady of Tripoli. Another element of extravagance came in with the feudal spirit: Provençal love is full of the very forms of vassalage. To be the servant of love, to have offended, to taste the subtle luxury of chastisement, of reconciliation—the religious spirit, too, knows that, and meets just there, as in Rousseau, the delicacies of the earthly love. Here, under this strange complex of conditions, as in some medicated air, exotic flowers of sentiment expand, among people of a remote and unaccustomed beauty, somnambulistic, frail, androgynous, the light almost shining through them, as the flame of a little taper shows through the Host. Such loves were too fragile and adventurous to last more than for a moment.

That whole religion of the middle age was but a beautiful disease or disorder of the senses; and a religion which is

a disorder of the senses must always be subject to illusions. Reverie, illusion, delirium, they are the three stages of a fatal descent both in the religion and the loves of the middle age. Nowhere has the impression of this delirium been conveyed
5 as by Victor Hugo in *Notre Dame de Paris*. The strangest creations of sleep seem here, by some appalling licence, to cross the limit of the dawn. The English poet too has learned the secret. He has diffused through “King Arthur’s Tomb” the maddening white glare of the sun, and tyranny of the moon, not tender and
10 far-off, but close down—the sorcerer’s moon, large and feverish. The colouring is intricate and delirious, as of “scarlet lilies.” The influence of summer is like a poison in one’s blood, with a sudden bewildered sickening of life and all things. In “Galahad: a Mystery,” the frost of Christmas night on the chapel stones
15 acts as a strong narcotic; a sudden shrill ringing pierces through the numbness; a voice proclaims that the Grail has gone forth through the great forest. It is in the “Blue Closet” that this delirium reaches its height with a singular beauty, reserved perhaps for the enjoyment of the few:—

20 “How long ago was it, how long ago,
 He came to this tower with hands full of snow?
 ‘Kneel down, O love Louise, kneel down,’ he said,
 And sprinkled the dusty snow over my head.
 He watch’d the snow melting, it ran through my hair,
25 Ran over my shoulders, white shoulders, and bare.
 ‘I cannot weep for thee, poor love Louise,
 For my tears are all hidden deep under the seas.
 In a gold and blue casket she keeps all my tears;
 But my eyes are no longer blue, as in old years;
30 For they grow grey with time, grow small and dry—
 I am so feeble now, would I might die.
 Will he come back again, or is he dead?
 O! is he sleeping, my scarf round his head?
 Or did they strangle him as he lay there,
35 With the long scarlet scarf I used to wear?
 Only I pray thee, Lord, let him come here!
 Both his soul and his body to me are most dear.

Dear Lord, that loves me, I wait to receive
Either body or spirit this wild Christmas-eve.”

A passion of which the outlets are sealed, begets a tension of nerve, in which the sensible world comes to one with a reinforced brilliance and relief—all redness is turned into blood, all water into tears. Hence a wild, convulsed sensuousness in the poetry of the middle age, in which the things of nature begin to play a strange delirious part. Of the things of nature the medieval mind had a deep sense; but its sense of them was not objective, no real escape to the world without one. The aspects and motions of nature only reinforced its prevailing mood, and were in conspiracy with one’s own brain against one. A single sentiment invaded the world; everything was infused with a motive drawn from the soul. The amorous poetry of Provence making the starling and the swallow its messengers, illustrates the whole attitude of nature in this electric atmosphere, bent as by miracle or magic to the service of human passion.

The most popular and gracious form of Provençal poetry was the *nocturn*, sung by the lover at night at the door or under the window of his mistress. These songs were of different kinds, according to the hour at which they were intended to be sung. Some were to be sung at midnight—songs inviting to sleep, the *serena*, or *serenade*; others at break of day—waking songs, the *aube*, or *aubade*.¹ This waking-song is put sometimes into the mouth of a comrade of the lover, who plays sentinel during the night, to watch for and announce the dawn; sometimes into the mouth of one of the lovers, who are about to separate. A modification of it is familiar to us all in *Romeo and Juliet*, where the lovers debate whether the song they hear is of the nightingale or the lark; the *aubade*, with the two other great forms of love-poetry then floating in the world, the sonnet and the epithalamium, being here refined, heightened, and inwoven into the structure of the play. Those, in whom what Rousseau calls “les frayeurs nocturnes” are constitutional,

1 Fauriel’s *Histoire de la Poésie Provençal*. Tome 2, ch. xviii.

know what splendour they give to the things of the morning;
and how there comes something of relief from physical pain
with the first white film in the sky. The middle age knew those
terrors in all their forms; and these songs of the morning win
5 hence a strange tenderness and effect. The crown of the English
poet's book is one of these songs of the dawn:—

Pray but one prayer for me 'twixt thy closed lips,
Think but one thought of me up in the stars.
The summer-night waneth, the morning light slips,
10 Faint and grey 'twixt the leaves of the aspen,
betwixt the cloud-bars,
That are patiently waiting there for the dawn:
Patient and colourless, though Heaven's gold
Waits to float through them along with the sun.
15 Far out in the meadows, above the young corn,
The heavy elms wait, and restless and cold
The uneasy wind rises; the roses are dun;
Through the long twilight they pray for the dawn,
Round the lone house in the midst of the corn.
20 Speak but one word to me over the corn,
Over the tender, bow'd locks of the corn.

It is the very soul of the bridegroom which goes forth to the
bride; inanimate things are longing with him; all the sweetness
of the imaginative loves of the middle age, with a superadded
25 spirituality of touch all its own, is in that!

The *Defence of Guenevere* was published in 1858; the *Life
and Death of Jason* in 1867; and the change of manner wrought
in the interval is entire, it is almost a revolt. Here there is no delirium
or illusion, no experiences of mere soul while the body
30 and the bodily senses sleep or wake with convulsed intensity
at the prompting of imaginative love; but rather the great primary
passions under broad daylight as of the pagan Veronese.
This simplification interests us not merely for the sake of an individual
poet—full of charm as he is—but chiefly because it

explains through him a transition which, under many forms, is one law of the life of the human spirit, and of which what we call “the Renaissance” is only a supreme instance. Just so the monk in his cloister, through the “open vision,” open only to the spirit, divined, aspired to and at last apprehended a better daylight, but earthly, open only to the senses. Complex and subtle interests, which the mind spins for itself, may occupy art and poetry or our own spirits for a time; but sooner or later they come back with a sharp rebound to the simple elementary passions—anger, desire, regret, pity and fear—and what corresponds to them in the sensuous world—bare, abstract fire, water, air, tears, sleep, silence—and what De Quincey has called the “glory of motion.”

This reaction from dreamlight to daylight gives, as always happens, a strange power in dealing with morning and the things of the morning. Think of this most lovely waking with the rain on one’s face—(Iris comes to Argus as he sleeps; a rainbow, when he wakes, is to be the pledge she has been present:—)

Then he, awaking in the morning cold,
A sprinkle of fine rain felt on his face,
And leaping to his feet, in that wild place,
Looked round and saw the morning sunlight throw
Across the world the many-coloured bow,
And trembling knew that the high gods, indeed,
Had sent the messenger unto their need.

Not less is this Hellenist of the middle age master of dreams, of sleep and the desire of sleep—sleep in which no one walks, restorer of childhood to men—dreams, not like Galahad’s or Guenevere’s, but full of happy, childish wonder as in the earlier world. It is a world in which the centaur and the ram with the fleece of gold are conceivable. The song sung always claims to be sung for the first time. There are hints at a language common to birds and beasts and men. Everywhere there is an impression of surprise, as of people first waking from the golden age, at fire, snow, wine, the touch of water as one swims, the salt taste of

the sea. And this simplicity at first hand is a strange contrast to the sought-out simplicity of Wordsworth. Desire here is towards the body of nature for its own sake, not because a soul is divined through it.

5 And yet it is one of the charming anachronisms of a poet, who, while he handles an ancient subject, never becomes an antiquarian, but vitalizes his subject by keeping it always close to himself, that betweenwhiles we have a sense of English scenery as from an eye well practised under Wordsworth's influence, in
10 the song of the brown river-bird among the willows, the casement half opened on summer-nights, the

Noise of bells, such as in moonlit lanes
Rings from the grey team on the market night.

Nowhere but in England is there such a nation of birds, the fern-
15 owl, the water-hen, the thrush in a hundred sweet variations, the ger-falcon, the kestrel, the starling, the pea-fowl; birds heard from the field by the townsman down in the streets at dawn; doves everywhere, pink-footed, grey-winged, flitting about the temple, troubled by the temple incense, trapped in the snow.
20 The sea-touches are not less sharp and firm, surest of effect in places where river and sea, salt and fresh waves, conflict.

All this is in that wonderful fourteenth book, the book of the Syrens. The power of an artist will sometimes remain inactive over us, the spirit of his work, however much one sees
25 of it, be veiled, till on a sudden we are *found* by one revealing example of it which makes all he did precious. It is so with this fourteenth book of *Jason*. There is a tranquil level of perfection in the poem, by which in certain moods, or for certain minds, the charm of it might escape. For such the book of the Syrens
30 is a revealing example of the poet's work. The book opens with a glimpse of white bodies, crowned and girt with gold, moving far-off on the sand of a little bay. It comes to men nearing home, yet so longing for rest that they might well lie down before they reach it. So the wise Medea prompts Orpheus to plead with the
35 Argonauts against the Syrens,—

Sweetly they sang, and still the answer came
 Piercing and clear from him, as bursts the flame
 From out the furnace in the moonless night;
 Yet, as their words are no more known aright
 Through lapse of many ages, and no man 5
 Can any more across the waters wan,
 Behold those singing women of the sea,
 Once more I pray you all to pardon me,
 If with my feeble voice and harsh I sing
 From what dim memories may chance to cling 10
 About men's hearts, of lovely things once sung
 Beside the sea, while yet the world was young.

Then literally like an echo from the Greek world, heard across
 so great a distance only as through some miraculous calm, 15
 subdued in colour and cadence, the ghosts of passionate song,
 come those matchless lyrics.

In handling a subject of Greek legend, anything in the
 way of an actual revival must always be impossible. Such vain
 antiquarianism is a waste of the poet's power. The composite 20
 experience of all the ages is part of each one of us; to deduct
 from that experience, to obliterate any part of it, to come face
 to face with the people of a past age, as if the middle age, the
 Renaissance, the eighteenth century had not been, is as impos-
 sible as to become a little child, or enter again into the womb 25
 and be born. But though it is not possible to repress a single
 phase of that humanity, which, because we live and move and
 have our being in the life of humanity, makes us what we are; it
 is possible to isolate such a phase, to throw it into relief, to be
 divided against ourselves in zeal for it, as we may hark back to 30
 some choice space of our own individual life. We cannot conce-
 ive the age; we can conceive the element it has contributed
 to our culture; we can treat the subjects of the age bringing that
 into relief. Such an attitude towards Greece, aspiring to but
 never actually reaching its way of conceiving life, is what is pos- 35
 sible for art.

The modern poet or artist who treats in this way a clas-
 sical story comes very near, if not to the Hellenism of Homer,

yet to that of the middle age, the Hellenism of Chaucer. No writer on the Renaissance has hitherto cared much for this exquisite early light of it. Afterwards the Renaissance takes its side, becomes exaggerated and facile. But the choice life of the human spirit is always under mixed lights, and in mixed situations; when it is not too sure of itself, is still expectant, girt up to leap forward to the promise. Such a situation there was in that earliest return from the overwrought spiritualities of the middle age to the earlier, more ancient life of the senses; and for us the most attractive form of classical story is the monk's conception of it, when he escapes from the sombre legend of his cloister to that true light. The fruits of this mood, which, divining more than it understands, infuses into the figures of the Christian legend some subtle reminiscence of older gods, or into the story of Cupid and Psyche that passionate stress of spirit which the world owes to Christianity, have still to be gathered up when the time comes.

And so, before we leave *Jason*, a word must be said about its medievalisms, delicate inconsistencies which, coming in a Greek poem, bring into this white dawn thoughts of the delirious night just over and make one's sense of relief deeper. The opening of the fourth book describes the embarkation of the Argonauts; as in a dream the scene shifts and we go down from Iolchos to the sea through a pageant of the fourteenth century in some French or Italian town. The gilded vanes on the spires, the bells ringing in the towers, the trellis of roses at the window, the close planted with apple-trees, the grotesque undercroft with its close-set pillars, change by a single touch the air of these Greek cities and we are at Glastonbury by the tomb of Arthur. The nymph in furred raiment who seduces Hylas is conceived frankly in the spirit of Teutonic romance; her song is of a garden enclosed, such as that with which the glass-stainer of the middle ages surrounds the mystic bride of the song of songs. Medea herself has a hundred touches of the medieval sorceress, the sorceress of the Streckelberg or the Blocksberg; her mystic changes are Christabel's. Here again is an incident straight out of the middle age,—

But, when all hushed and still the palace grew,
 She put her gold robes off, and on her drew
 A dusky gown, and with a wallet small
 And cutting wood-knife girt herself withal, 5
 And from her dainty chamber softly passed
 Through stairs and corridors, until at last
 She came down to a gilded watergate,
 Which with a golden key she opened straight,
 And swiftly stept into a little boat, 10
 And, pushing off from shore, began to float
 Adown the stream, and with her tender hands
 And half-bared arms, the wonder of all lands,
 Bowed strongly through the starlit gusty night.

It is precisely this effect, this grace of Hellenism relieved against 15
 the sorrow of the middle age, which forms the chief motive
 of *The Earthly Paradise*: with an exquisite dexterity the two
 threads of sentiment are here interwoven and contrasted. A
 band of adventurers sets out from Norway, most northerly
 of northern lands, where the plague is raging, and the host- 20
 bell is continually ringing as they carry the sacrament to the
 sick. Even in Mr. Morris's earliest poems snatches of the sweet
 French tongue had always come with something of Hellenic
 blitheness and grace. And now it is below the very coast of
 France, through the fleet of Edward III., among the painted 25
 sails of the middle age, that we pass to a reserved fragment of
 Greece, which by some Θεία τύχη lingers on in the Western Sea
 into the middle age. There the stories of *The Earthly Paradise*
 are told, Greek story and romantic alternating; and for the crew
 of the Rose Garland coming across the sins of the earlier world 30
 with the sign of the cross and drinking Rhine wine in Greece,
 the two worlds of sentiment are confronted.

We have become so used to austerity and concentration
 in some noble types of modern poetry, that it is easy to dislike 35
 the lengthiness of this new poem. Yet here mere mass is itself
 the first condition of an art which deals with broad atmospher-
 ic effects. The water is not less medicinal, not less gifted with
 virtues, because a few drops of it are without effect; it is water

to bathe and swim in. The songs, the "Apology" to the reader, the month-interludes, especially those of April and May, which are worthy of Shakespeare, detach themselves by their concentrated sweetness from the rest of the book. Partly because in
5 perfect story-telling like this the manner rises and falls with the story itself, "Atalanta's Race," "The Man born to be King," "The Story of Cupid and Psyche," and in "The Doom of King Acrisius," the episode of Danaë and the shower of gold, have in a pre-eminent degree what is characteristic of the whole book,
10 the loveliness of things newly washed with fresh water; and this clarity and chasteness, mere qualities here of an exquisite art, remind one that the effectual preserver of all purity is perfect taste.

One characteristic of the pagan spirit these new poems
15 have which is on their surface—the continual suggestion, pensive or passionate, of the shortness of life; this is contrasted with the bloom of the world and gives new seduction to it; the sense of death and the desire of beauty; the desire of beauty quickened by the sense of death. "*Arriéré!*" you say, "here in a tangible
20 form we have the defect of all poetry like this. The modern world is in possession of truths; what but a passing smile can it have for a kind of poetry which, assuming artistic beauty of form to be an end in itself, passes by those truths and the living interests which are connected with them, to spend a thousand
25 cares in telling once more these pagan fables as if it had but to choose between a more and a less beautiful shadow?" It is a strange transition from the earthly paradise to the sad-coloured world of abstract philosophy. But let us accept the challenge; let us see what modern philosophy, when it is sincere, really
30 does say about human life and the truth we can attain in it, and the relation of this to the desire of beauty.

To regard all things and principles of things as inconstant
35 modes or fashions has more and more become the tendency of modern thought. Let us begin with that which is without,—our physical life. Fix upon it in one of its more exquisite intervals—the moment, for instance, of delicious recoil from

the flood of water in summer heat. What is the whole physical life in that moment but a combination of natural elements to which science gives their names? But those elements, phosphorus and lime, and delicate fibres, are present not in the human body alone; we detect them in places most remote from it. 5
Our physical life is a perpetual motion of them—the passage of the blood, the wasting and repairing of the lenses of the eye, the modification of the tissues of the brain by every ray of light and sound—processes which science reduces to simpler and more elementary forces. Like the elements of which we are composed, the action of these forces extends beyond us; it rusts iron and ripens corn. Far out on every side of us these elements are broadcast, driven by many forces; and birth and gesture and death and the springing of violets from the grave are but a few out of ten thousand resulting combinations. That clear, perpetual outline of face and limb is but an image of ours under which we group them—a design in a web the actual threads of which pass out beyond it. This at least of flame-like our life has, that it is but the concurrence renewed from moment to moment of forces parting sooner or later on their ways. 20

Or if we begin with the inward world of thought and feeling, the whirlpool is still more rapid, the flame more eager and devouring. There it is no longer the gradual darkening of the eye and fading of colour from the wall, the movement of the shore side, where the water flows down indeed, though in apparent rest, but the race of the midstream, a drift of momentary acts of sight and passion and thought. At first sight experience seems to bury us under a flood of external objects, pressing upon us with a sharp, importunate reality, calling us out of ourselves in a thousand forms of action. But when reflection begins to act upon those objects they are dissipated under its influence, the cohesive force is suspended like a trick of magic, each object is loosed into a group of impressions, colour, odour, texture, in the mind of the observer. And if we continue to dwell on this world, not of objects in the solidity with which language invests them, but of impressions unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn, and are extinguished with our consciousness of them, it contracts still further, the whole scope of 35

observation is dwarfed to the narrow chamber of the individual mind. Experience, already reduced to a swarm of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way
5 to us, or from us to that, which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of an individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.

Analysis goes a step further still, and tells us that those
10 impressions of the individual to which, for each one of us, experience dwindles down, are in perpetual flight, that each of them is limited by time, and that as time is infinitely divisible, each of them is infinitely divisible also, all that is actual in it being a single moment, gone while we try to apprehend it, of
15 which it may ever be more truly said that it has ceased to be than that it is. To such a tremulous wisp constantly reforming itself on the stream, to a single sharp impression, with a sense in it, a relic more or less fleeting, of such moments gone by, what is real in our life fines itself down. It is with the movement, the
20 passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off, that continual vanishing away, that strange perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves.

Such thoughts seem desolate at first; at times all the bitterness of life seems concentrated in them. They bring the image of one washed out beyond the bar in a sea at ebb, losing
25 even his personality, as the elements of which he is composed pass into new combinations. Struggling, as he must, to save himself, it is himself that he loses at every moment.

“Philosophiren,” says Novalis, “ist dephlegmatisiren, vivificiren.” The service of philosophy, and of religion and culture
30 as well, to the human spirit, is to startle it into a sharp and eager observation. Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is
35 irresistibly real and attractive for us for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience but experience itself is the end. A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them

by the finest senses? How can we pass most swiftly from point to point, and be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy?

To burn always with this hard gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life. Failure is to form habits; for habit is relative to a stereotyped world; meantime it is only the roughness of the eye that makes any two things, persons, situations—seem alike. While all melts under our feet, we may well catch at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange flowers and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend. Not to discriminate every moment some passionate attitude in those about us and in the brilliance of their gifts some tragic dividing of forces on their ways, is on this short day of frost and sun to sleep before evening. With this sense of the splendour of our experience and of its awful brevity, gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch, we shall hardly have time to make theories about the things we see and touch. What we have to do is to be for ever curiously testing opinion and courting new impressions, never acquiescing in a facile orthodoxy of Comte or of Hegel or of our own. Theories, religious or philosophical ideas, as points of view, instruments of criticism, may help us to gather up what might otherwise pass unregarded by us. "La philosophie," says Victor Hugo, "c'est le microscope de la pensée." The theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract morality we have not identified with ourselves, or what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us.

One of the most beautiful places in the writings of Rousseau is that in the sixth book of the *Confessions*, where he describes the awakening in him of the literary sense. An undefinable taint of death had always clung about him, and now in early manhood he believed himself stricken by mortal disease. He asked himself how he might make as much as possible of the interval that remained; and he was not biassed by anything in

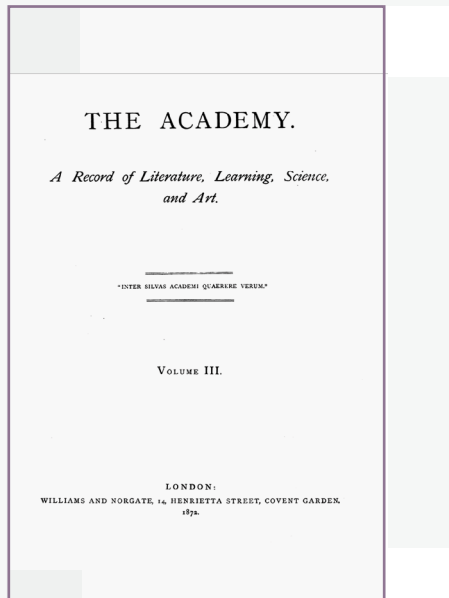
his previous life when he decided that it must be by intellectual excitement, which he found in the clear, fresh writings of Voltaire. Well, we are all *condamnés*, as Victor Hugo somewhere says: we have an interval and then we cease to be. Some spend
5 this interval in listlessness, some in high passions, the wisest in art and song. For our one chance is in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. High passions give one this quickened sense of life, ecstasy and sorrow of love, political or religious enthusiasm, or the “enthusiasm of humanity.” Only, be sure it is passion, that it does yield
10 you this fruit of a quickened, multiplied consciousness. Of this wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art’s sake, has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they
15 pass, and simply for those moments’ sake.



3.

Children in Italian and English Design

The Academy.
Vol. III, no. 52 (15 Jul. 1872), pp. 267–269.



CHILDREN
IN ITALIAN AND ENGLISH DESIGN.

BY

SIDNEY COLVIN, M.A.

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLL. CAMBRIDGE.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

AFTER LUCA DELLA ROBBIA, MARC ANTONIO, CORREGGIO,
BLAKE, STOTHARD, AND FLAXMAN.

SEELEY, JACKSON, AND HALLIDAY, FLEET STREET.
LONDON. MDCCCLXXII.

Children in Italian and English Design

THIS eloquent essay, reprinted from the *Portfolio*, is a good specimen of that best and most legitimate sort of writing on art which has for its aim the adjustment of a special knowledge of artists and their work to the needs and interests of general culture. Its subject is the treatment of children by Blake, 5
Stothard and Flaxman, as prominent examples of the temper and mode of work of a whole school of English artists three generations ago; and this gives the writer an opportunity of analysing the general characteristics of those three great designers in a very happy and interesting way. His object has been to show 10
that “there exists what may be justly called a modern sentiment towards children and appreciation of them, in a sense in which no such novelty of sentiment or appreciation exists between grown-up people towards each other”; and again, “how that observant home-tenderness, that new, subtle and affectionate 15
intimacy with children, of which Reynolds had first given signs in his portraits of them taken individually, had got to be part of the regular endowment of the age, and had sunk down even into the lightest incidental work and ornament in which its more finely gifted artists revealed their prevailing temper.” Sir 20
Joshua Reynolds, notwithstanding the wonderful variety and perfection of his delineation of childish character, is excluded, because in portrait-painting the general temper and sentiment of the artist are controlled by the exigencies of his special function and the necessity of dealing directly with the special and 25
individual traits of the subject in hand; and what Mr. Colvin wishes to seize and analyse is a “type,” a “mode of conceiving childhood generally”; and he rightly looks for this in “design of the independent or ideal kind,” work which the work which

the artist “does out of his own head,” like the designs in Blake’s *Songs of Innocence* or Stothard’s illustrations of books.

In the chapter on Blake, which is illustrated by two plates full of that peculiar mingling of sweetness and strange-
5 ness which characterise the work of this great artist, he dwells
at length on the original of the *Songs of Innocence*, the text of
which has been lately reprinted, bringing clearness into the be-
wildered beauties of that singular *mélange* of design and verse.
Afterwards, illustrating what he says here, as in other parts of
10 his book, by vignettes introduced with pleasant effect into the
printed page, he defines a certain affinity between Stothard and
Blake, two artists at first sight so incompatible or contrasted,
lingering pleasantly over the *rappports* of Stothard with his time,
and giving some interesting details on the early history of Eng-
15 lish engraving, showing by many incidental indications and a
well selected epithet here and there an unusual knowledge of
that perplexed subject, the general history of English art; see-
ing these things always in close relation to the artists who pro-
duced them, and those artists themselves in close relation to
20 their times. “Stothard’s age,” he says in a characteristic passage,
“and its ways in England had enough charm in them to have
become pleasantly ideal to us, in the sense in which it takes
something more than mere lapse of time to make an age ideal;
and he, like the stronger souls between whom we have set him,
25 was a votary of the ideal within his age itself; he knows how to
add the necessary touch, to accent or generalise the costume, to
find grace in frilled shirts and large lappets, and knee-breeches
and stockings, to sweeten and dignify the type, to group and
harmonise the figures just within the fitting measure. And in
30 his landscape and accessories he makes just the abstraction
required by the pitch of the subject and the conditions of the
scale and material. Stothard was a real student of outer nature
both in general and detail (his tender passion for flowers is one
of the prettiest things which Mrs. Bray, his daughter-in-law,
35 tells about him in her *Life*); and his miniature landscapes of
hill, lake, park, garden, and woodland, or cottage and thicket,
have the elements which speak most directly to the quieter side
of the landscape faculty in us.”

And the same skill with which Mr. Colvin has struck upon the remote affinity between Stothard and Blake is shown in the passages in which, on the other hand, he distinguishes the qualities of Stothard from those of Flaxman—designers who have so much in common, and whose qualities for the superficial observer so easily fade into each other—thus discriminating admirably those three distinct faculties. “Unlike Stothard, Flaxman works in an atmosphere, above that of historical or romance associations, in which ancient and modern are reconciled under an almost identical ideal,” presenting this ideal “in a mode which I have called architectonic,” the limbs of his figures “being conceived as masses for adjustment in something like rigid geometrical or architectural figures.” The frontispiece of the book is a design of Flaxman’s photographed from an example in Mr. Colvin’s own possession—a design quite monumental and grand, though worked out with a few simple lines and tints; and on page 46 he suggests in a few words altogether worthy of it what he thinks may be the meaning of this design.

And by way of further defining, through contrast, that exact phase of sentiment in the treatment of children by English artists which he wishes to discriminate and explain, he has prefixed some notices of the very different treatment of children by the Italians of the middle age and the Renaissance, artists who saw in children not their common human relations, but referred them “to other and more remote relations suggested by religion and imagination,” looking for supernatural or symbolical types in them, so that “the burden of the supernatural which,” as he well says, “is always in some degree the unnatural, rests inevitably on all their delineation of them.” Here too Mr. Colvin shows an equal knowledge and appreciation of a kind of art so different from that of England in the Georgian era, unravelling distinct threads of feeling here also, and showing how to a true culture workmen so far apart as these early Italians and those later Englishmen suggest no incompatible interests, but with full congruity lie easily enough together in that *House Beautiful* which the genuine and humanistic workmen of all ages, all those artists who have really felt and understood their work, are always building together for the human spirit.

It will be seen from what has been said that although this book is of no great length yet it ranges over a great variety of subjects. And out of all this Mr. Colvin has untwisted with singular skill this one particular thread of the treatment of children, presenting only what he feels clearly and can present with true effect. Thus the little book has a real unity, touching on many diverse things, but kept together by its main thread, so that it might easily be expanded into a larger volume. Such work is only possible where there is great general knowledge of art. Instances of this general knowledge are everywhere scattered up and down this essay. Mr. Colvin gives us, for instance, by the way, on page 16, a clear characterisation of that obscure artist, Honoré Fragonard, and does an act of historical justice in passing. But this true knowledge in aesthetics is shown best of all by the impression he gives one that in passing over so many phases of art he seizes a fresh *nuance*, a fresh variety of impression and enjoyment from each; you feel that beyond mere knowledge, mere intellectual discrimination, each one of them is a distinct thing for him, and yields him a distinct savour.

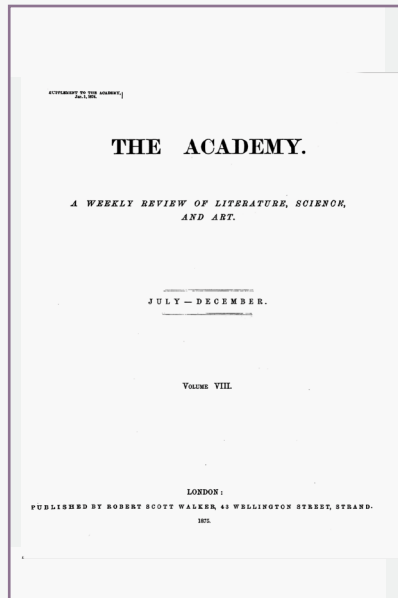


4.

Renaissance in Italy: the Age of the Despots

The Academy.

Vol. VIII, no. 169 (31 Jul. 1875), pp. 105–106.



RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

THE AGE OF THE DESPOTS

BY

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

AUTHOR OF

'STUDIES OF THE GREEK POETS' 'SKETCHES IN ITALY AND GREECE' ETC.

'Di questi adunque oziosi principi, e di queste vilissime armi, sarà piena la mia istoria'
MACH. *Ist. Fior.* lib. i.

LONDON
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE
1875

Renaissance in Italy: The Age of the Despots



THIS remarkable volume is the first of three parts of a projected work which in its complete form will present a more comprehensive treatment of its subject than has yet been offered to English readers. The aim of the writer is to weave together the various threads of a very complex period of European life, and to set the art and literature of Italy on that background of general social and historical conditions to which they belong, and apart from which they cannot really be understood, according to the received and well-known belief of most modern writers. Mr. Symonds brings to this task the results of wide, varied, and often curious reading, which he has by no means allowed to overburden his work, and also a familiar knowledge, attested by his former eloquent volume of *Studies of the Greek Poets*, of that classical world to which the Renaissance was confessedly in some degree a return.

It is that background of general history, a background upon which the artists and men of letters are moving figures not to be wholly detached from it, that this volume presents. By the "Age of the Despots" in Italian history the writer understands the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as the twelfth and the thirteenth are the "Age of the Free Burghs," and the sixteenth and seventeenth the "Age of Foreign Enslavement." The chief phenomenon with which the *Age of the Despots* is occupied is that "free emergence of personal passions, personal aims," which all its peculiar conditions tended to encourage, of personalities all alike so energetic and free, though otherwise so unlike as Francesco Sforza, Savonarola, Machiavelli, and Alexander VI., all "despots" in their way. Benvenuto Cellini and Cesare Borgia are seen to be products of the same general conditions as the "good Duke of Urbino" and Savonarola.

Such a book necessarily presents strong lights and shades. The first chapter groups together some wide generalisations on the subject of the work as a whole, on the Renaissance as an “emancipation,” which, though perhaps not wholly novel, are
5 very strikingly put, and through the whole of which we feel the breath of an ardent love of liberty. In the next two chapters the writer discusses the age of the earlier despots, the founders of the great princely families, going over ground well traversed indeed, but with a freshness of interest which is the mark of
10 original assimilation, with some parallels and contrasts between Italy and ancient Greece, and led always by the light of modern ideas. One by one all those highly-coloured pieces of humanity are displayed before us, those stories which have made Italian history the fountain-head of tragic motives, all the
15 hard, bright, fiery things, the colour of which M. Taine has in some degree caught in his writings on the philosophy of Italian art, and still more completely Stendhal, in his essay on Italian art and his *Chroniques Italiennes*. You can hardly open Mr. Symonds’s volume without lighting on some incident or trait
20 of character in which man’s elementary power to be, to think, to do, shows forth emphatically, and the writer has not chosen to soften down these characteristics; there is even noticeable a certain cynicism in his attitude towards his subject, expressed well enough in the words which he quotes from Machiavelli as the motto of his title-page: *Di .questi adunque oziosi principi, e di*
25 *queste vilissime armi, sarà piena la mia istoria.*

That sense of the complex interdependence on each other of all historical conditions is one of the guiding lights of the modern historical method, and Mr. Symonds abundantly
30 shows how thoroughly he has mastered this idea. And yet on the same background, out of the same general conditions, products emerge, the unlikeness of which is the chief thing to be noticed. The spirit of the Renaissance proper, of the Renaissance as a humanistic movement, on which it may be said
35 this volume does not profess to touch, is as unlike the spirit of Alexander VI. as it is unlike that of Savonarola. Alexander VI. has more in common with Ezzelino da Romano, that fanatical hater of human life in the middle age, than with Tasso or

Leonardo. The Renaissance is an assertion of liberty indeed, but of liberty to see and feel those things the seeing and feeling of which generate not the “barbarous ferocity of temper, the savage and coarse tastes” of the Renaissance Popes, but a sympathy with life everywhere, even in its weakest and most frail manifestations. Sympathy, appreciation, a sense of latent claims in things which even ordinary good men pass rudely by—these on the whole are the characteristic traits of its artists, though it may be still true that “aesthetic propriety, rather than strict conceptions of duty, ruled the conduct even of the best;” and at least they never “destroyed pity in their souls.” Such softer touches Mr. Symonds gives us in the “good duke Frederic of Urbino,” his real courtesy and height of character, though under many difficulties; in his admirable criticisms on the *Cortegiano* of Castiglione; and again in his account of Agnolo Pandolfini’s *Treatise on the Family*, the charm of which has by no means evaporated in Mr. Symonds’s analysis; above all, in the beautiful description, in the seventh chapter, of the last days of Pietro Boscoli the tyrannicide, a striking instance of “the combination of deeply-rooted and almost infantine piety with antique heroism,” coming near as it happened, in his friend Luca dells Robbia the younger, to an artist who could understand the aesthetic value of the incidents he has related.

I quote a very different episode as a specimen of Mr. Symonds’ style:—

There is a story told by Infessura which illustrates the temper of the times with singular felicity. On April 18, 1485, a report circulated in Rome that some Lombard workmen had discovered a Roman sarcophagus while digging on the Appian Way. It was a marble tomb, engraved with the inscription, “Julia, daughter of Claudius,” and inside the coffin lay the body of the most beautiful girl of fifteen years, preserved by precious unguents from corruption and the injury of time. The bloom of youth was still upon her cheeks and lips; her eyes and mouth were half open, her long hair floated round her shoulders. She was instantly removed, so goes the legend, to

the Capitol; and then began a procession of pilgrims from all the quarters of Rome to gaze upon this saint of the old Pagan world. In the eyes of those enthusiastic worshippers her beauty was beyond imagination or description; she was far fairer than any woman of the modern age could hope to be. At last Innocent VIII. feared lest the orthodox faith should suffer by this new cult of a heathen corpse. Julia was buried, secretly and at night by his direction, and naught remained in the Capitol but her empty marble coffin. The tale, as told by Infessura, is repeated in Matarazzo and in Nantiporto with slight variations. One says that the girl's hair was yellow, another that it was of the glossiest black. What foundation for the legend may really have existed need not here be questioned. Let us rather use the mythus as a parable of the ecstatic devotion which prompted the men of that age to discover a form of unimaginable beauty in the tomb of the classic world.

The book then presents a brilliant picture of its subject, of the movements of these energetic personalities, the magnificent restlessness and changefulness of their lives, their immense cynicism. As is the writer's subject so is his style—energetic, flexible, eloquent, full of various illustration, keeping the attention of the reader always on the alert. Yet perhaps the best chapter in the book, the best because the most sympathetic, is one of the quieter ones, that on “The Florentine Historians;” their great studies, their anticipations of the historical spirit of modern times, their noble style, their pious humour of discipleship towards Aristotle, Cicero, Tacitus, not without a certain pedantry becoming enough in the historians of those republics which were after all “products of constructive skill” rather than of a true political evolution—all this is drawn with a clear hand and a high degree of reflectiveness. The chapter on *The Prince* corrects some common mistakes concerning Machiavelli, who is perhaps less of a puzzle than has sometimes been supposed, a patriot devising a desperate means of establishing permanent rule in Florence, designing, in the spirit of a political idealism

not more ruthless than that of Plato's Republic, to cure a real evil, a fault not unlike that of ancient Athens itself, the constant exaggerated appetite for change in public institutions, bringing with it an incorrigible tendency of all the parts of human life to fly from the centre, a fault, as it happened in both cases, at last become incurable. The chapter on Savonarola is a bold and complete portrait, with an interesting pendant on "Religious Revivals in Medieval Italy;" and the last chapter on "Charles the Eighth in Italy" has some real light in it, making things lie more intelligibly apart and together in that tangle of events. The imagination in historical composition works most legitimately when it approaches dramatic effects. In this volume there is a high degree of dramatic imagination; here all is objective, and the writer is hardly seen behind his work.

I have noted in the foregoing paragraphs the things which have chiefly impressed and pleased me in reading this book, things which are sure to impress and please hundreds of readers and make it very popular. But there is one thing more which I cannot help noticing before I close. Notwithstanding Mr. Symonds's many good gifts, there is one quality which I think in this book is singularly absent, the quality of reserve, a quality by no means merely negative, and so indispensable to the full effect of all artistic means, whether in art itself, or poetry, or the finer sorts of literature, that in one who possesses gifts for those things its cultivation or acquisition is neither more nor less than loyalty to his subject and his work. I note the absence of this reserve in many turns of expression, in the choice sometimes of detail and metaphor, in the very bulk of the present volume, which yet needs only this one quality, in addition to the writer's other admirable qualities of conception and execution, to make this first part of his work wholly worthy of his design.

5.

Love in Idleness

The Oxford Magazine.

Vol. I, no. 7 (7 Mar. 1883), pp. 144-145.

THE OXFORD MAGAZINE A Weekly Newspaper and Review.

Vol. I. No. 7] WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 1883. [PRICE SIXPENCE.

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK.

THURSDAY, March 8th.—Examination for Hall Honours Supper. **Evening.**
Friday, March 9th.—Lecture on "Kantian College and James I. and Charles I." by Messrs Hall at 4 p.m.
SATURDAY, March 10th.—Examination before the Council.
SUNDAY, March 11th.—Public Lecture in the Museum at 4 p.m.
Evening Speech: see day.

SATURDAY, March 10th.—Association Football Match, Oxford v. Ball School.
Evening Speech: see day.
SUNDAY, March 11th.—The Hon. and Rev. W. H. Fremantle, Balliol College (Harvard Lecturer).
At 4 p.m.—The Rev. Dr. J. J. G. O'Connell, Balliol College.
Monday, March 12th.—The Hon. and Rev. W. H. Fremantle, Balliol College.
Evening Speech: see day.
Examination for Demy and Johnson Scholarships begins.

NOTES AND NEWS.

Contributors are always being made of the substance of the University endowment. Yet the expenditure continues to be as usual as ever. This continues a source of great concern to those before Commission for approval. If the £10,000 collection be accepted, and it is hardly likely to be refused, the necessary means and fittings. Then £10,000 is to be devoted to the purchase of instruments and apparatus for him. The day is very an indication of what the new Professor will ultimately require. He wants a separate building with lecture-rooms, working rooms, &c., which is estimated to cost £10,000, and then he is to have another £10,000 to stock this with apparatus. Truly, science is no expense though knowledge.

Apprentices of the Museum, various amounts are about as to the present health of the University. Some people are anxious of securing an income. Anthropologists in order that he may represent the University in the division from the Fitz-Rivers collection. But surely there are several scientific Professors already present who have greater claims, and to whom the house which is attached to the office would be a well-merited and welcome increase of endowment.

The new system of appointing examiners is likely to give a considerable increase of labour to the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors. In the old days when the appointment was a personal one, it was not difficult for the individuals to make up the list. But a committee of six persons is an awkward body to bring to a decision, in addition to the difficulty of settling three of meeting, which will be subject to each member. In the papers which there are no less than thirteen of each meeting, and at the same time there is an unusual press of affairs. University business. When Commission meets on these days almost consecutively, the Proctors meet and find it indeed more for their part of office to come to an end.

It is all probability the means for transferring the functions of the Branch of Studies to the Society of Pulpits will pass without serious opposition, and this is certainly a matter for congratulation. It would have been a very curious arrangement if the addition of work had been kept up by some one body, many of whose members are devoted. It is, however, proposed that the students for the last two years should be added to the Branch of their Faculty for the special purpose of replacing the subjects of instruction in Mathematics in physics, but hardly possible in practice, and of doubtful supply.

It seems to be generally acknowledged that the New Schools have given increased facility to the nation for of "cramming." Council has endeavored to meet this by a scheme for the better supervision of examinations. As a whole, under the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors agree to this, there is to be one examiner for every fifty candidates examined in the same room. It is a pity that the latter does not direct him to walk about the room all the time instead of sitting on a high throne and marking papers with a red and blue pencil. This latter process always the attention of the examiner and distracts him of the responses. Every one that goes past a more than usually angry crowd there is a sympathetic "cheer" among a number of nervous candidates, each of whom thinks that it will be his own paper.

The Town Council has taken to the Bank, officers, and appointed a Committee to meet the Thames Commissioners. Like the discussion reported in Saturday's Oxford paper, currently illustration that we had but with about the propriety of any public, the River-Department was intended to be abolished, and substituted by Mr. Alderman Colfax, such speaker saying on the assumption that the City and University were being to contribute in the world now going on. This is not the case. The whole one of the present one. This was not the case. This (this was undoubtedly printed as £10,000 but work) will be used, chiefly by grant from the Thames Commissioners, to be used by the present one. The speech is to be made to carry out a further installment of Mr. John Halket's

LOVE IN IDLENESS

A VOLUME OF POEMS



LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1883

Love in Idleness



THERE are hints in the verses with which this volume opens that it is not the work of a single writer; a part, at least, of its contents has been printed before, and it might be thought to consist of the fittest survivors from one of those outbursts of poetic zeal, which, seemingly with no sense of contention 5 against the surrounding atmosphere, pass from time to time over the undergraduate world of Oxford, almost as regularly as the fritillaries over her fields; the pieces here garlanded, with a conscience which leaves no room for further weeding, being certainly as pure and graceful as those rarer white ones. Much 10 genuine love for good things—above all, for good poetic models, not unwisely followed; a contagious enthusiasm, not only for other poets but for poetic things; the natural and unaffected record of a pleasant time of youth, devoted to such love—that, in effect, might be defined as the matter of the book. And then, 15 for its manner; that is singularly accomplished, in an age full of exquisite craftsmen in verse; for these writers have been scholars in deed, and no idlers; with a love very unlike that so well analysed in the “Lines by a person of quality.” How real their scholarship is, is shown by the sonnet in Latin with which the 20 original portion of the volume closes, and by the group of excellent translations which follows—translations, far from being mere

Rose-leaves when the rose is dead;

as they modestly proclaim themselves. 25

But one might say all that, perhaps—one might bear unforced testimony to the elegant scholarship, the mastery over the instruments of the craft of verse, in a volume like this, and

still be confronted with the question, whether it really has in reserve any fresh pleasure or sensation, for those who have read freely in the poetic literature of the day.

Those who have read thus freely, then, but will linger yet
5 a little while longer over one verse-book more, and really read it, will find this collection of verse far more stimulant, far less merely soothing and amusive, according to the proper function of good minor poetry, than its unpretending demeanour might lead one to think. So much must in fairness be said about what
10 looks, at first sight, like one of many books of the day, of an age, regarding which, perhaps, it might be said, that never were there so many excellent minor poets before. For the writers of *Love in Idleness* are in truth much more original, have more original power, and much less of the character of an echo, than the title
15 of their volume and the somewhat imitative titles of its contents, together with certain archaisms of expression, and with something also in the very look of the volume, would seem to indicate. What echoes there are, indeed, they show themselves well aware of in the compartment of “Doggerel in Delft,” where
20 all their echoes are collected together, as in some Lurlei grotto, with much real humour, especially in the pieces entitled “Half-way in Love,” and the “Ballad of Dead Thinkers:” and the critical reader may rank such echoes, where they occur, as but a sign that these writers have, as a matter of course, felt the influence
25 of their predecessors in the poetic art—of the master-sources, in what is rapidly becoming the poetry of a past generation; at a time of life too, and in a place, in which literary imitation is one of the duties of one’s calling. Signs of power, on the other hand—of a power which may increase itself in work to come, it
30 is always interesting to discriminate in the work of young poets, such as those we seem to be dealing with here. Tokens of such power there are, among the Sonnets, in “Jealousy;” and “After Parting;” and, among the longer pieces, in that headed “In Scheria,” which, with a remarkable transparency and simplicity
35 of descriptive work, a power of classic description which would go far to the making of an excellent translator, calls a fresh and real pathos out of the beautiful old Odyssean episode of the first coming of Ulysses to the island, supplemented by a strange

later story, which tells of his return thither, in after life. Certainly, the writer of so quietly perfect a piece of work would have been foolish to let it die, or lie hid, in the periodical collection in which it first appeared.

Nor would Kingsley himself have disdained, he might 5
have been proud to own, the fine cordial inspiration of another sea-piece, of very different subject and manner, which celebrates the English fight at Santa Cruz; a due share (a surprising share when some of its poetic affinities are considered) being 10
given in this volume to practical interests. Our poets are certainly not shy of such interests, as the decided protest against some recent invasions of the rights of eye and ear in Oxford, and a really powerful utterance upon Ireland in 1881 and 1882, may bear witness.

Marks of a quite different sort of poetic power are visible in *Luna Fatifera* (a poem, which, again, Coleridge might not have disdained, though it is written with no conscious modelling after him), and in the poem entitled *Loca senta situ*; a composition which might well rank with some of the best pieces of poetic "animism"; so efficaciously, with such delicate mastery, 20
does it convey a soul into the weird spot, where

"was once a lake, in the lonely wood, "

and make it speak out what it would say.

In the somewhat unequal series of Sonnets, again, there are some which reach a high standard of worthiness—worthiness of what the essential type of the sonnet really is. They fail 25
of that type, if at all, in the direction of what has been the less usual defect of the Sonnet-writer—a kind of overcharging of sentiment, namely, an error naturally incident to the sonnet by reason of its effort after unity and concentration of motive; as, 30
on the other hand, dullness is the defect, the too common defect, of its other great quality, its dignity or repose. Some of the strongest of these sonnets, like two of the earlier poems in the volume, *In Limine* and "The Recompense," aim at the indication of passion, the passion of love, as its own exceeding great 35
reward, however castaway and profitless it may seem, in some-

thing like the spirit of Mérimée's powerful tale of Arsène Guillo-
lot, and are effective enough, dramatically. Dramatically—be it
said; for after all one is tempted to ask, can there be at the age of
twenty-two quite so blank a sense of the irreparable as that ex-
5 pressed in "The Lost Self?" And we may notice that here, as in
many other places in the volume, the kind of language adopted
passes into a strain, which association, at least, has made almost
exclusively proper to devotional poetry, something hymn-like
and with a sort of religious fervour— a strain of language
10 which, after all, perhaps, still rings truest when employed in
its original service; a point actually illustrated here, by some
strictly devotional pieces, *Vigilate Itaque*, and "The Handmaid
of the Lord;" and by some passages in "The History of Philip
the Deacon," which might rank with the work of Miss Christina
15 Rossetti, certainly our most excellent religious poet since Ke-
ble; and where words have a real sincerity which seem almost
hollow when used about earthly passion.

Yet it must not be supposed that this volume, with its
genuine humour, in "The Last Tennis-Party," for instance, is on
20 the whole a melancholy one. Beginning with models very dif-
ferent from him, what its authors actually reach, at their happi-
est, is something like the effect of Heine's songs; and even when
most melancholy are far from languidly so. Looking back, they
are ready, at least to look for profit from painful experience; and
25 can discern before them a turning, at least, on the road of a real
pilgrimage.

And, after all, in grace (it goes with that perfectness of in-
strumentation), the grace which is the special charm of *vers de*
société—in the happy wedding of fancy and expression, in the
30 ease indispensable to true song-writing, is their strength. It is a
quality which ranks, in matters of poetic taste, for what wit is,
in the purely intellectual order; full of surprise at the newness,
the happy perfection of a thing, which could hardly have been
thought at all apart from the saying of it, a moment afterwards,
35 we seem to have known that dainty point always, and are sur-
prised only that it was never made before.

And, so pure and polished, yet so unpretentious, is this
collection, as a whole, that the reader must wish to meet its au-

thors again, after the advent to them of motives, stronger than befit the pretty cockle-boat on the title page. The “art-poems”—pieces composed to pictures, according to the habit now so fashionable, and which here certainly indicate a real feeling for, and acquaintance with art—with art and music too; or again, those strictly religious pieces; or again, the excellent translations, of which there is no time left to say more—indicate, perhaps, where those future powers may in part lie. Meantime, the selectness of their work here, their power of discernment in the matters of rhythm and expression, tells us something cheering of an increasing number among the youth of Oxford for whom the true workman’s labour and care will be one of the enjoyments of life, and literary vulgarity impossible.



THE
ENGLISH SCHOOL
OF
PAINTING.

BY
ERNEST CHESNEAU.


TRANSLATED BY
L. N. ETHERINGTON.

WITH A PREFACE BY PROFESSOR RUSKIN.



CASELL & COMPANY, LIMITED:
LONDON, PARIS, NEW YORK & MELBOURNE.
1885.

The English School of Painting



THAT a translation of the work of a French writer should have been selected by the Principal of the National Art Training School as the exponent of English painting in a series of popular handbooks, is in itself noticeable, not so much as proof of the growing importance of English art, as of the increasing liberality of French criticism. A French work, indeed, might have been thus selected, either for its salutariness indirectly, in affording light upon our art from a source alien and perhaps hostile, or for its direct usefulness in the guidance of a critic who should be foreign only in his freshness, and French only by his good sense. The plain merits of this somewhat English book, now so pleasantly translated, shows that the latter motive has guided its selection: it tells us, perhaps, little that none but a foreigner could, and has certainly no foreign absurdities. Carefully minute and complete, with a large amount of information, as to dates and the like, in its ample foot-notes, it begins with a lively sketch, based on the works of the acute and entertaining Walpole, of foreign art in England down to the period when English art proper began, with Hogarth, the great humourist.

For the humour of English art—a homely humour, paralleled only by old German engraving—and specially for the humour of Hogarth, M. Chesneau has a genuine appreciation; though he perhaps underrates the purely artistic value of Hogarth's work. "It would seem," he says of Hogarth and Wilkie, "as though those two artists see with their understanding and not with their eyes." That is hardly the whole truth about Hogarth. Hogarth, with all his faults of drawing, is a great pictorial composer: a great pictorial composer is surely a great draughtsman, and a great draughtsman surely a genuine artist. Even if we set aside the natural charm of his portraits, about which there may

be two opinions, and his mastery over a peculiar harmony of colour, Hogarth is an artist indeed, in the most exact sense, simply because what he has to present, as satirist or moralist, was originally conceived by him as *visible*. His art is no mere
5 shell; no mere translation of a matter he might have in common with a writer of satirical books, but an intrinsically and exclusively visible thing.

On the other hand, M. Chesneau very justly develops the difference between Reynolds and Gainsborough. “If one
10 would define exactly the difference between these two masters, one might say that Reynolds was all intelligence and will, Gainsborough all soul and sentiment; the former delights those of refined tastes, the latter charms everybody.” And these are among the things in English art which the French critic, who,
15 after all, has his preferences (himself indeed preferring Gainsborough to Reynolds) likes best. Those preferences he reveals by the quality of his writing, which, always animated, becomes judiciously enthusiastic, now and again, about our landscape art—“the brightest jewel of the English school”: Constable, as
20 he shows, even determining the aims of French landscape art; Bonington being cordially restored to the English; and Turner duly defined in his three characteristic stages, standing for him without a rival, even with Claude and Delacroix in mind. A like preference is shown later when he deals with our modern, especially the Pre-raphaelite, landscape. Throughout, he understands the English success in this matter in connection with the sincere English passion for natural objects as such: and its importance is brought the more into prominence by its contrast with those fade historic and “ideal” painters with whom he
30 deals, not always quite fairly, in a chapter on “The Old Masters of English Art” down to Barry, which has been to him clearly a mere trial of patience.

The chapters on Pre-raphaelitism are, of course, designed less for information of ourselves than of the French, whose half-
35 vexed, half-delighted bewilderment, on their first discovery of the thing, at an exhibition in the Avenue Montaigne, in the year 1855, M. Chesneau records. It is a characteristic circumstance that the English school of painting begins with the satire, of-

ten harsh satire, of Hogarth. Throughout that school, and most clearly in Pre-raphaelitism, M. Chesneau detects, with great truth of observation, a certain temper of revolt. English artistic genius has been apt to jar against the English public; it has been often at variance with itself, as with ancient precedent; and something of the same kind may be noticed also about English literature. French art, indeed, has certainly had its full measure of eccentric subjectivities; but they have been, for the most part, mere tricks of manner on the surface of an almost universal consent on all important principles. As regards English art, on the other hand, in what has been repeatedly the attitude of the public towards what it has, on first sight, taken for artistic eccentricity, one may suspect a permanent symptom of a divided and tentative condition in the national intelligence itself—never sure of itself, and very capable of sudden mutation and extravagance—a condition clearly illustrated in the contrast of the practicality of its politics with the ideal elevation of its poetry. From the midst of narrowly practical interests it reaches out for the great things of mind, but not always with tact and consistency. To such a people, artistic genius has almost always come, like the roll of writing to the prophet, bitter, at all events at the first tasting—claiming to be appreciated with an effort, and almost against one's will: and that condition has again and again reacted on art itself in England.



7.

Vernon Lee's *Juvenilia* The Pall Mall Gazette. Vol. XLVI, 5 Aug. 1887, p. 5.

August 5, 1887.] The Pall Mall Gazette 5

VERNON LEE'S "JUVENILIA."*

It is in a peculiar sense, as the author explains in an ingenious prologue, that we are to understand the term "Juvenilia," by which the lady who writes under the name of Vernon Lee has entitled a second series of very interesting "Essays on Sundry Æsthetical Questions," recently published. The author of "Euphorion," "Baldwin," and "Belcoran," of the "Duchess of Albany," and above all, perhaps, of the charming volume on the "Eighteenth Century in Italy," though her learning and varied literary gifts have already made her remarkable in contemporary literature, still belongs to the younger and rising generation. It is with regard to the future rather than the past that these essays figure as *youthful*—as matters, that is to say, which *prima facie* need a certain amount of excusing. To Vernon Lee, the æsthetical questions here discussed, over which she has so genuine a mastery, have come, under her growing sense of great social and other evils, to rank as but questions of the best way of amassing ourselves. In face of this awakening conscience and the purpose to give it satisfaction in future work, music and art and poetry, once in so exclusive possession of her interests, must rank as the mere toys of childhood. "While we were happy other folk were wretched." Little by little we begin to perceive that there are ugly things in the world.

The volumes thus differentiated, like their predecessors, though they have their difficulties, should be, for those who in these days of despised literature really care to read, full of charm. Certain shortcomings in execution we might point out, were there space here, due apparently to rapidity of thought and exuberance of knowledge; but the surmounting of these shortcomings would certainly leave Vernon Lee among the very few best critical writers of all time. You wish to escape for an hour from a world which, if not sordid, is perhaps dreary; you take up one of these volumes, and in a little while are transferred with slight effort to a world composed of the best, or nearly best, things there are, in art, in literature, in nature, with an animated companion who writes out of a minute and well-digested acquaintance, at first hand, with medieval art, the art of the Renaissance, of the last century, of to-day, the sort of learning which involves a most varied gift of sympathy and appreciation over co-operating with diligent labour,—who writes out a large stock of vivid impressions, and has moreover a singularly virile dialectical power, always on the alert for the fallacies which may lurk in those impressions. If the reader desires a specimen of cool, dispassionate reasoning on such matters let him turn to certain observations on what the author well calls "the modern gallery-and-concert tendency" in a chapter on the Botticelli at the Villa Lemmi, or to some wholesome remarks on a certain craze of Shakespearean criticism. If he wishes to add pleasantly to his own æsthetic impressions, let him read the whole of the delightful chapter on Perigo, in which the latter are contained.

A very considerable force of mainly dialectical skill; a style rich, varied, and expressive, if at times plethoric or contorted, which has in it, in short, the making of a finer style; Italy and its whole magic story, with a great deal besides, at the finger's end; a picturesque-romantic, wholly modern sensibility, which forbids work except at the call of genuinely felt interest—these are qualities that define good literature, and which have gone largely to the composition of the series, to which we hope "Juvenilia," in spite of its increasing "ethical" tone, is by no means to be the conclusion. For in truth, together with all these fine qualities, there has been always traceable in Vernon Lee's work an unaffected sense of great problems, of the real probation of man and woman in life, of a great pity, of the sad story of humanity, bringing now and again into her exposition of what is sometimes perhaps decadent art a touch of something like Puritanism.

* "Juvenilia: Being a Second Series of Essays on Sundry Æsthetical Questions." By Vernon Lee. Two vols. (London: T. Fisher Unwin.)

JUVENILIA:

BEING A SECOND SERIES OF

ESSAYS ON
SUNDRY ÆSTHETICAL
QUESTIONS

BY

VERNON LEE

VOL. I.

London

T FISHER UNWIN

26 PATERNOSTER SQUARE

MDCCLXXXVII

Vernon Lee's *Juvenilia*

IT IS IN a peculiar sense, as the author explains in an ingenious prologue, that we are to understand the term "Juvenilia," by which the lady who writes under the name of Vernon Lee has entitled a second series of very interesting *Essays on Sundry Æsthetical Questions*, recently published. The author of *Euphorion*, *Baldwin*, and *Belcaro*, of the *Countess of Albany*, and above all, perhaps, of the charming volume on the *Eighteenth Century in Italy*, though her learning and varied literary gifts have already made her remarkable in contemporary literature, still belongs to the younger and rising generation. It is with regard to the future rather than the past that these essays figure as *youthful*—as matters, that is to say, which *prima facie* need a certain amount of excusing. To Vernon Lee, the aesthetic questions here discussed, over which she has so genuine a mastery, have come, under her growing sense of great social and other evils, to rank as but questions of the best way of amusing ourselves. In face of this awakening conscience and the purpose to give it satisfaction in future work, music and art and poetry, once in so exclusive possession of her interests, must rank as the mere toys of childhood. "While we were happy other folk were wretched." "Little by little we begin to perceive that there are ugly things in the world."

The volumes thus differentiated, like their predecessors, though they have their difficulties, should be, for those who in these days of dropsical literature really care to read, full of charm. Certain shortcomings in execution we might point out, were there space here, due apparently to rapidity of thought and exeburance of knowledge; but the surmounting of these shortcomings would certainly leave Vernon Lee among the very few best critical writers of all time. You wish to escape for

an hour from a world which, if not sordid, is perhaps threadbare; you take up one of these volumes, and in a little while are transferred with slight effort to a world composed of the best, or nearly best, things there are, in art, in literature, in nature,
5 with an animated companion who writes out of a minute and well-digested acquaintance, at first hand, with medieval art, the art of the Renaissance, of the last century, of to-day, the sort of learning which involves a most varied gift of sympathy and appreciation ever co-operating with diligent labour,—who writes
10 out a large stock of vivid impressions, and has moreover a singularly virile dialectical power, always on the alert for the falsities which may lurk in those impressions. If the reader desires a specimen of cool, dispassionate reasoning on such matters let him turn to certain observations on what the author well calls
15 “the modern gallery-and-concert tendency” in a chapter on the Botticellis at the Villa Lemmi, or to some wholesome remarks on a certain craze of Shakespearean criticism. If he wishes to add pleasantly to his own aesthetic impressions, let him read the whole of the delightful chapter on Perigot, in which the latter are contained.

A very considerable force of manly dialectical skill; a style rich, varied, and expressive, if at times plethoric or contorted, which has in it, in short, the making of a finer style; Italy and its whole magic story, with a great deal besides, at the
25 finger’s ends; a picturesque, romantic, wholly modern sensibility, which forbids work except at the call of genuinely felt interests:—these are qualities that define good literature, and which have gone largely to the composition of the series, to which we hope *Juvenilia*, in spite of its increasing “ethical” tone,
30 is by no means to be the conclusion. For in truth, together with all those fine qualities, there has been always traceable in Vernon Lee’s work an unaffected sense of great problems, of the real probation of men and women in life, of a great pity, of the “sad story of humanity,” bringing now and again into her
35 exposition of what is sometimes perhaps decadent art a touch of something like Puritanism.

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

CORRESPONDANCE

PREMIÈRE SÉRIE

(1830-1850)

PARIS

G. CHARPENTIER ET C^{ie}, ÉDITEURS

11, RUE DE GRENELLE, 11

—
1887

The Life and Letters of Gustave Flaubert

PROSE as a fine art, of which French literature affords a continuous illustration, had in Gustave Flaubert a follower, unique in the decisiveness of his conception of that art and the disinterestedness of his service to it. Necessitated by weak health to the regularity and the quiet of a monk, he was but kept the closer to what he had early recognised as his vocation in life. By taking care, he lived to be almost sixty years old, in the full use of his gift, as we may suppose, and he wrote seven or eight books, none of them lengthy. "Neglect nothing," he writes to a friend. "Labour! Do the thing over again, and don't leave your work till you feel convinced that you have brought it to the last point of perfection possible for you. In these days genius is not rare. But what no one has now, what we should try to have, is the conscience of one's work." To that view he was faithful; and he had, and keeps, his reward. So sparing as a writer of books, he was a voluminous letter-writer. A volume of his letters to George Sand appeared in 1888. In 1887 his niece, for many years his intimate companion, published the first portion of his general correspondence, and it is the purpose of this paper to note some of the lights thrown by it on himself and on his work.

Gustave Flaubert was born at Rouen in 1821. His earliest home was in the old *Maison-Dieu*, of which his father was surgeon. The surgeon's household was self-respecting, affectionate, refined, liberal in expense; but the inevitable associations of the place—the suffering, white-capped faces at the windows—stayed by the susceptible lad, and passed into his work as a somewhat overbalanced sense of unhappiness in things. More cheerful influences came with the purchase of a country house at Croisset, a few miles down the Seine, on the

right bank, "white and in the old style." In after years Flaubert delighted to believe that Pascal, that great master of prose, had once visited it. It was here, in the large rooms, the delightful garden, with views of Rouen, the busy river, the wooded hills, that the remainder of Flaubert's life was chiefly spent. His letters show that the feeling of vocation to literature came early; oddly enough, for he was no precocious child, and took a longer time than is usual in learning to read. From the first he was abundant in enthusiasm for the literary art of others. In early youth he meets Victor Hugo, and is surprised to find him much like any one else externally, wondering at "the greatness of the treasure contained in so ordinary a casket," fixing his eyes devoutly "on the right hand which had written so many beautiful things." He was a singularly beautiful child, and records that royal ladies had stopped their carriages to take him in their arms and kiss him. By its vigour and beauty, again, his youth made people think of the young demigods of Greek sculpture. Then, somewhere in early manhood, came an alarm regarding health, both bodily and mental; and from that time to his death he continued more or less of an invalid, or at least a valetudinarian, enjoying life, indeed, its work, its gift, but always with an undercurrent of nervous distress. "To practical life," he writes at twenty-four, "I have said an irrevocable adieu. Hence, for a long time to come, all I ask is five or six hours of quiet in my own room daily, a big fire in the winter, and two candles every evening to give me light": again, "I am well enough, now that I have consented to be always ill": and again, "My life seems arranged now after a regular plan, with less large, less varied horizons, but the deeper perhaps, because more restrained. You would not believe what mischief any sort of derangement causes me." Henceforth a sort of sacerdotal order is impressed everywhere. In the quiet house his writing table is before him, reverently covered with all its apparatus of work, under a light silken cloth, when a visitor is announced: his life slides early into even grooves; an organisation naturally exquisite becomes fastidious. He was still, at carefully guarded hours, abundant in friendship, in the good-humour, and the humour or wit, which attaches and amuses friends. After all, there was plenty of laugh-

ter, not always satiric, in his life. And then an intimate domestic affection, so largely evidenced in these letters, making heavy demands from time to time on his patience, his self-denial, and procuring him in return immense consideration, was a necessity alike of his personal and his literary life. It is a very human picture, with average battles and sorrows and joys, quite like those of the *bourgeois* he so greatly despised, but for him with all the joys also, all the various intellectual adventure, of the artistic life, followed loyally as an end in itself. The quiet people he quietly loves are a relaxation from the somewhat over-intent character of his "art," while they supply some of its motives. And the enforced monotony of a recluse life is in their favour. "To take pleasure in a place it is necessary to have lived there long. One day is not enough for warming one's nest."

Yet in spite of bad health, in spite of his love of retirement, of routine, his passion for a recluse life, he had been, at least for a Frenchman, a good deal of a traveller. Foreign travel—mental, and as far as might be physical, journeys—to the old classical lands, the desert, the wondrous East, the very matter of his work was in considerable measure dependent upon that. Rapid yet penetrative notice of the places he visits animates his correspondence. The student of his writings—so brief a list!—is glad to add to them the record of a journey to Brittany in 1847, written in "collaboration" with his travelling companion, M. Maxine du Camp. He visited many parts of France, above all, the grand old pagan towns of the South, Switzerland, Italy, Corsica, "a brave country still virgin as to the *bourgeois*, who have not yet arrived to degrade it with their admiration, a country ardent and grave, all red and black." At last, with a thousand daily solitudes for the poor old mother left at Croisset, came his long journey to Syria and Egypt, the record of which fills the last hundred pages of the volume before us.

Flaubert's first great trouble came in his twenty-fifth year, on the death of his father, followed quickly by that of his favourite sister Caroline:—

It was yesterday at eleven o'clock we interred her—
poor damsel! They put her in her wedding-gown, with

bunches of roses, violets and immortelles. I passed the whole night watching beside her. She lay straight, reposed on her couch, in the room where you have heard her play. She looked taller and handsomer than in life, with the long white veil down to the feet. In the morning, when all was ready, I gave her a last kiss in her coffin. I stooped down, placed my head within, felt the lead bend under my hands.—It was I who had the cast taken. I saw the coarse hands handle her and enclose her in the plaster. I shall possess her hand and her face. Pradier will make the bust for me, to be placed in my own room. I have kept for myself her large striped shawl, a lock of her hair, the table, and the desk at which she wrote. And that is all!—all that remains of those one has loved . . .

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When we got up there, in the cemetery behind the walls of which we used to go out walking in my school days, the grave was too narrow: the coffin would not go in. They shook it, pulled it this way and that, used spade and levers, and at last a gravedigger tramped upon it—where the head was—to force it into its place. I felt dried up—like the marble of a tomb—but terribly irritated. And now, since Sunday, we are at home again at Croisset. What a journey it was! alone with my mother and the infant, which cried. The last time I left, it was with yourself, you will remember. Of the four persons who then lived there two remain. . . . My mother is better than she might be; occupies herself with her daughter's babe, is trying to make herself a mother once more. Will she succeed? The reaction has not yet come, and I dread it. I am crushed, stupefied. If I could but resume my tranquil life of art, of long-continued meditation!

What note of dismay, of a kind of frozen grief, of a capacity for pity, of those resources to be so largely tested by *Madame Bovary*!

35 I am prepared for everything. I am like the pavement on the high road; misfortune tramps over me as it wills.

As for me, my eyes are dry as marble. Strange! The more expansive I find myself, fluid and abundant, in fictitious griefs, just in that proportion do the real griefs stay fixed in my heart, acrid and hard. They tum to crystal, there, one by one, as they come.

5

It is the daughter of that favourite sister who has now appeared as the editor of his letters from the year 1830 to 1850. She has introduced them by a sketch of his life which the student of Flaubert's work will value, for she became in her turn her uncle's intimate companion, and has recorded some characteristic counsels to herself, the mature experience of his artistic life applied to the formation of the mind of a young girl. "When you take up a book," he would say, "you must swallow it at one mouthful. That is the only way to know it in its entirety. Accustom yourself to follow out an idea. I don't wish you should have that loose character in your thoughts which is the appanage of persons of your sex." The author of *Salammbô* taught her ancient history. "I interrupted him sometimes," she tells us, "by the question 'Was he a good man?—Cambyses, Alexander, Alcibiades.' 'Faith! they were not very accommodating members of society—*messieurs très commodes*. But what has that to do with you?'" He went to church with her, for the young French girl could not go alone—amazing complaisance it seemed in so marked a Freethinker—awaiting patiently, we must not be too sure with what kind of thoughts, till her duties were over.

La Bovary!—many a time she heard of that before she had any notion what the name meant. "I had a vague belief that it was a synonym for labour, perpetual labour. I assisted, a motionless witness, at the slow creation of these pages so severely elaborated." There he sat, month after month, seeking, sometimes with so much pain, the expression, "the phrase," weighing the retention or rejection of an epithet—his one fixed belief the belief in beauty, literary beauty, with liberal delight at beauty in other men's work, remembering after many years the precise place on the page of some approved form of sentence. He knew his favourite passage in Scripture, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring glad tidings!"

“Reflect on that, get to the bottom of it, if you can,’ he would say to me, full of enthusiasm.”

His “distractions” were limited to certain short absences in Paris for a day or two, about once in three months—*pour me retremper*. On the rare occasion of a longer visit it was necessary that his home companions should go with him; and then, on certain days, his rooms in the Boulevard du Temple were put in flowery array, and he entertained a select party of friends. “Whenever I re-enter Paris,” he writes, “I breathe at my ease.”

10 But in truth he abhorred change. “Man is so poor a machine that a straw among the wheels spoils it.” “I live like a Carthusian,” he says; and again, “I am but a lizard, a literary lizard, warming himself all day long at the full sun of the beautiful.” “For writing,” his niece tells us, “he required extreme tension

15 of mind, and he never found himself in the desired condition save in his own workroom, seated at his great round table, sure that nothing could come to disturb him. He had a passionate love of order, and ate sparingly. His force of will in all that concerned his ‘art’ was immense.” He troubled himself little about

20 “moments of inspiration,” the waiting on which he held to be a cause of “sterility.” Get the habit of working in ordinary daylight, and then perhaps the ray of heavenly light may come. At times the monotony of his method of life, a monotony likely to continue to the end, weighed on the spirits, especially as the

25 passing footsteps about him grew rarer and memory took the place of sensation: for, in spite of what people say, “memories don’t fill one’s house, they do but enlarge its solitude. There is now a multitude of places at which my heart bleeds as I pass. It seems to me,” he writes—only in his twenty-fifth year—“that

30 the angles of my life are worn down under the friction of all that has passed over it.”

So his life continued to the last, as he had foreseen, somewhat painfully disturbed towards the end by the German war. That its barbarities should have been the work of a literary,

35 a scientific people, was but the last expression of a soul of stupidity in things, to his view unmistakable. The invaders in occupation of Rouen made use of his house, but respectfully. The end came in 1880, and found him at work, alone apparently, in

his large study, with the five windows and wide views, where he had lived so long.

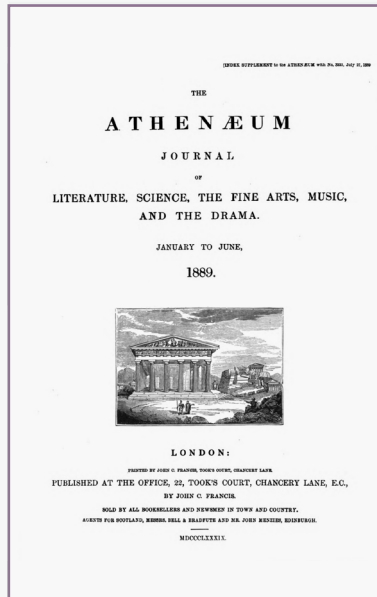
Madame Commanville has printed these letters, chiefly because she thought they revealed her uncle under a different light from that of his books. A kind of scandal attached to his writings, and the editor of his correspondence is certainly right in thinking that her own reminiscences of his life would, after all, make people esteem him as a man. In truth, life and letters alike reveal him not otherwise than as we divine him through his books—the passionate, labourious, conscientious artist, who has found affection and temperance indispensable to his art, abounding in sympathy for the simple people who came nearest to him, conscious of an immense mental superiority to almost every one, a superiority which kept him high and clean in all things, yet full of pity, of practical consideration for men and women as they must be. Anxious to think him a good man, his niece, with some costly generous acts known to herself in memory, was struck above all by that tranquil devotion to art which seemed to have had about it something of the “seriousness and passion that are like a consecration”—something of religion.



9.

The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth

The Athenæum.
26 Jan. 1889, pp. 109–110.



THE
COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS
OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
JOHN MORLEY

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND NEW YORK
1889

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The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth [And Two Other Books of the Same]



THE appearance of Prof. Knight's judicious *Selections*, and of Messrs. Macmillan's collected edition of his works in one volume, with the first book of *The Recluse*, now printed in its entirety for the first time, and a sensible introductory essay by Mr. John Morley, gives sufficient proof that general interest in Wordsworth is on the increase. Nothing could be better—nothing so well calculated as a careful study of Wordsworth to correct the faults of our bustling age as regards both thought and taste, and remind people, amid the vast contemporary expansion of the means and accessories of life, of the essential value of life itself. It was none other than Mill himself, so true a representative of the main tendencies of the spirit of our day, who protested that when the battle which he and his friends were waging had been won the world would "need more than ever those qualities which Wordsworth had kept alive and nourished."

In the new edition the poems are arranged, with their dates, as much as possible in the order of their composition—an arrangement which has its obvious uses for the student of the development of the poet's genius, though the older method of distributing his work into various groups of subject had its service as throwing light upon his poetic motives, more especially as coming from himself.

Mr. Morley in his introduction dwells on the fact of Wordsworth's singular personal happiness as having had much to do with the physiognomy of his work—a calm, sabbatic, mystic well-being some may think it; worldly prosperity De Quincey reckoned it. The poet's own flawless temperament, his fine mountain atmosphere of mind, had, of course, something to do with that. What a store of good fortune, what a contribu-

tion to happiness in the very finest sense of that word, is really involved in a cheerful, grateful, physical temperament, above all for a poet!

5 An intimate consciousness of the expression of natural things, which weighs, listens, penetrates, where the earlier phase of mind passed roughly by, is a large element in the complexion of modern poetry. It has been remarked as a fact in mental history again and again. It reveals itself in many forms, but is certainly strongest and most attractive in the most characteristic products of modern literature as of modern art also: it is exemplified almost equally by writers as unlike each other as Senancour and Théophile Gautier. As a curious chapter in the history of human mind, its growth might be traced from Rousseau to Chateaubriand, from Chateaubriand to Victor Hugo.

15 It has doubtless some latent connexion with those pantheistic theories which locate an intelligent soul in material things, and have largely exercised men's minds in some modern systems of philosophy; while it makes as much difference between ancient and modern landscape art as there is between the rough masks of an early mosaic and a portrait by Reynolds or Gainsborough. Of this new sense the writings of Wordsworth are the central and elementary expression; he is more simply and entirely preoccupied with it than any other poet, though there are fine expressions of precisely the same interest in so different a poet as Shelley. There was in Wordsworth's own character, as we have seen, a certain natural contentment, a sort of inborn religious placidity, seldom found united with a sensibility so mobile as his, which was favourable to the quiet, habitual observation of inanimate or imperfectly animate existence. His

20 life of eighty years is divided by no very profoundly felt incidents, its changes being almost wholly inward; it falls, like his work, into broad, untroubled, perhaps somewhat monotonous spaces. What it resembles most is the life of one of those early Flemish or Italian painters who, just because their minds were

25 full of heavenly visions, passed, some of them, the better part of sixty years in quiet systematic industry. And this sort of placid life matured in Wordsworth a quite unusual sensibility, really innate in him, to the sights and sounds of the natural world. It

is to this world, and to a world of congruous meditation thereon, that we see him retiring in this newly published poem of *The Recluse*—taking leave, without much count of costs, of the world of business, of action and ambition, as also of all that, for the majority of mankind, counts as sensuous enjoyment. 5

And so it came about that this sense of a life, a living soul, in natural objects, which in most poetry is but a rhetorical artifice, is with Wordsworth the assertion of what for him is almost literal fact. To him every natural object seemed to possess more or less of a moral or spiritual life—to be capable of a companionship with humanity full of expression, of inexplicable affinities, and delicacies of intercourse. It was like a survival, in the peculiar intellectual temperament of a man of letters at the end of the eighteenth century, of that primitive condition which some philosophers have traced in the general history of human culture, in which all outward objects alike, including even the works of men's hands, were believed to be endowed with animation, and the world seemed "full of souls." The eighteenth century had had but little of such mysticism. But then Wordsworth was essentially a leader of the revolt against the hard reign of the mere understanding in that century, a pioneer of thoughts which have been so different in our own. 10 15 20

And it was through nature thus ennobled by a semblance of passion and thought that Wordsworth approached the spectacle of human life. Human life, indeed, is for him at first only an additional accidental grace upon this expressive landscape. When he thought of men and women, it was of men and women as in the presence, and under the influence of the spell, of those effective natural objects, and linked to them by many associations. The close connexion of humanity with natural objects, the habitual association of his feelings and thoughts with a particular neighbourhood—colourless perhaps, certainly limited—has sometimes seemed to degrade those who have been the subjects of its influence, as if it did but reinforce that physical connexion of our nature with the actual lime and clay of the soil which is always drawing us nearer to our end. But for Wordsworth these influences tended to the dignity of human nature, because they tended to tranquillise it. He raises nature 25 30 35

to the level of human thought to give it power and expression; he subdues man to the level of nature, and gives him thereby a certain breadth and vastness and solemnity. The “leech-gatherer” on the moor, the “woman stepping westward,” are for him
5 natural objects, almost in the same sense as the aged thorn or the lichened rock on the heath. In this sense the leader of the “Lake School,” in spite of an earnest preoccupation with man, his thoughts, his destiny, is the poet of nature.

And of nature, after all, in its modesty. The English lake
10 country has, of course, its grandeurs. But the peculiar function of Wordsworth’s genius, as carrying in it a power to open out the soul of apparently little or familiar things, would have found its true test had he become the poet of Surrey, say, and the prophet of its life. The glories of Italy and Switzerland, though
15 he did write a little about them, had too potent a material life of their own to serve greatly his poetic purpose.

In Wordsworth’s prefatory advertisement to the first edition of *The Prelude*, published in 1850, it is stated that that work was intended to be introductory to *The Recluse*, and that *The Recluse*, if completed, would have consisted of three parts. The
20 second part is *The Excursion*. The third part was only planned; but the first book of the first part was left in manuscript by Wordsworth—though in manuscript, it is said, in no great condition of forwardness for the printers. This book, now for the
25 first time printed *in extenso* (a very noble passage from it found place in that prose advertisement to *The Excursion*), is the great novelty of this latest edition of Wordsworth’s poetry: it was well worth adding to the poet’s great bequest to English literature. A true student of his work, who has formulated for himself what
30 he supposes to be the leading characteristics of Wordsworth’s genius, will feel, we think, lively interest in testing them by the various fine passages in what is here presented for the first time. Let the following serve for a sample:—

Thickets full of songsters, and the voice
35 Of lordly birds, an unexpected sound
Heard now and then from morn to latest eve,
Admonishing the man who walks below

Of solitude and silence in the sky?
These have we, and a thousand nooks of earth
Have also these, but nowhere else is found,
Nowhere (or is it fancy?) can be found
The one sensation that is here; 'tis here, 5
Here as it found its way into my heart
In childhood, here as it abides by day,
By night, here only; or in chosen minds
That take it with them hence, where'er they go.
—'Tis, but I cannot name it, 'tis the sense 10
Of majesty, and beauty, and repose,
A blended holiness of earth and sky,
Something that makes this individual spot,
This small abiding-place of many men,
A termination, and a last retreat, 15
A centre, come from wheresoe'er you will,
A whole without dependence or defect,
Made for itself, and happy in itself,
Perfect contentment, Unity entire.



DAYS AND NIGHTS

BY

ARTHUR SYMONS

"These things are life :
And life, they say, is worthy of the Muse."
Modern Love.

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND NEW YORK
1889

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A Poet with Something to Say

THE student of modern literature, turning to the spectacle of our modern life, notes there a variety and complexity which seem to defy the limitations of verse structure, as if more and more any large record of humanity must necessarily be in prose. Yet there is certainly abundant proof that the beauty and sorrow of the world can still kindle satisfying verse, in a volume recently published under the significant title of *Days and Nights*, being, in effect, concentrations, powerfully dramatic, of what we call “the light and shadow of life;” although, with Art, as Mr. Symonds conceives—

Since, of man with trouble born to death
She sings, her song is less of Days than Nights.

Readers of contemporary verse who may regret in much of it, amid an admirable achievement of poetic form, a certain lack of poetic matter, will find substance here—abundant poetic substance, developing, as by its own organic force, the poetic forms proper to it, with natural vigour.

Mr. Symonds’s themes, then, are almost exclusively those of the present day, studied, as must needs happen with a very young writer, rather through literature than life; through the literature, however, which is most in touch with the actual life around us. “J’aime passionnément la passion,” he might say with Stendhal: and in two main forms. The reader of Dante will remember those words of La Pia in the *Purgatorio*, so dramatic in their brevity that they have seemed to interpret many a problematic scene of pictorial art. Shape their exacter meaning as we may, they record an instance of human passion, under the influence of some intellectual subtlety in the air, going to

its end by paths round-about. Love's casuistries, impassioned satiety, love's inversion into cruelty, are experiences even more characteristic of our late day than of Dante's somewhat sophisticated middle age; and it is just this complexion of sentiment—a grand passion, entangled in scruples, refinements, after-thoughts, reserved, repressed, but none the less masterful for that, conserving all its energies for expression in some unexpected way—that Mr. Symons presents, with unmistakable insight, in one group of his poems, at the head of which we should place "An Act of Mercy"—odd and remote, mercy's self turned malignant—or "A Revenge," or, perhaps, in long-drawn sonnet-series, "A Lover's Progress"—progress, one half at least, in merely intellectual fineness, as if love had heard "All the Yea and Nay of life," and taken his degree, in some school of metaphysical philosophy. Like the hero in his own "Interlude of Helena and Faustus," the modern lover, as Mr. Symons conceives him, claims to have seen in their fulness

The workings of the world Plato but dreamt of.

He welcomes, as an added source of interest in the study of it, the curious subtlety to which the human soul has come even in its passions.

"Thy speech hath not the largeness of my sires," says Helena to Faustus; but this "largeness" Mr. Symons attains in just the converse of this remotely conceived, exotic, casuistical passion, in that rural tragedy, the tragedy of the poor generally (the tyranny of love, here too, sometimes turning to cruelty), in a group of poignant stories, told with unflinching, dramatic sincerity, which is not afraid of the smallest incident that has the suggestion of true feeling in it. The elementary passions of men and women in their exclusive strength, the fierce, vengeful sense of outraged honour in the humble, wild hunger, in mortal conflict with the ideal of homely dignity, as Crabbe or Wordsworth understood it, and, beyond these miserable, ragged ends of existence, the white dawn possible for humanity, for "Esther Bray," for "Red Bredbury," for "Margery of the Fens," whose wronged honour and affection has made her a witch—

Go, and leave me alone. I'm past your help, I shall lie,
As she lay, through the night, and at morn, as she
went in the rain, I shall die.
Go, and leave me alone. Let us die as I lived. But oh,
If the wind wouldn't cry and wail with the baby's cry as I go! 5

And this too, the tragedy of the poor as it must always be with us, finds its still more harshly satiric inverse in certain poems, like "A Café-Singer," and other Parisian grotesques, for the delineation of the deepest tragedy of all, underlying that world of sickly gaslight and artificial flowers which apes the tuberoso 10 conventionalities of the ultra-refined; often with a touch of lunacy about it, or the partial lunacy of narcotism—"the soul at pawn"—or that violent religious reaction which is like a narcotic. These very modern notes also are made to contribute their gloom to the dramatic effect of life in these poems. 15

Set over against this impressively painted series of nights and days, often forbidding, a faith in the eternal value of art is throughout maintained;

Art alone
Changeless among the changing made; 20

as amply compensating for all other defects in the poet's finding of things; though on what grounds we hardly see, except his own deep, unaffected sense of it. Its witness to eternal beauty comes in directly, as nature itself, with tranquillising influence, contrives to do in this volume, in interludes of wholesome air, 25 as through open doors, upon those hot, impassioned scenes. Yet close as art comes in these very poems, for example, to the lives of men, to interpret the beauty and sorrow there, Mr. Symons is anxious to disavow any practical pretension to alter or affect the nature of things thereby:— 30

She probes an ancient wound yet brings no balm.

And yet pity (who that reads can doubt it?) is a large constituent of this writer's temper,—natural pity, contending

with the somewhat artificial modern preference for telling and leaving a story in all its harsh, unrelieved effect. The appeal of a pale, smitten face has perhaps never been rendered more touchingly than in "A Village Mariana."

5 The complex, perhaps too matterful, soul of our century has found in Mr. Browning, and some other excellent modern English poets, the capacity for dealing masterfully with it, excepting only that it has been too much for their perfect lucidity of mind, or at least of style, so that they take a good deal of
10 time to read. In an age of excellent poets, people sometimes speculate wherein any new and original force in poetry may be thought likely to reveal itself; and some may have thought that just as, for a poet after Dryden, nothing was left but correctness, and thereupon the genius of Pope became correct, with a
15 correctness which made him profoundly original; so the *cachet* of a new-born poetry for ourselves may lie precisely in that gift of lucidity, given a genuine grapple with difficult matter. The finer pieces in this volume, certainly, any poet of our day might be glad to own, for their substance, their dramatic hold on life,
20 their fine scholarship; and they have this eminent merit, among many fine qualities of style,—readers need fear no difficulty in them. In this new poet the rich poetic vintage of our time has run clear at last.



It is Thyself

“One knocked at the Beloved’s door: and a Voice asked from within, Who is there? and he answered, It is I. And the door was not opened. And after a year he returned and knocked again at the door. And again the Voice asked, Who is there? and he said, It is Thyself! And the door was opened to him.” 5

THE author of this volume, who, with those pretty words on its title-page, seems modestly to disavow that difference from other people on which poets are apt to pride themselves, is, we judge, a Russian, of French culture, who, taken with a love of the English genius, has turned to that somewhat antique phase of our poetry which has ceased to be altogether vernacular, and has learned to write therein like an Englishman; certainly, with much genuine insight and sympathy. The best of those pieces, indeed, might find their place in an anthology of the later Elizabethan or early Jacobean muse, in a certain mood, half serious, half playful, not without a grain of satire. Mr. Rafalovich has mastered many of its quaint charms, its trick, especially, of seizing, in the little graces of actual life, of dress for instance, the poetic touch. 20

There are no colours that have sworn
Such bitter enmity
But may be reconciled and worn,
My dearest one, by thee.

Thy wearing shall do wonders 25
For those same colours summer links,
But man more tasteful sunders:
The purplest blues, the crudest pinks.

I know that yellows unsubdued
The crabbed reds repel,
But thou, quite heedless of their feud,
Their violence canst quell

5 Thy wearing shall make harmless
Magenta, mauve, and green, shot through
With purple, nor quite charmless
Thy flag-like sporting of bright blue.

10 No bolder than a brilliant morn
On thy victorious way,
No less thyself thou canst adorn
Than can a summer's day.

There is surely a pleasant vein of true poetry in that, akin
to Herrick.

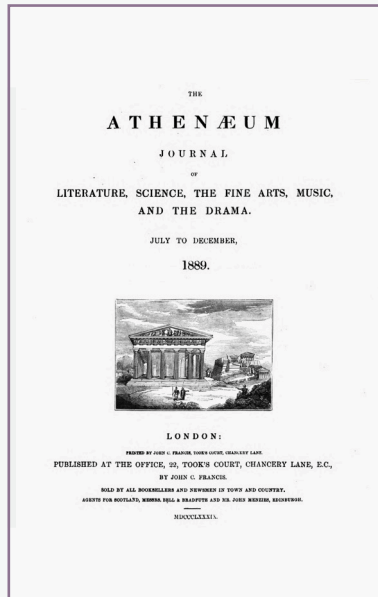
15 This brief collection, in short, with no titles except that
general one, making it all the easier to sip at it lightly, is really
a series of pleasant afterthoughts on human life, in what may
be called its spring colours. It indicates, indeed, so true a sense
20 of what is rightly attractive in trifles, that really poetic touch in
the mere toys of life which suggest or is suggested by the living
undercurrent of its deepest feelings that we doubt whether the
author has found in English verse the proper scope for his tal-
ents. To add to the great body of English literature is not the
25 natural function of a foreigner, however clever; but rather the
critical one of reporting, of making known at home or abroad
the real flowers, as distinguished from many imitation ones, the
real graces of existence, to be gathered in the more fortunate re-
gions of that English civilisation, which Parisians and Russians
30 (Mr. Raffalovich being not alone in his preference) are said just
now so greatly to affect.

12.

Correspondance de Gustave Flaubert

The Athenæum.

3 Aug. 1889, pp. 155–156.





GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

CORRESPONDANCE

— DEUXIÈME SÉRIE —

(1850-1854)

TROISIÈME MILLE

PARIS
G. CHARPENTIER ET C^{te}, ÉDITEURS
11, RUE DE GRENELLE, 11

1889

Correspondance de Gustave Flaubert



THE second volume of Gustave Flaubert's correspondence, just now published, is even richer than the first, alike in those counsels of literary art Flaubert was pre-eminently fitted to give, and in lights, direct and indirect, on his own work. The letters belong to a short period in his life, from his twenty-eighth to his thirty-second year (1850-54), during which he was an exceptionally expansive correspondent, but otherwise chiefly occupied in the composition of *Madame Bovary*, a work of immense labour, as also of great and original genius. The more systematic student might draw from these letters many an interesting paragraph to add, by way of foot-notes, to that impressive book. 5

The earlier letters find Flaubert still in the East, recording abundantly those half-savage notes of ancient civilisation which are in sympathy with the fierce natural colouring of the country he loved so well. The author of *Salammbô* and "Hérodiad" is to be detected already in this lively vignette from an Oriental square:— 15

Nothing is more graceful than the spectacle of all those men [the Dervishes] waltzing, with their great petticoats twisted, their ecstatic faces lifted to the sky. They tum, without a moment's pause, for about an hour. One of them assured us that, if he were not obliged to hold his hands above his head, he could turn for six hours continuously. 20 25

Even here, then, it is the calm of the East which expresses itself—the calm, perhaps the emptiness, of the Oriental, of which he has fixed the type in the following sketch:—

I have seen certain dancing girls, who balanced themselves with the regularity of a palm tree. Their eyes, of a profound depth, express calm only—nothing but the calm, the emptiness, of the desert. It is the same with
5 the men. What admirable heads! heads which seem to be turning over within them the grandest thoughts in the world. But tap on them! and there will be only the empty beer-glass, the deserted, sepulchre. Whence then
10 the majesty of their external form? of what does it really hold? Of the absence, I should reply, of all passion. They have the beauty of the ruminating ox, of the greyhound in its race, the floating eagle—that sentiment of fatality which is fulfilled in these. A conviction of the nothingness of man gives to all they do, their looks, their attitudes,
15 a resigned but grandiose character. Their loose and easy raiment, lending itself freely to every movement of the body, is always in closest accord with the wearer and his functions; with the sky, too, by its colour: and then the sun! There is an immense *ennui* there in the
20 sun, which consumes everything.

But it is as brief essays in literary criticism that these letters are most effective. Exquisitely personal essays, self-explanatory, or by way of confession, written almost exclusively to one person—a perfectly sympathetic friend, engaged like the writer
25 in serious literary work—they possess almost the unity, the connected current of a book. It is to Madame X., however, that Flaubert makes this cynical admission about women:

What I reproach in women, above all, is their need of *poetisation*, of forcing poetry into things. A man may
30 be in love with his laundress, but will know that she is stupid, though he may not enjoy her company the less. But if a woman loves her inferior, he is straightway an unrecognised genius, a superior soul, or the like. And to such a degree does this innate disposition to see crooked prevail, that woman can perceive neither truth when
35 they encounter it, nor beauty where it really exists. This

fault is the true cause of the deceptions of which they so often complain. To require oranges of apple trees is a common malady with them.

Flaubert, as seen in these letters, was undoubtedly a somewhat austere lover. His true mistress was his art. Counsels of art there are—for the most part, the best thing he has to offer. Only rarely does he show how he could play the lover:—

Your love penetrates me at last, like warm rain, and I feel myself searched through with it, to the bottom of my heart. Have you not everything that could make me love you? body, wit, tenderness? You are simple of soul and strong of head; not poetic, yet a poet in extreme degree. There is nothing but good in you: and you are wholly, as your bosom is, white, and soft to touch. I try sometimes to fancy how your face will look when you are old, and it seems to me I shall love you still as much as now, perhaps more.

In contrast with the majority of writers, apt to make a false pretence of facility, it is of his labour that Flaubert boasts. That was because, after all, labour did but set free the innate lights of a true diamond; it realised, was a ministry to, the great imaginative gift of which he was irresistibly conscious. It was worth his while!

As for me, the more I feel the difficulties of good writing, the more my boldness grows. It is this preserves me from the pedantry into which I should otherwise fall. I have plans for books, the composition of which would occupy the rest of my life: and if there happen to me, sometimes, cruel moments, which well-nigh make me weep with anger (so great do I feel my weakness to be), there are others also when I can scarce contain myself for joy: something from the depths within me, for which “voluptuous” is no word, overflows for me in sudden leaps. I feel transported, almost inebriate, with my

own thoughts, as if there came to me, at some window
within, a puff of warm perfumes. I shall never go very
far, and know how much I lack; but the task I undertake
will surely be executed by another. I shall have put on the
5 true road some one better endowed, better born, for the
purpose, than myself. The determination to give to prose
the rhythm of verse, leaving it still veritable prose; to
write the story of common life as history or the epic gets
10 written (that is to say, without detriment to the natural
truth of the subject), is perhaps impossible. I ask myself
the question sometimes. Yet it is perhaps a considerable,
an original thing, to have tried. I shall have had my per-
manent value for my obstinacy. And who knows? One
15 day I may find a good motif, an air entirely within the
compass of my voice: and at any rate I shall have passed
my life not ignobly, often with delight. Yet still it is sad-
dening to think how many great men arrive easily at the
desired effect, by means beyond the limits of conscious
20 art. What could be worse built than many things in Rab-
elais, Cervantes, Molière, Hugo? But, then, what sudden
thrusts of power! What power in a single word!

Impersonality in art, the literary ideal of Gustave Flau-
bert, is perhaps no more possible than realism. The artist *will*
be felt; his subjectivity must and will colour the incidents, as
25 his very bodily eye *selects* the aspects of things. By force of an
immense and continuous effort, however, the whole scope of
which these letters enable us to measure, Flaubert did keep
Madame Bovary at a great distance from himself; the author
might be thought to have been completely hidden out of sight in
30 his work. Yet even here he transpires, clearly enough, from time
to time; and the morbid sense of life, everywhere impressed
in the very atmosphere of that sombre history, came certainly
of the writer himself. The cruelty of the ways of things—that
is a conviction of which the development is partly traceable in
35 these letters.

Provided the brain remains! That is the chief thing. But how nothingness invades us! We are scarcely born ere decay begins for us, in such a way that the whole of life is but one long combat with it, more and more triumphant, on its part, to the consummation, namely, death; and then the reign of decay is exclusive. There have been at most two or three years in which I was really entire—from seventeen to nineteen. I was splendid just then, though I scarce like to say so now; enough to attract the eye of a whole assembly of spectators, as happened to me at Rouen, on the first presentation of *Ruy Blas*. Ever since then I have deteriorated at a furious pace. There are mornings when I feel afraid to look at myself, so worn and used-up am I grown.

Madame Bovary, of course, was a tribute to science; and Flaubert had no dread, great hopes rather, of the service of science in imaginative literature, though the combat between scientific truth—mental physiology and the like—and that perfectly finished academic style he preferred, might prove a hard one. We might be all of us, since Sophocles—well, “tattooed savages!” but still, there was “something else in art besides rectitude of line and the well-polished surface.” The difficulty lay in the limitations of language, which it would be the literary artist’s true contention to enlarge. “We have too many things, too few words. ‘Tis from that comes the torture of the fine literary conscience.” But it was one’s duty, none the less, to accept all, “imprint all, and, above all, fix one’s *point d’appui* in the present.” Literature, he held, would take more and more the modes of action which now seem to belong exclusively to science. It would be, above all, *exposante*—by way of exposition; by which, he was careful to point out, he by no means intended didactic. One must make pictures, by way of showing nature as she really is; only, the pictures must be complete ones. We must paint both sides, the upper and under. Style—what it might be, if writers faithfully cherished it—that was the subject of his perpetual consideration. Here is a sketch of the prose style of the future:—

Style, as I conceive it, style as it will be realised some day—in ten years, or ten generations! It would be rhythmic as verse itself, precise as the language of science; and with undulations—a swelling of the violin! plumage
5 of fire! A style which would enter into the idea like the point of a lancet; when thought would travel over the smooth surfaces like a canoe with fair winds behind it. Prose is but of yesterday, it must be confessed. Verse is
10 *par excellence* the form of the ancient literatures. All possible prosodic combinations have been already made; those of prose are still to make.

The effort, certainly, cost him much; how much we may partly see in these letters, the more as *Madame Bovary*, on which he was then mainly at work, made a large demand also on his
15 impersonality:—

The cause of my going so slowly is just this, that nothing in that book [*Madame Bovary*] is drawn from myself. Never has my own personality been so useless to me. It may be, perhaps, that hereafter I shall do stronger things.
20 I hope so, but I can hardly imagine I shall do anything more skilful. Here everything is of the head. If it has been false in aim, I shall always feel that it has been a good mental exercise. But after all, what is the non-natural to others is the natural to me—the extraordinary, the fantastic, the wild chase, mythologic, or metaphysic. *Saint Antoine*
25 did not require of me one quarter of the tension of mind *Madame Bovary* has caused me. *Saint Antoine* was a discharge: I had nothing but pleasure in writing it; and the eighteen months devoted to the composition of
30 its five hundred pages were the most thoroughly voluptuous of my life, hitherto. Judge, then, of my condition in writing *Madame Bovary*. I must needs put myself every minute into a skin not mine, and antipathetic to me. For six months now I have been making love Platonically;

and at the present moment my exaltation of mind is that of a good Catholic: I am longing to go to confession.

A constant reader of Montaigne, Flaubert pushed to the utmost the habit of doubt, as leading to artistic detachment from all practical ends:— 5

Posterity will not be slow in cruel desertion of those who have determined to be useful, and have sung 'for a cause.' It cares very little for Chateaubriand, and his resuscitation of medieval religion; for Béranger, with his libertine philosophy; will soon care little for Lamartine and his religious humanitarianism. Truth is never in the present; and if one attaches oneself to the present, there comes an end of one. At the present moment, I believe that even a thinker (and the artist, surely, is three times a thinker) should have no convictions. 10 15

Flaubert himself, whatever we may think of that, had certainly attained a remarkable degree of detachment from the ordinary interests of mankind.

Over and above its weightier contributions to the knowledge of Flaubert, to the knowledge and practice of literature at its best, this volume, like its predecessor, abounds in striking occasional thoughts:— 20

There is no imagination in France. If you want to make real poetry pass, you must be clever enough to disguise it. 25

In youth one associates the future realisation of one's dreams with the existence of the actual people around us. In proportion as those existences disappear, our dreams also depart.

Nothing is more useless than those heroic friendships which require exceptional circumstances to prove them. The great difficulty is to find some one who does 30

not rack your nerves in every one of the various ordinary occurrences of life.

5 The dimensions of a soul may be measured by its power of suffering, as we calculate the depth of rivers by their current.

10 Formerly, people believed that the sugar-cane alone yielded sugar; nowadays it is extracted from almost anything. It is the same with poetry. Let us draw it, no matter whence, for it lies everywhere, and in all things. Let us habituate ourselves to regard the world as a work of art, the processes of which are to be reproduced in our works.

15 To have talent, one must be convinced one has it; and to keep the conscience pure, we must put it above the consciences of all other people.

We retain always a certain grudge against any one who instructs us.

20 What is best in art will always escape people of mediocrity, that is to say, more than three quarters of the human race.

Let our enemies speak evil of us! it is their proper function. It is worse when friends speak well of us foolishly.

25 Materialists and spiritualists, in about equal degree, prevent the knowledge of matter and spirit alike, because they sever one from the other. The one party make man an angel, the other a swine.

In proportion as it advances, art will be more and more scientific, even as science will become artistic. The

two will re-join each other at the summit, after separating at the base.

Let us be ourselves, and nothing else! “What is your duty? What each day requires.” That is Goethe’s notion. Let *us* do our duty; which is, to try to write well. What a society of saints we should be, if only each one of us did his duty!

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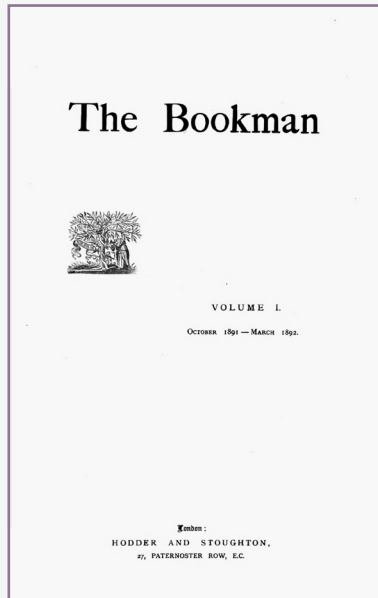


13

A Novel by Mr. Oscar Wilde

The Bookman.

Vol. I, no. 2 (Nov. 1891), pp. 59–60.



THE PICTURE OF
DORIAN GRAY.
BY
OSCAR
WILDE.


WARD LOCK & CO.
LONDON & NEW YORK
& MELBOURNE.

A Novel by Mr. Oscar Wilde

THERE is always something of an excellent talker about the writing of Mr. Oscar Wilde; and in his hands, as happens so rarely with those who practise it, the form of dialogue is justified by its being really alive. His genial, laughter-loving sense of life and its enjoyable intercourse, goes far to obviate any crudity there may be in the paradox, with which, as with the bright and shining truth which often underlies it, Mr. Wilde, startling his “countrymen,” carries on, more perhaps than any other writer, the brilliant critical work of Matthew Arnold. 5

“The Decay of Lying,” for instance, is all but unique in its half-humorous, yet wholly convinced, presentment of certain valuable truths of criticism. Conversational ease, the fluidity of life, felicitous expression, are qualities which have a natural alliance to the successful writing of fiction; and side by side with Mr. Wilde’s *Intentions* (so he entitles his critical efforts) comes a novel, certainly original, and affording the reader a fair opportunity of comparing his practice as a creative artist with many a precept he has enounced as critic concerning it. 10 15

A wholesome dislike of the common-place, rightly or wrongly identified by him with the *bourgeois*, with our middle-class—its habits and tastes—leads him to protest emphatically against so-called “realism” in art; life, as he argues, with much plausibility, as a matter of fact, when it is really awake, following art—the fashion an effective artist sets; while art, on the other hand, influential and effective art, has never taken its cue from actual life. In *Dorian Gray* he is true certainly, on the whole, to the aesthetic philosophy of his *Intentions*; yet not infallibly, even on this point: there is a certain amount of the intrusion of real life and its sordid aspect—the low theatre, the pleasures and griefs, the faces of some very unrefined 20 25 30

people, managed, of course, cleverly enough. The interlude of Jim Vane, his half-sullen but wholly faithful care for his sister's honour, is as good as perhaps anything of the kind, marked by a homely but real pathos, sufficiently proving a versatility in the writer's talent, which should make his books popular. Clever always, this book, however, seems intended to set forth anything but a homely philosophy of life for the middle-class—a kind of dainty Epicurean theory, rather—yet fails, to some degree, in this; and one can see why. A true Epicureanism aims at a complete though harmonious development of man's entire organism. To lose the moral sense therefore, for instance, the sense of sin and righteousness, as Mr. Wilde's hero—his heroes are bent on doing as speedily, as completely as they can, is to lose, or lower, organisation, to become less complex, to pass from a higher to a lower degree of development. As a story, however, a partly supernatural story, it is first-rate in artistic management; those Epicurean niceties only adding to the decorative colour of its central figure, like so many exotic flowers, like the charming scenery, and the perpetual, epigrammatic, surprising, yet so natural, conversations, like an atmosphere all about it. All that pleasant accessory detail, taken straight from the culture, the intellectual and social interests, the conventionalities, of the moment, have, in fact, after all, the effect of the better sort of realism, throwing into relief the adroitly-devised supernatural element after the manner of Poe, but with a grace he never reached, which supersedes that earlier didactic purpose, and makes the quite sufficing interest of an excellent story.

We like the hero, and, spite of his, somewhat unsociable, devotion to his art, Hallward, better than Lord Henry Wotton. He has too much of a not very really refined world in and about him, and his somewhat cynic opinions, which seem sometimes to be those of the writer, who may, however, have intended Lord Henry as a satiric sketch. Mr. Wilde can hardly have intended him, with his cynic amity of mind and temper, any more than the miserable end of Dorian himself, to figure the motive and tendency of a true Cyrenaic or Epicurean doctrine of life. In contrast with Hallward, the artist, whose sensibilities idealise the world around him, the personality of Dorian Gray, above

all, into something magnificent and strange, we might say that Lord Henry, and even more the, from the first, suicidal hero, loses too much in life to be a true Epicurean—loses so much in the way of impressions, of pleasant memories, and subsequent hopes, which Hallward, by a really Epicurean economy, manages to secure. It should be said, however, in fairness, that the writer is impersonal: seems not to have identified himself entirely with any one of his characters: and Wotton's cynicism, or whatever it be, at least makes a very clever story possible. He becomes the spoiler of the fair young man, whose bodily form remains un-aged; while his picture, the *chef d'oeuvre* of the artist Hallward, changes miraculously with the gradual corruption of his soul. How true, what a light on the artistic nature, is the following on actual personalities and their revealing influence in art. We quote it as an example of Mr. Wilde's more serious style.

I sometimes think that there are only two eras of any importance in the world's history. The first is the appearance of a new medium for art, and the second is the appearance of new personality for art also. What the invention of oil-painting was to the Venetians, the face of Antinous was to late Greek sculpture, and the face of Dorian Gray will some day be to me. It is not merely that I paint from him, draw from him, sketch from him. Of course I have done all that. But he is much more to me than a model or a sitter. I won't tell you that I am dissatisfied with what I have done of him, or that his beauty is such that Art cannot express it. There is nothing that Art cannot express, and I know that the work I have done, since I met Dorian Gray, is good work, is the best work of my life. But in some curious way his personality has suggested to me an entirely new manner in art, an entirely new mode of style. I see things differently, I think of them differently. I can now re-create life in a way that was hidden from me before.

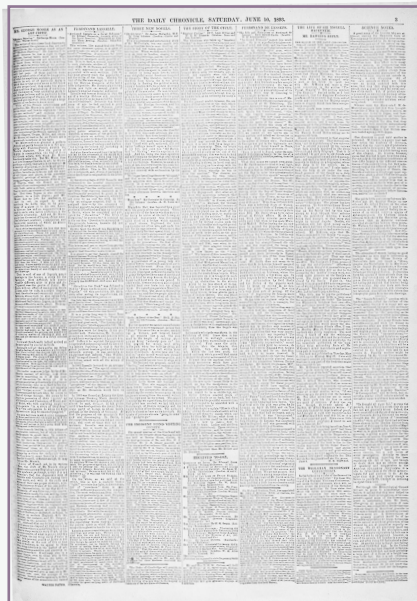
Dorian himself, though certainly a quite unsuccessful experiment in Epicureanism, in life as a fine art, is (till his in-

ward spoiling takes visible effect suddenly, and in a moment, at the end of his story) a beautiful creation. But his story is also a vivid, though carefully considered, exposure of the corruption of a soul, with a very plain moral, pushed home, to the effect that vice and crime make people coarse and ugly. General readers, nevertheless, will probably care less for this moral, less for the fine, varied, largely appreciative culture of the writer, in evidence from page to page, than for the story itself, with its adroitly managed supernatural incidents, its almost equally wonderful applications of natural science; impossible, surely, in fact, but plausible enough in fiction. Its interest turns on that very old theme, old because based on some inherent experience or fancy of the human brain, of a double life: of *Doppelgänger*—not of two *persons*, in this case, but of the man and his portrait; the latter of which, as we hinted above, changes, decays, is spoiled, while the former, through a long course of corruption, remains, to the outward eye, unchanged, still in all the beauty of a seemingly immaculate youth—"the devil's bargain." But it would be a pity to spoil the reader's enjoyment by further detail. We need only emphasise, once more, the skill, the real subtlety of art, the ease and fluidity withal of telling a story by word of mouth, with which the consciousness of the supernatural is introduced into, and maintained amid, the elaborately conventional, sophisticated, disabused world Mr. Wilde depicts so cleverly, so mercilessly. The special fascination of the piece is, of course, just there—at that point of contrast. Mr. Wilde's work may fairly claim to go with that of Edgar Poe, and with some good French work of the same kind, done, probably, in more or less conscious imitation of it.

14.

Mr. George Moore as an Art Critic

Daily Chronicle.
10 Jun. 1893, p. 3.



MODERN
PAINTING

By GEORGE MOORE

LONDON
WALTER SCOTT, LIMITED

24 WARWICK LANE

1893

Mr. George Moore as an Art Critic



THE writer of this clever book deserves to be heard about his opinions on fine art, and especially on the somewhat vexed subject of "Modern Painting." He deserves to be heard, because he has a right to those opinions, having taken more pains than critics of contemporary art sometimes do to know from within what he is writing about; while he writes with all the courage of opinions thus sincerely formed, so as to keep the attention of the reader fixed to the very last page. If these qualities make him a pungent critic of what he disapproves, of what he may think mistaken general tendencies in art, or of particular works in which this or that artist seems to fall below his own proper level, they make him also—those qualities of painstaking, of conviction and liveliness—a very animating guide to the things he loves, and in particular to the modern painting of France, of which we in England still know so little, though a large number of us desire to know more.

With all his French intuitiveness and *gaillardise* Mr. Moore is a patient teacher, knows what and how to explain to "those that are without," and explains clearly. The persons, or professional bodies of persons whom he attacks, would, of course, have a reply; and the more permanently true, certainly the more delightful parts of his volume, at all events for the sincere lover of art, are his chapters of positive appreciation concerning the French masters of his choice—Ingres, Degas, Millet and others. Mr. Moore, at least as far as French art is concerned, is catholic in his taste.

Mr. Moore makes so pleasant a guide to French art partly because he is in full sympathy with France—French scenery, the French character. Now the genius of Ingres is cosmopolitan, like that of those old Greek artists with whom Mr. Moore

fearlessly ranks him. But Mr. Moore does not love cosmopolitanism in art; he thinks, perhaps rightly, that art is in its very nature a matter of personal, or, in its largest groupings, of national, inspiration. To be cosmopolitan, he tells us, to be one
5 and the same at all times and places, is the somewhat doubtful privilege of science. He might urge, perhaps, in the presence of the works of Ingres, that the French are the Greeks of our contemporary world, and that with both alike a certain *cosmopolitanism* was, in truth, an element of *national* character. But
10 then Ingres is also certainly academic, in a high degree; and Mr. Moore has no love for academies, at least in art, in regard to which territory he holds that to be something of a gipsy (it is his own figure), to have no law and no responsibilities except to one's own native preference, is the veritable citizenship. And
15 yet Mr. Moore really has the secret of Ingres, of that somewhat abstract, academic, cosmopolitan and uncoloured painting of which *La Source* is the best known example.

Think of the learning and the love that were necessary for the accomplishment of such exquisite simplifications. Never did pencil follow an outline with such
20 penetrating and unwearying passion, or clasp and enfold it with such simple and sufficient modelling. Nowhere can you detect a starting-point or a measurement taken: it seems to have grown as a beautiful tendril grows, and
25 every curve sways as mysteriously, and the perfection seems as divine. Beside it Dürer would seem crabbed and puzzle-headed; Holbein would seem angular and geometrical; Da Vinci would seem vague; and I hope that no critic by partial quotation will endeavour to prove me
30 guilty of having said that Ingres was a greater artist than Da Vinci. I have not said any such thing: I have merely striven by aid of comparison to bring before the reader some sense of the miraculous beauty of one of Ingre's finest pencil drawings.

That is said of one of Ingres's pencil drawings in the Louvre, a study for the *Odalisque*. How different, how unmistakably different, alike in germ and development, was the genius of Corot! Mr. Moore, with no effect of incongruity, treats of them, side by side, in a single chapter. Corot, the elusive and evanescent master of Barbizon, whose work he also values duly, loves better probably than that of the very definite and half-classic Ingres, is, however, far more difficult to write about. He is ingeniously compared with Rembrandt. 5

They painted with the values—that is to say, with what remained on the palette when abstraction has been made of the colouring matter—a delicate neutral tint of infinite subtlety and charm; and it is with this, the evanescent and impalpable soul of the vanished colours, that the most beautiful pictures are painted. Corot, too, is a conspicuous example of this mode of painting. His right to stand among the world's colourists has never, so far as I know, been seriously contested, his pictures are almost void of colouring matter—a blending of grey and green, and yet the result is of a richly coloured evening. 10
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Corot and Rembrandt, indeed, arrived at the same goal by similar methods.

Rembrandt told all that a golden ray falling through a darkened room awakes in a visionary brain; Corot told all that the grey light of morning and evening whispers in the pensive mind of the elegiac poet. The story told was widely different, but the manner of telling was the same. One attenuated in the light, the other attenuated in the shadow. Both sacrificed the corners with a view of fixing the attention on the one spot in which the soul of the picture lives. 25
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The reader may now judge fairly of Mr. Moore's manner of writing; may think there is something in it of the manner of the artists he writes of. It is perhaps a surprise, yet certainly of a pleasant sort, to find one who is so hard in his characterisation
5 of what may be not ungently called "vulgar errors" in matters of art, so reverent and delicate when he comes to treat of things delicate. He seems to be really in possession of their "secret" as of Sisley also and Chavannes, of Manet, and of Monet, who with sparkling magic—or trick—paints "in a series of little
10 dots." He is "the only painter to whom the word *impressionism* may be reasonably applied."

Not with half-tints in which colour disappears are Monet and his school concerned, but with the brilliant vibration of colour in the full light, with open spaces,
15 where the light is reflected back and forward, and nature is but a prism filled with dazzling and iridescent tints.

There is much besides in this volume of considerable interest, but of which there is hardly space to speak here. In common, these chapters have certainly this merit: that, by their very
20 conviction, their perfervid conviction, they arouse the general reader, lost perhaps in a general sleep of conventional ideas, at the very least to combat so incisive a visitor,—put up his back perhaps by a claim for unfamiliar views; challenge him to come honestly to convictions for himself, different enough, it may be
25 from Mr. Moore's.

A lover of French art, in its various phases, the drift of Mr. Moore's charge against contemporary English art, especially under academic patronage, is that it is not vernacular; that the degenerate sons of Reynolds and Constable are leaving
30 their native earth, and with it the roots and sources of their own proper strength, actually for this very France of his own preference. Impressionism, to use that word, in the absence of any fitter one,—the impressionism which makes his own writing on art in this volume so effective, is, in short, the secret both of

his likes and dislikes, his hatred of what he thinks conventional and mechanic, together with his very alert and careful evaluation of what comes home to him as straightforward, whether in Reynolds or Rubens, or Ruysdael; in Japan, in Paris or in modern England; with Mr. Whistler, for instance, and Mr. Sargent; his belief in the personal, the uncontrollable. Above all that can be learnt in art, he would assure us,—beyond all that can be had of teachers—there is something there, something in every veritable work of art, of the incommunicable, of what is unique, and this is, perhaps, the one thing really of value in art. As a personal quality or power it will vary greatly, in the case of this or that work or workman, in its appeal to those who, being outsiders in the matter of art, are nevertheless sensitive and sincerely receptive towards it. It will vary also, in a lesser degree, even to those who in this matter *really know*. But to the latter, at all events, preference in art will be nothing less than conviction, and the estimate of artistic power and product, in every several case, an object of no manner of doubt at all, such as may well give a man, as in Mr. Moore's own case, the courage of his opinions. In such matter opinion is, in fact, of the nature of the sensations one cannot help.



II. Articles

English at the Universities



YOU have asked me to express an opinion on a proposal to establish here a School of English Literature. I have long had an interest in the teaching of young men at Oxford, and in the study of English literature; and proposals similar to this have from time to time occurred to me. The university has done little for English literature by way of direct teaching. Its indirect encouragement of what is best in English literature has, I think, been immense, as regards both the appreciation of what is old and the initiation of what is new. The university has been enabled to exercise this influence mainly as a consequence of its abundant and disinterested devotion, in the face of much opposition, to Greek and Latin literature—to the study of those literary productions wherein lie the sources of all our most salutary literary traditions, and which must always remain typical standards in literature, of a stirring interest in the matter together with absolute correctness in the form. I should, therefore, be no advocate for any plan of introducing English literature into the course of university studies which seemed likely to throw into the background that study of classical literature which has proved so effective for the maintenance of what is excellent in our own. On the other hand, much probably might be done for the expansion and enlivening of classical study itself by a larger infusion into it of those literary interests which modern literature, in particular, has developed; and a closer connection of it, if this be practicable, with the study of great modern works (classical literature and the literature of modern Europe having, in truth, an organic unity); above all, by the maintenance, at its highest possible level, of the purely literary character of those literary exercises in which the classical examination mainly consists.

An examination seems to run the risk of two opposite defects. Many of those who most truly enjoy this or that special study are jealous of examinations in it. The “fine flower” of English poetry, or Latin oratory, or Greek art, might fade for them, in the long, pedantic, mechanical discipline (perhaps the “cram”) which is the necessary accompaniment of a system of examination; indispensable as that may nevertheless be for certain purposes. Intelligent Englishmen resort naturally for a liberal pleasure to their own literature. Why transform into a difficult exercise what is natural virtue in them? On the other hand, there are those who might give the preference to these studies for their fancied easiness, and welcome such a change in the interest of that desire to facilitate things, at any cost, the tendency of which is to suppress every kind of excellence born of strenuous labour, and, in literature especially, to promote what is lax and slipshod, alike in thought and expression. That is the last thing we require from the university, in an age already overloaded with the heavy, incondite, “brute matter” of knowledge, and too bustling in its habits to think of that just management of its material which is precisely what we admire in the Greek and Latin writers. Much, then, would depend upon the details of the proposed scheme; that scheme itself possessing, perhaps, a more general interest than usually belongs to matters of the kind. Certainly it would show a poor sense of responsibility towards the interests of literature if one judged such a proposal as this on any other ground than its own intrinsic reasonableness.

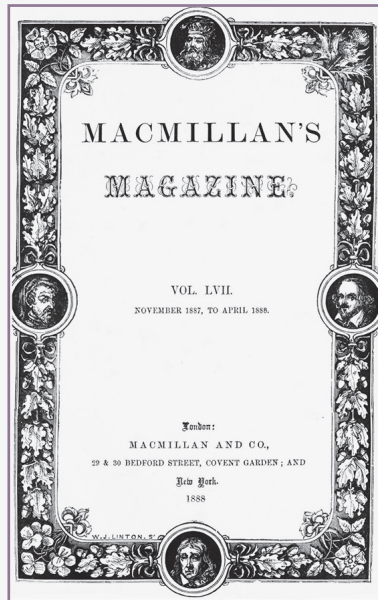


2.

M. Lemaître's "Serenus", and Other Tales

Macmillan's Magazine.

Vol. LVII, no. 337 (Nov. 1887), pp. 71-80.



Sérénus

HISTOIRE D'UN MARTYR

CONTES D'AUTREFOIS ET D'AUJOURD'HUI



PARIS

ALPHONSE LEMERRE, ÉDITEUR

23-31, PASSAGE CHOISEUL, 23-31

M. Lemaître's "Serenus", and Other Tales

A VOLUME of fiction which, while it possesses something of the power and charm of Gustave Flaubert, takes us through no scenes of cruelty or coarseness, but relies for its interest on the blameless pathos of life, touched in the spirit of a true realism, is worth pointing out to English readers. The volume takes its name from the singular story of Serenus, a Christian martyr, to which are added certain briefer *Stories of the Past and of To-day*. With two slight exceptions, two pieces of peculiarly Parisian humour, which make a harsh contrast with the rest of the book, these stories are as pure and solemn as the pictures of Alphonse Legros. The narrative of Serenus, the patrician martyr, has about it something which reminds one of those sumptuous Roman basilicas put together out of the marble fragments of older Pagan temples or palaces; and in the shorter pieces the busy French journalist seems to have gone for a sort of mental holiday to quiet convent parlours and white-washed village churches—places of subdued colour and personages congruous therewith, pleasant, doubtless, to fatigued Parisian eyes. M. Jules Lemaître is before all things an artist, showing in these pieces, the longest of which attains no more than sixty pages, that self-possession and sustained sense of design which anticipates the end in the commencement, and never loses sight of it—that gift of literary structure which lends so monumental an air to even the shortest of Flaubert's pieces. Then, he has Flaubert's sense of compassion and his peculiar interest in certain phases or aspects of religious life; and his art (again like Flaubert's) is a learned art. There is the fruit of much and varied reading and thought in this volume, short as it is, though without a shade of pedantry; and its union of realism, of the force of style which is allied to a genuine realism, with an entire

freedom from the dubious interests of almost all French fiction, gives it a charming freshness of effect.

We propose to say a few words on those shorter pieces first, giving some specimens of M. Lemaître's manner. The hero of "La Mère Sainte-Agathe," a very intellectual young Parisian, has formed a somewhat artificial marriage engagement with a guileless orphan-girl at the convent school over which Mother Sainte-Agathe presides. Mother Sainte-Agathe was still young—thirty years, perhaps thirty-five. But years, in the case of "the religious," when they are pretty and live really holy lives, rather embalm them than add to their age. When the young man visits the girl, the Mother presides over their interviews, looking at them with an air of kindness and serenity, with an expression she wore always, in which one seemed to detect the presence of a thought, unique, eternal in its character, ever mingled with the thought of the present hour. One day the girl leads her lover into the convent garden.

It was a large one, and so neat and prim!—neat and prim as a convent-chapel. An avenue of limes, as exact in line as a row of tapers, led to a terrace projecting on the Loire, with a pleasing view over the landscape of Touraine. Between its gentle banks, amid scattered groups of rustling poplars, the river spread out like a lake, with little pale-coloured islands tufted with misty beds of osiers, and against the horizon a long, long bridge of delicate arches, silver-grey—all very sweet, with melting outlines in water-colour tints, under a lightsome sky of soft blue.

But the childish lover is shrewd enough to notice that in these visits the real business of conversation (very superior conversation, on M. Renan, for instance) is wholly between the Mother and the clever young man. She writes one day at the end of one of her letters: "Mother Sainte-Agathe tells me that I don't put warmth enough into my letters. Ah! my friend, I have enough of it in my heart nevertheless; only perhaps I am still too little to know how to tell it." The young man does not marry the or-

phan, and, of course, not the reverend Mother. He thought it well to discontinue his visits to the convent.

Almost without note of the fact,—he says—I was treating Lydia like a child. Whenever I said any thing at all serious it was to Mother Sainte-Agathe I addressed myself. 5

They were exquisite, those conversations with the Mother—all the more exquisite because I was then finishing a volume of criticism and fantasy combined, in which I put the utmost amount of Renanism, Impressionism, and Parisian raillery, in tum or altogether. And it was often after the reading of some perverse book that I took myself to those white interviews. One day at parting, when I kissed Lydia, I saw tears in her eyes. “You are crying. Lydia: have I hurt you in any way?” She gave me a long, serious look, and the look was no longer that of a mere child. “Are you quite sure,” she said to me in a low voice, “that it is still for my sake that you come here?” 10 15

It haunted me through the evening, through the whole night, little Lydia’s question. In spite of myself she had revealed to me what was at the bottom of my heart. In effect, I perceived with much distress that for some time past it was for Mother Sainte-Agathe I had come, that that charm of innocence in my betrothed was exhausted. Yes. it was over—well over! 20 25

I did not venture to the convent next day, nor the day after that. Did she look out for me? I never returned there again.

A still more melancholy note is struck in “L’Ainée,” the story of a beautiful girl, the eldest of eight sisters, who sees them all cheerfully married to the suitors who had begun by paying court to herself. It pained her to see her nephews and nieces, although she loved them much, and spent her days in work for them. And what added to her unhappiness was that every one, in these matters, took her for a confidante and adviser, regarding her as a person of extraordinary prudence, superior to hu- 30 35

man passions. To her the prize never comes. Her languors, her dejected resumptions of life, are told with great feeling and tact, till death comes just in time to save her from the dishonour to which the *ennui* of her days had at last tempted her.

5 “Les Deux Saints” presents a curious picture from religious life in a French country village, the not ill-natured irony of which by no means destroys an agreeable sense of calm remoteness from the world in reading it.

10 The little village of Champignol-les-Raisins had an aged Curé, an old church, and in the church an ancient image. The image was the image of St. Vincent, patron of vine-dressers. It was of wood, and seemed to have been shaped by the strokes of a hatchet. It had a great belly, a big face frankly painted with vermillion, breathing of gaiety and good-nature—the physiognomy of a vine-dresser at the time of vintage. Pretty it was not. But the Curé and his flock were used to it. The image of the good saint enjoyed the greatest consideration in the parish, and deserved it, for it worked miracles.

20 The old Curé dies. His youthful successor forces a smart new image on his flock. The parish is divided between the votaries of the old and the new; and the tiny provincial controversy seems by a certain touch of irony to give the true measure of many greater, perhaps less ingenuous controversies; and for half an hour one has a perfect calm at Champignol-les-Raisins.

25 M. Lemaître writes for the most part as a pure artist. He writes to please the literary sense: to call into pleasurable exercise a delicately formed intelligence. In one instance, however, it is to be feared he is writing for a practical purpose. “En Nourrice” describes the fate of a little child put out to nurse in the country. “He is a beautiful infant,” cries the mother at his birth: “he shall be named George. I hope he may be very happy!” Alas! all goes the other way. His foster-brother, the strenuous Fred, wears out the frail stranger’s dainty frocks—*la belle robe*
35 *de Georges*. When the parents make their visits it is Fred who

receives the mother's embraces instead of the pining George, sent out of sight for the occasion. In short:

The little Parisian's destiny had been that terrible, inexplicable destiny of the infants who suffer and cry for a few months and then die, having understood nothing in it all. One night he had refused to sleep. He had refused the feeding-bottle, and even the breast of Rosalie, the treat allowed him when it was too late. His eyes rolled convulsively: the cheeks were of the colour of earth: the infant was dying. Towards morning, instead of crying, little groanings had escaped him, almost like the complaints of a grown person. At last he had grown quite still and moved no more. His mother was glad to have escaped the sight of that.

It rained in torrents when she and M. Loisil arrived at the village. The young mother, who had been in tears all the way from Paris, could weep no more, rocking herself in her damp gown, her red eyes under her crape. Early in the morning Rosalie had sent Fred to his grandmother's. She, too, was weeping,—sincerely! if you please.

Then the mother looked at the little corpse in its cradle of basket-work. George was wearing for the first time his fine frock, dirtied by Fred. He was terribly thin, with cheeks like old wax, the nose dwindled, the eyelids blue, his tiny mouth, pale and partly open, with a little foam at the back, had a touch of violet round the lips.

"Poor little babe! how he is changed!" said the mother, sobbing. M. Loisil looked at the dead child attentively, but said nothing. A horrible doubt had come to him.

"Come," said Rosalie, "don't look any more. It is too painful." Then on a sudden enters Totor, holding Fred in his arms, like a great bundle. Rosalie grew pale. Totor explained that grandmother was sick and would not keep them.

And Fred, with one of George's caps on his head and one of George's sashes round his waist, in George's white shoes, bursting with health, good-tempered, and moving

skittishly in the arms of Totor, began smiling at the lady and gentleman.

5 The carpenter came, then the Curé, with a choir-boy spattered with mud, carrying an old tarnished cross which tottered on its pole.

10 They are sickening, those funerals of Parisian nurslings one sees sometimes crossing an empty village-street, leading, behind a coffin of the size of a violin-case, a lady and gentleman in mourning, who pass by, dabbing their eyes, while the labourers regard them curiously from the barn-doors (it happened in La Beauce) on the way to leave a bit of their own hearts in some corner of a forgotten cemetery. As the first shovel of earth fell, Madame Loisil, who had forgotten in her illness that
15 one first kiss she had given to George, cried out, "Ah! my poor babe, you will never have a kiss from me alive!"

Of the *Tales of Other Days*, two—"Boun" and "Les Funéaillles de Firdosi"—are Oriental pieces, apologues, full of that mellow and tranquil wisdom which becomes the East.
20 We profess to be no great lovers of an Oriental setting. A world from which medieval and modern experience must, from the nature of the case, be excluded, makes on our minds an impression too vague for really artistic effect. The intimacies, the minute and concrete expression of the pathos of life, are apt to be
25 wanting in compositions after the manner of *Rasselas*. But it is just that element—the refinement of wisdom, the refinement of justice, an exquisite compassion and mercy in the taking of life—which the reader may look for in the charming story of Boun.

30 "Les Deus Fleurs" is another Story of Other Days, reminding us somewhat of Flaubert's "St. Julien l'Hospitalier." Its aim is, again, that of an apologue, impressing the characteristically French moral that, "in the regard of Heaven, charity is of equal value with chastity. It is best to have both if one can. Let
35 him who lacks the second, try at all events to attain the first. Amen!" As a picture from the Middle Ages it possesses a reality of impression not often found amid medieval sceneries—an

impression much enhanced by the gently satiric effect of the half-sceptical chaplain (a figure worthy of Chaucer), who accompanies the hero to the Crusades. Already in the Middle Ages, as he goes decorously on his way, he can divert himself in a curious observation of the ideas, the deportment of others. 5

Simon Godard, mounted on his old mule, rode usually side by side with the knight-errant his master, whose candour of spirit he loved; and oftentimes they conversed together to while away the length of the journey. "Shall we be soon in Palestine!" Sir Oy de Hautecoeur asked him one day, being no great clerk in matters of geography. "About a month hence we shall be getting near it, if no accident happens," answered the chaplain. "But only one-half of our number will be left when we arrive. In the East large numbers die of want, of fatigue, of malignant fevers. I don't know whether you perceive it, lost in dreaming as you always are, but we leave behind us many of our companion; and as there is no time to dig their graves, the dogs and the crows provide them another sort of sepulture." 10 15 20

"I don't pity those," said the knight-errant, "who go before us to Paradise. The body is but a prison: its substance vile; and it matters little what becomes of it."

"Sire, there are moments when for my part I fail to distinguish clearly the prison from the prisoner. It grieves me that too many of us die. And I don't see precisely what good end is served by their deaths. We are spending a year and more on the work of taking two or three towns, and when the day of conquest comes we shall be but a handful of men." 25 30

"True! But the walls of Jericho did not fall till the seventh day, and this is not yet the seventh crusade."

"But is it really necessary that Christians should possess the sepulchre of the Lord, which, after all, is an empty sepulchre, and which He suffers to remain for a thousand years in the hands of infidels? And don't you think 35

that the soil of their country belongs to them, as lawfully as the soil of France to French men?"

"Talk not thus, Master Chaplain: such railleries ill become a Churchman and a holy man like yourself."

5 "I am not joking, sire! But the will of Heaven does not appear to me so manifestly as it appears to you. It irks me to think that Heaven has given to its worst enemies a wiser industry than ours, and better engines of war, and the victory over its faithful servants."

10 "Are you unaware then that their riches come from the devil and serve only to maintain them in their abominable manners? If Heaven permits them to overcome us from time to time, that is because it tries those whom it loves, because trials purify and lift us to itself."

15 "Sire! you would make an excellent theologian and I but an indifferent knight. But if by good fortune I were a *seigneur* in the land of France, I think I should seldom leave it. While the *seigneurs* go afar to get killed, the stay-at-homes fall behind with their dues. The *bourgeois* in the towns add pound to pound, and as the *seigneurs* want money for their distant expeditions, get by purchase all sorts of liberties. I don't complain of that, being of the people myself. But what I say is, that a nobleman who takes the Cross is greatly taken in."

25 "I am aware, Master Chaplain, that you are not uttering your true thoughts, and that all this is meant to try me. I am not troubled because other Christians endeavour to improve their low and hard condition. For myself, I am neither a draper nor a grocer that I should remain
30 always in my hole, taking no thought except for money and bodily gratification. I am in quest of what is of higher price. I am made of different paste from your *bourgeois* and your serfs. I should scarce be able to remain long in any one place, or limit my happiness to the things one
35 can see and touch. I love the Demoiselle de Blanc-Lys, and I leave her not knowing whether I shall return. I go to make my trial in an adventure which you declare foolish and useless, and of which certainly I shall have no

profit even if I succeed. And wherefore?—I know not. Only I can do no otherwise. And I have a sense that it is pleasing to God and that I am a workman of His.”

Master Simon Godard could only answer, “Amen!”

On the whole, “Pauvre Ame” is the most characteristic of M. Lemaître’s shorter stories. We think the English reader will forgive some copious extracts.

If one must needs feel pity for all people’s sorrows, the life and heart of an honest man would not suffice. One would begin by lamenting the violent and tragic griefs which force themselves into view. And then those other sorrows, the sorrows which are modest, which hide themselves under a veil of sweetness and seeming serenity. There are destinies stifled and silent, where the pain is so secret and so equable in its continuance, and makes so little sound, that no one thinks of commiseration. Yet nothing is more worthy of pity than those unquiet and solitary hearts, which have yearned to give themselves and no one has cared to take, which have lavished their treasures unheeded and without fruit, and which death at last carries away, outwardly intact, but torn within, because they preyed upon themselves.

Mademoiselle de Mérisols, then, one of those quiet souls whose fortunes M. Lemaître loves to trace, inhabited in an old street of convents a small set of apartments, with melancholy old furniture she had been able to keep from what had belonged to her parents. The happiest hours of her life were at the Sunday mass and vespers. She would have been pretty could she have felt gay. She loves and is disappointed; but she bravely resumes once more her life of hard work as a teacher, putting her from time to time in contact with home scenes which only bring the closer to herself her sense of isolation in the world. Love comes at last, but in that ironic mood which seems to be one of M. Lemaître’s fixed ideas of the spirit of human life. She was thirty-five. The excellent M. de Maucroix was twenty years older.

But she felt afraid of eternal solitude. She had hopes of a child, but it never came. For eight years she was her husband's nurse. She closed his eyes and shed tears for him. She found herself rich. Only once again the poor soul was alone in the world. She
5 busied herself in good works, but felt an immense weariness. What she needed was some one she might love singly and with all her force. Then follows one of those curious episodes only possible in Roman Catholic France, and the writer finds his opportunity for a striking clerical portrait.

10 Madame de Maucroix was in the habit of attending the Sunday Offices at the chapel of the Dominicans. It was warmer, sweeter, more intimate, than in the churches. Many women of fashion repaired thither, rustling softly as in a drawing-room.

15 One great festival a monk preached—thirty years of age, handsome, slender, with a superb pallor. He talked much of love and human affections. He quoted Plato, Virgil, Lamartine. He preached on doubt, and was still more modern. He quoted contemporaries—Jouffroy, Leopardi, Heine, De Musset. He described the anguish
20 of a mind which does not believe; and some of his touches would have been equally appropriate to the picture of a heart in anguish because it does not love. Father Montarcy was one of those generous hearts with a superficial
25 mind often to be found in the order of St. Dominic. He had all the beautiful illusions of Lacordaire, and united to them some pretensions to science. He was one of those monks who have read Darwin and attend the physiological courses at the Sorbonne. His style of speaking
30 was vague and inflated, but with flights of real beauty. He moved along, involved in his dream, isolated from what is real, body and soul alike draped in white—draped with much skill. He was profoundly chaste, but felt his power over women, taking pleasure in it in spite of himself, lending himself to their adoration.
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He became the director of Madame de Maucroix. She told him the story of her life and confided to him the

void in her heart. What was she to do to fill that void? And every time she called him Father bethought herself that he might have been her son.

With a fine stroke of policy, moved also by the poor woman's desolation, and responding to his own secret desire, he observed gravely: "My daughter, it is I who should call you mother, and you should call me son. I am young, and I feel how feeble I should be without that special aid which Heaven accords to its priests. I may believe that you have acquired by a life of virtue an illumination equal to that conferred by the holy oil of the priesthood. Will you be my mother and director?" And he, in his turn, confessed himself to Madame de Maucroix. 5 10

She had a son, then! Her life became a charming one. Every morning she assisted at his mass. She busied herself, precisely as a mother might have done, with his wardrobe and his linen. She accompanied him to the various towns to which he went to preach, and listened with delight to all his sermons. She seeks to know the family history of Father Montarcy, and hearing that he was an orphan feels her joy renewed. He was the son of a working-man, like the Saviour, like many who have become powerful in this world. She does but admire him the more. He had but one sister, devout, insignificant enough, a dress-maker in a country town. Madame de Maucroix provided a dowry and got her well married. She feels proud to have a hand in all the affairs of the convent, in going thither with perfect freedom, receiving from the fathers as she passes ceremonious smiles and greetings, as if in recognition of her right. Often she would call to mind the great Christian women of the early Church, Paula, Monica. It was, fascinating to play the part of a Mother of the Church. What Madame Swetchine had been for Lacordaire, it was her dream to be for Father Montarcy. 15 20 25 30

Only she carried the part of director a little too far. A kind of jealousy—jealousy of penitents younger, and with other charms than hers—mingles with her devotion. 35

“Pardon my freedom,” she says one day, “but it is dangerous for a man of your age to listen for hours to the confessions of young women made after the manner of the one who has just left you.”

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It was like a blow in the face. The young monk raised himself in all the pride of his priesthood, pride of a man chaste and sure of himself, with the rudeness of a monk contemptuous of women. The chapel was empty. He darted out of the confessional, and with a terrible voice, a magnificent tragic movement of his great sleeves, exclaimed: “Madame de Maucroix! Understand! I forbid you to intrude into my life as a priest and interfere in matters which concern Heaven and myself alone.” And he quitted the chapel with majestic step.

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Madame de Maucroix sank upon the pavement. Next day, broken down with grief and quite prepared to humiliate herself, she returned to the convent. The porter informed her that Father Montarcy was absent. The Prior, whom she asked to see, announced in freezing tones that he was departed for the Tyrol, where he purposed to spend some months in a convent recently founded. She understood that all was over. She possessed in Sollogne a little old country-house, and thither she took refuge. There she lived for a year amid the melancholy of the pinewoods, of the violet heaths and motionless meres stained with blood at sunset, passing her days in the practice of a minute and mechanical devotion, sleepily plucking the beads of her rosary, chilled, without thoughts, with tearless eyes. In truth, she was dying day by day of an affection of the liver, aggravated suddenly by her recent emotions. When she saw that her end was near, she begged the sister who nursed her to write to Father Montarcy that she was going to die. Actually she died next day, and the Father’s answer came too late. It was wanting in simplicity, though perhaps not in sincerity: “My mother! my mother! all is forgotten. Ah! often

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have I wept in the presence of Heaven," &c., &c. It was signed, "Your son."

The good sister, who received the letter, thought she might open it, and felt somewhat surprised and scandalised.

The peculiar sense of irony which is the closing effect of every one of these shorter pieces is also the prevailing note of "Serenus"—that more lengthy and weighty narrative, which gives name to the whole volume. It embodies the imaginary confession of a supposed Christian martyr, who was not in reality a Christian at all, who had in truth died by his own hand. 5 10

At daybreak, on a morning of March, A. D. 90, a group of Christians has come to the Mamertine prison to receive the bodies of certain criminals condemned to death.

It was cold: small rain was falling: towards the east the sky was tinged with an impure and ghastly yellow. The Eternal City, emerging from the shadows of night, unrolled around the Capitol its grey billows of houses, like a dirty sea after a storm. Certain ponderous monuments rose above the rest here and there. Their wet roofs shone feebly in the dawn. 15 20

"Let us pray for our brothers!" says an aged priest in the company; and at that moment the magistrates entrusted with the execution of capital sentences emerge from the prison. The Christians enter. The head and trunk of the grey-haired consular, Flavius Clemens, are lying there. A patch of blood glistens on the ground beside him. One of the Christians dips in it the corner of a white linen cloth, which he folds carefully and hides within his tunic. In the next cell lay the corpse of a man still young. He seemed to have died a natural death. Even in death his fine but enigmatic features wore an air of irony and pride. "The body of Marcus Annæus Serenus!" cries the gaoler. "He was found dead this morning. The triumvirs thought it not worth while to decapitate a dead body. It is thought he died of poison." The rude face of the aged priest contracted suddenly with a look of surprise, of pain and indignation. 25 30 35

Through the midst of the contemptuous by-standers the bodies are reverently borne away along the Appian Way, well described by M. Lemaître, to a vast subterranean chamber, the tomb of Flavius Clemens, where the priest Timotheus remains
5 alone for a time with the sacred remains. As he gazes on the face of Serenus with a look “keen and persistent, as if he would have fathomed to its depths the mysterious soul which dwelt no longer in that elegant form,” his hand rests for a moment on the bosom of the corpse. He feels something below the silken
10 tunic—a roll of parchment. He recognises the handwriting of Serenus. But the characters are small and fine, impossible to read in that feeble light. Hardly pausing to cover the pale face, he hastens from the sepulchre, and returns with the manuscript to his sordid lodging in Rome. Here he draws forth and reads
15 with eagerness the confessions of Serenus.

“It is folly perhaps to undertake this confession. Either it will not be read, or it will distress those who read it. Still, it may be, that in recounting my story to myself for the last time, I shall justify myself in my own eyes.
20 Some worthy souls have loved me, but none have really known me. Now, though for a long time past it has been my pride to live in myself, to be impenetrable to every one beside, my secret weighs upon me to-day. A certain regret comes to me (it is almost remorse) that I
25 have played so successfully the singular part which circumstances and my own curiosity have imposed upon me; and I should wish, by way of persuading myself that I could not have acted otherwise, to take up the entire chain of my thoughts and actions from my earliest days
30 to the day on which I am to die.”

It is a charming figure, certainly, which Serenus displays, rich with intellectual endowments, and a heart that, amid all the opportunities for corruption which could beset a fortunate patrician in the days of Domitian, never loses its purity to the
35 last—affectionate, reflective, impressible by pity, with “the gift of tears.” And here is one of his earliest experiences.

“I was twelve years old when the great fire destroyed one-half of Rome and threw more than a hundred thousand people on the pavements. During two or three years, in spite of the enormous distributions of money and bread ordered by the emperor, the misery in Rome was fearful. The spectacle of so much undeserved suffering wounded my heart incurably. I conceived a lively notion of the injustice of things and the absurdity of men’s destinies. I found it unjust that my father should be the possessor of five hundred slaves while so many poor people were dying of hunger. I gave away all the money I could dispose of. But, with the stiff logic of my age, I considered that no thanks were due to me, and avoided people’s effusive thanks, the coarseness of which shocked the fine taste of my aristocratic youth. One day my tutor took me to a grand festival which Nero gave to the people in his gardens. To divert the anger of the populace, which accused him of being the author of the conflagration, he had caused some hundreds of Christians to be arrested. The majority of them had been thrown to the beasts in the circus: others, arrayed in sacks steeped in resin, were attached to tall stakes at intervals along the broad pathways. At nightfall fire was applied to them. The crowds pressed with loud vociferations around the living torches. The flame which enveloped the culprits, hollowed by the wind from time to time, allowed the horrible faces to be seen, with great open mouths, though one could not hear the cries. A stench of burnt flesh filled the air. I had a nervous attack and was carried home half dead. The shock had been too great; and although at that age the most painful impressions are quickly effaced, something of it remained with me—a languor of spirits at certain moments, a melancholy, an indolence of pulse.”

This was on one side: on the other were the varied intellectual interests offered to a reflective mind in that curious, highly educated, wistful age. In a few effective but sparing

traits Serenus depicts his intellectual course, through the noble dreams of a chaste Stoicism, through the exquisite material voluptuousness of Epicureanism when the natural reaction had come, until, having exhausted experience, as he fancies, he proposes to die.

It was an age in which people had carried the art of enjoyment to its height.

“Never before, I think, has the world seen, never again will it see, so small a number of persons absorb and occupy for their own uses so large a number of human lives. Some of my friends had as many as three thousand slaves, and hardly knew the real extent of their riches. And the science of pleasure was on a level with the resources at its disposition. Many successive generations of a privileged class had made a study of the means of refining, varying, multiplying, agreeable sensations. Posterity, assuredly, will hardly conceive the kind of life which some of us have known and practised. But as the future will not easily imagine the intensity of our physical pleasures, perhaps it will even less understand the depth of our satiety. It will be surprised, in reading our chronicles, at the number of those who in this age have committed suicide. After fifteen years of a revel, refined and coarse by turns, my body exhausted, my senses dulled, my heart void to the bottom of all belief, and even of illusion, what was I to do in the world? It figured to me as a ridiculous spectacle, and interested me no longer. I had retained that native sweetness of temper which came to me from my father, but only because I found it pleasant to be kind; and even that too was come to be indifferent to me. For the rest, public employments had become sordid things of purchase, and I loathed every form of activity. I languished in an immense, an incurable *enui*, and having no further motive to live, I wished to die. Death had no fears for me. It was the great deliverer. Only, I desired to die without suffering.”

The would-be suicide is saved from death by the intervention, at the last moment, of his sister, the youthful Serena, in the retired life of a young orphan girl scarcely known by him hitherto; and her subsequent devotion during the long illness which follows touches him deeply. In reality her devotion is due in part to a motive higher than natural sisterly devotion. On the part of Serenus also, there was something deeper than merely fraternal affection. 5

“It was love of a peculiar kind, such as I had never before experienced in the faintest degree. Serena was so different from all the women I had ever known. It seemed to me that that love evoked from the depths of my past life and brought to new birth within me what had been lost in my earlier days, those ardours of the youthful sage aspiring towards an absolute purity. Then, in proportion as I recovered my mental vigour, my old curiosity returned; and little by little I introduced into this ardent affection for my sister, the attentive mood of an observer, attracted by the spectacle of an extraordinary soul. 10 15 20

“One day Serena said to me, ‘Will you give me a great pleasure? Come with me to-morrow morning where I shall take you.’

“I will go where you will, Serena.”

Serena takes him to see the ceremonies of the Eucharist in a Christian oratory. 25

“I perceived among the company assembled the consul of that year, Flavius Clemens—a circumstance which explained the fact that this meeting took place in one of the burial places of his family. I recognised the wife of Clemens and his niece, and Paulina, the widow of Seneca, pale for ever from having followed her husband more than half way on the road to death. They were deeply veiled. At last I saw in the front rank Acte, the former mistress of Nero, the former friend of my father, still 30 35

beautiful in spite of her fifty years, but with a little of the cosmetic art, methinks. The rest of the company appeared to be composed of poor people and slaves.”

5 To Serenus the company, the office for which it was assembled, seemed grave, majestic, touching, and something altogether new. But he perceives also, clearly enough, once for all, that for him these rites will never be more than a spectacle, that there is a gulf between these people and himself.

10 “My dear Serenu,’ said my sister, as we departed, ‘You have now seen what the Christians are. You will love them more and more in proportion as you come to know them. You are unhappy, as I well know. You must become a Christian. The Truth is there. There, also, is the secret of consolation.’

15 “I will think of it, Serena.”

In fact, he takes pains to inform himself on the matter, interested at finding many a familiar thought of ancient Pagan wisdom in a new setting. Yes!—

20 “All the virtues which the Pagan philosophers had already known and preached seemed to me among the disciples of Christ to have been transformed by a sentiment absolutely new—a love of a God who was man, a God crucified—a love burning, full of sensibility, of tears, of confidence, of hope. Clearly, neither the personification of the forces of nature, nor the abstract deity of
25 the Stoics, had ever inspired anything like this. And this love of God, the origin of, and first step towards, all other Christian virtues, communicated to them a purity and sweetness, an unction, and, as it were, a perfume, such as
30 I had never breathed before.”

Yet with all his heartfelt admiration for believers, Serenus is still unable to believe. Like a creature of the nineteenth century, he finds the world absolutely subject to the reign of

physical law. And then there were difficulties of another sort, of which he became sensible now and again.

“The idea which my new brethren entertained of the world about us, and of our life here, jarred upon I know not what sentiment of nature within me. In spite of my own persistent pessimism, I was displeased that men should so despise the only mode of life, after all, of which we are certain. I found them, moreover, far too simple-minded, closed against all artistic impressions, limited, inelegant. Or, perhaps, a certain anxiety awaking in me, I feared for the mischief which might be caused to the empire by a conception of life such as that, if it continued to spread—a detachment such as theirs from all evil duties, all profane occupations. Sometimes I was decidedly unjust to them. The religious after-thought which the Christians mingled with their affections, by way of purifying them, seemed to me to chill those affections, in depriving them of their natural liberty, their grace, their spontaneity. To be loved only as redeemed by Christ, and in regard of my eternal salvation, made my heart cold. And then it shocked me that these saintly people should feel so sure of so many things, and things so wonderful, while I, for my part, had searched so carefully without finding, had doubted so much in my life, and finally made a pride of my unbelief.”

But, inconsistently enough, he is offended at times by the survival of many a human weakness among the believers. The consul Clemens, among those brothers who were all equal before Heaven, was treated with marked consideration, and welcomed it. Slaves were still slaves. The women were rivals for the special attention of the priests. Acte, once the mistress of Nero, somewhat exaggerated her piety, and still retained also many of her former artificial manners.

“In spite of those little weaknesses, what good, what beautiful souls, I came across there! In vain I said to my-

self, these holy persons are making a bargain; they reckon on Paradise; it is in view of a reward that they practise the most sublime virtues. But to believe at all in that distant far-off recompense, is not this too itself an act of virtue, since it involves belief in the justice of God, and a conception of Him, as being that which He ought to be?"

And noting sometimes the ardent quality of their faith and its appropriateness to human needs, the needs especially of the poor and suffering, Serenus could not but feel that the future would be with them. If the empire failed, the religion of Christ would flourish on its ruins. Then, what sort of a thing would that new humanity be? More virtuous, doubtless, and therefore happier, since happiness comes of the soul; on the other hand, he thinks (mistakenly, as we know, looking backwards on the length and breadth of Christian history) with less art, and less elegance of soul, a feebler understanding of the beautiful.

Presently, a certain change takes place in the life of the Christian community. The influence of Calixtus, a priest of the sweeter and more lenient type, is superseded by that of Timotheus, lately returned to Rome—a man sincerely good, but narrow-minded and rigorous in his zeal. He would have Serenus receive baptism, or depart entirely from the church. It takes Serenus some time to explain away his scruples regarding what seems at first sight an act of hypocrisy. And then the trial comes. Partly on the ground of their religious belief, mainly for an affront to the Emperor, the chief members of the community are arrested. Serenus has said adieu to his sister. He is in prison, awaiting his end.

"My gaoler is a good-natured fellow. I had about me the means of writing, and he has procured me a lamp. He informs me that the executioner will come about the hour of daybreak. I have been writing all the night. My last link to life is broken; and death, be it annihilation, be it the passage to a world unknown, has no terrors for me. I have replaced myself almost exactly in the state of mind

in which I was last year, when I determined to die in my bath. But at this last moment a dread has come upon me for a death which soils and disfigures: I fear the stroke of the axe, which may fail in its aim. In my time the science of poisons has reached a high perfection, and the hollow pearl in my ring contains a colourless drop of liquid which will destroy me in a few minutes, almost without pain. I have seen the honours Christians pay to the burial-place wherein rest the remains of the victims of Nero. They will honour me also as one of their saints. Can I, at this late hour, undeceive them? But for what purpose? I am willing they should guess the fact of my suicide, that they should read my confession; yet I will do nothing to that end; for if Serena knew how I died, in what condition of unbelief, her grief would be too great for her. For the rest, I have good hope that Timotheus, who has no love for me, will allow only a limited form of reverence to be paid to my bones; and if some simple hearts revere me more than I deserve, again what does it matter? It is their faith will be reckoned to them, not the merits of the saint they will invoke. And then, after all, it is not a bad man whose memory they will honour. I have sincerely sought for truth. I forced myself in youth to attain to sanctity as I conceived it. And if I have been indolent, weak, voluptuous—if I have done little for other people—at least I have always had great indulgence for them, a great pity.”

The austere Timotheus, full of suspicion, pored for hours over the manuscript, which was clear enough at the beginning. But the scholarly Latin of the young patrician was not always intelligible to him, towards the end the handwriting became confused, and he remained still in doubt regarding the precise character of the death of Serenus. He might have confided the confession to a more expert reader; but, though profoundly curious on the matter, he feared a possible scandal. More than suspicious, he would fain allow Serenus the benefit of such doubt as remained. If he had not died for Christ, at least he had been condemned because of Him; and, perhaps, even

at the last moment, some sudden illumination, some gleam of faith had come to him. For a moment he thought of burning the manuscript; but a certain sense of respect for the dead restrained him. He replaced the manuscript in a fold of the tunic: “Let his sin, or his innocence, remain with him. God! who
5 judges the heart, I recommend my brother to your goodness!”

It is about eight hundred years later that we find Serenus again—Marcus Annæus Serenus, by the designation of his tombstone in the catacombs,—as Saint Marc le Romain,
10 at Beaugency-sur-Loire, whither his precious relics have been brought from Rome by the Abbot Angelran. Among those relics the Abbot had discovered the manuscript, and confided it, still intact, to the most learned member of the Benedictine community over which he presided. With him those old
15 doubts of Timotheus became certainty. With much labour he deciphers the writing, and discovers that the supposed martyr had died a Pagan.

But Saint Marc the Roman had already become popular, and worked miracles. The learned monk was unwilling to trouble the minds of the faithful, to gratify, moreover, the monks of a rival house. Still, he lacked the courage to destroy a document so singular, and hid the manuscript in a corner of the monastic library. It passed, we are told, in 1793, into the public library of Beaugency, where it was found and read by our author. The
20 reputation of Saint Marc the Roman maintained itself till far onwards in the Middle Ages. His miracles, like himself of old, were always considerate, always full of “indulgence.”

The same sort of irony, then, makes itself felt, as the final impression of the history of Serenus—the same sort of irony as that which shaped the fortunes of M. Lemaitre’s other characters—the worthiest of all the sisters, who fails to get married: the mother who embraces the wrong infant: Boun, with her gift of the fairy’s ring, whose last, best miracle of assistance is but to restore her again to the simplicity of mind and body in
30 which it had found her. “She has this irony—Dame Nature!”—and in the recognition of it, supplemented by a keen sense of what should be the complementary disposition on man’s part, is the nearest approach which our author makes to a philoso-

phy of life. Nature, circumstance, is far from pitiful, abounds in mockeries, in baffling surprises and misadventures, like a cynical person amused with the distresses of children. Over against that cynical humour, it may be our part to promote in life the mood of the kindly person, still regarding people very much as children, but, like Serenus, with “a great pity for them, a great indulgence.” 5

M. Lemaître has many and varied interests, a marked individuality of his own amid them all, and great literary accomplishments. His success in the present volume might well encourage him to undertake a work of larger scope,—to add to his other excellent gifts, in the prolonged treatment of some one of those many interests, that great literary gift of patience. 10

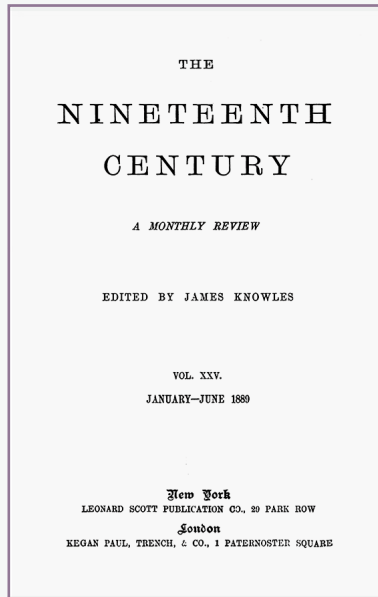


3.

Toussaint Galabru

The Nineteenth Century.

Vol. XXV, no. 146 (Apr. 1889), pp. 621-623.



TOUSSAINT
GALABRU

PAR

FERDINAND FABRE

TROISIÈME MILLE

PARIS

G. CHARPENTIER ET C^o, ÉDITEURS

41, RUE DE GRENELLE, 41

1887

Toussaint Galabru

M. FABRES'S recent novel, *Toussaint Galabru*, is not to be recommended to readers seeking first acquaintance with his works, but will charm those who already know them. In *Les Courbezon*, and *Lucifer*, ranking, it may be thought, above even *L'Abbé Tigrane*, in a series of stories, worthy to accompany 5 those remarkable books, he has made his own, and conveys to us, a district of France, gloomy in spite of its almonds, its oil and wine, but certainly grandiose. The large towns, the sparse hamlets, the wide landscape, of the Cevennes, are, for his books (the list of which, thanks to the application of a somewhat fastidious writer, is becoming a long one), what Alsace 10 is to Messrs. Erckmann-Chatrian; and as with these pleasant writers, as must needs be the result of such faithfulness to a single locality in a world like our modern one, Fabre's interest is ever in the humbler children of its soil—the earthy strength 15 of their passions, their pleasures with all the natural radiancy of those of children, and, of course far more numerous, their pains. What distinguishes him from those Alsatian writers, what constitutes his distinction in the abstract, is his recognition of the religious, the catholic, ideal, intervening masterfully 20 throughout the picture he presents of life, as the only mode of poetry realisable by the poor, and, although it may do a great deal more beside, certainly doing the work of poetry effectively. That ideal, with its weighty sanctions, brings in to full relief all the primitive, recusant, militant force of half-regenerate nature. 25 *Les Courbezon*, certainly, displays the passions of the peasant, with a power of realism (to give that name to what is only the directest use of imaginative skill) worthy of M. Zola at his best. And then, there is nothing in Fabre to shock the most scrupulous conscience, the daintiest taste. 30

Every traveller to Italy has felt the charm of those roomy sacristies, admitted to which for the inspection of some ancient tomb or fresco, one is presently overcome by their reverend quiet; the people coming and going there, devout or at least on
5 devout business, their voices at half-pitch, not without a touch of humour in what seems to express, like a picture, the best side, the really ideal side, midway between the altar and the home, of the ecclesiastical life. Just such an interior, with many a shrewd study of clerical faces, *rusé* yet essentially honest, ambitious but
10 for the most part wonderfully controlled, is afforded by the pen of Ferdinand Fabre.

And the passions he treats of in priests are strictly clerical—most often their ambitions: not the errant humours of the mere man in the priest, but movements of spirit properly
15 incidental to the clerical type itself. Turning to those peasant types, at first sight so strongly contrasted with it, he shows great acquaintance again with the sources, the effects, of average human feeling: but it will still be, in contact—in contact, as its conscience, its better mind, its ideal—with the institutions of
20 religion: these peasants, one feels, are the *chantres* in their village churches. So, of this latest book, the true hero is not the strange being who actually lends it his name, a character disappearing, surely, even from those remote valleys—the wizard, who, if he has no mysterious powers, has a mysterious influence,
25 with a soul of good in his evil, often helping the miserable by power of sympathy where doctor and priest are of no avail, the enemy, because in a sense a real rival, of M. le Curé. No! the hero is not Toussaint Galabru, but another striking clerical personage, whose portrait Fabre here adds to his gallery. From
30 the first pages, where, still a schoolboy, Baptistin is helping to make the coffin of the defunct *maire*, lying down in it at his father's bidding, being already of the same stature with that dignitary, to test its capacity—from that time to the end, where he leads a grand *impromptu* function, in which the Sacraments are
35 taken, across the snowy hills on Christmas night, to the dying sorcerer, we see him clearly, and understand—understand the real unity of the career of this creature of nature, who is also so true a priest. To the last, indeed, the Abbé knows more of

the quails, the varied bird-life of the Cevennes, than of the life of souls. Still, even with him, droll Baptistin Nizerolles, the priesthood, honestly taken, is spiritually a success. Of belief, certainly, he has plenty; and be it through faith, or tact, or mere *esprit de corps*, has more self-restraint, more truth to nature, a more watchful and general charity than his parishioners. The rude lips and hands seem graced when men need it most with something of angelic tones, of an angelic touch. 5

The reader will naturally look in such a writer for a graphic, an impressive, a discreet style—not in vain. M. Fabre 10 is a writer who has a fine sense of his words.

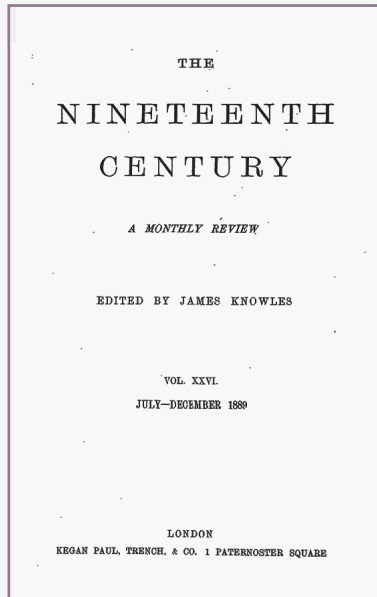


4.

A Century of Revolution

The Nineteenth Century.

Vol. XXVI, no. 154 (Dec. 1889), pp. 992-994.



A CENTURY OF REVOLUTION

BY

WILLIAM SAMUEL LILLY

“ Wer in der Weltgeschichte lebt,
Dem Augenblick sollt' er sich richten ?
Wer in die Zeiten schaut und strebt,
Nur der ist werth, zu sprechen und zu dichten.”
GOETHE.

LONDON: CHAPMAN AND HALL

LIMITED.

1889.

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A Century of Revolution

ONE of the privileges of the larger survey of historical phenomena enjoyed by our own generation, looking back now over many unexpected revivals in doctrine and practice, is the assurance that there are no lost causes. Through the complexity of things, as of men's thoughts about them, the last word, on this side or that, never gets spoken. For example: the force, the secret, if not of the future, at the present, may seem to be with "the idea, the faith, the dogma," (if indeed there really was anything of the kind) "underlying" that blind conflict labelled historically as *The French Revolution*. Yet Catholicism, which, if any vast practical movement ever had one, has an idea underlying it (Catholicism, which the Revolution certainly did its best to destroy but only succeeded in putting on its mettle), possessing its share of permanent truth to human experience, still finds therefore from time to time its adherents, alike among the simple who "must needs live" and the wise who must needs reflect, as it has found just now an able and animated vindicator in the author of *A Century of Revolution*.

As such a vindicator Mr. Lilly proposes to test the Revolution by its fruits from 1789 to 1889—by its supposed operation in the world, its effort "to mix with life," in the three spheres of politics, science, and art. Judged by his chapter on "The Revolution and Liberty," he would appear peculiarly well fitted for that useful function of excepting against, and qualifying, any too confident faith in the final acceptability of this or the other theoretic programme. He is no idolator, for instance—no idyllist, shall we say?—of the French peasant, as the Revolution has left him. It is sad to think that, after paying such a price for emancipation, so many millions of the French people still not only eat the bread of sorrow, but with so sordid

a heart. As a critic of the worship of the Revolution, affected or sincere, and the somewhat second-rate performers therein, as also of those later phases of Liberalism which figure as derivative from it, he proves himself an effective controversialist, capable of a good deal of fine raillery, sometimes of racy mockery for his opponents, equipped with various reading and a style singularly well adapted to the purpose of popular exposition.

But Mr. Lilly is not only a critic of the Revolution, of the tree and its supposed fruits. His exceptions come by way of the assertion of a counter-principle, an abstract ideal of his own; and effectiveness in asserting an abstract ideal can, for the most part, be attained only at the cost of those very qualifications in which at times Mr. Lilly shows himself so expert, and in which what we may call the “aesthetic” spirit, driving always at the concrete, at the precise differentiation of the concrete, event or person, finds its opportunity. It is the spirit which in dealing with the Revolution, for instance, or with the Catholicism Mr. Lilly here so ably upholds against it, does justice to the irregularities, the inconsistencies, the “faults” as the geologist calls them, which traverse and set at nought our abstract or ideal assumptions of the nature of this or that “tendency” in human affairs. One thing, certainly, the Revolution left to the century which followed it—a large stock, not merely of questionable abstract propositions, but also of abstract terms of very doubtful serviceableness in the study of history. Abstract terms like *Liberty*, *Democracy*, *Atheism*—abstract propositions about them in whatever interest, make one think sometimes of those worn old screws which turn either way with equal facility, and compact nothing. What we mean might be illustrated by Mr. Lilly’s chapter on “The Revolution and Art;” telling as it really is as an attack on the “naturalism” which he holds to be the fruit of the Revolution, especially in literature. But was “naturalism,” even as he understands it, finding it at its height in M. Zola’s *Nana*, really born in 1789? did it not exist, like the revolutionary temper itself, from of old? Is not a certain kind of naturalism an element in all living art? And then *Nana* is very far from being characteristic of the whole scope of M. Zola’s work. Was not the Revolution, after all, a kind of vicious running to seed

of that principle of Individualism so nobly vindicated by Mr. Lilly himself as a discovery of Christianity or Catholicism?

For in developing the spirit, the ἦθος, of Catholicism, compatible or incompatible as it may be with Revolution, he writes admirably, with a fulness of historic and personal insight into what Christianity, in that most venerable of its forms, has been to each and all of us, with touches also of a really masculine eloquence, and a dignity worthy of so great a subject, of his own chivalry for it. A Catholic, writing for the general public, with a sense perhaps that reason is not too obviously on his side, may sometimes be tempted to be more ingenious than he needs. There is nothing of that kind in Mr. Lilly. Not so much ingenious as ingenuous in the best sense, he takes our old-fashioned Catechism as a "summary of the fundamental religious and ethical conceptions of Christendom," and (must it be said?) with true "liberalism" after all, is ready to accept what is popularly known as "Darwinism;" feels as strongly as Newman himself the unreasonableness of forcing people's opinions; makes in passing an effective attack on vivisection; and is catholic in his aesthetic tastes, at least till 1789 is concerned. If he deals a little too much with abstractions, yet he has real insight into, a real power over them, available both for thought and utterance, which we would willingly illustrate by quotation.

The past is really indestructible. You do not destroy it by destroying its symbols.— 25

An artist is one who reproduces the world in his own image and likeness.—

The advance of the general mind is so slow as to be imperceptible unless viewed at a distance. 30

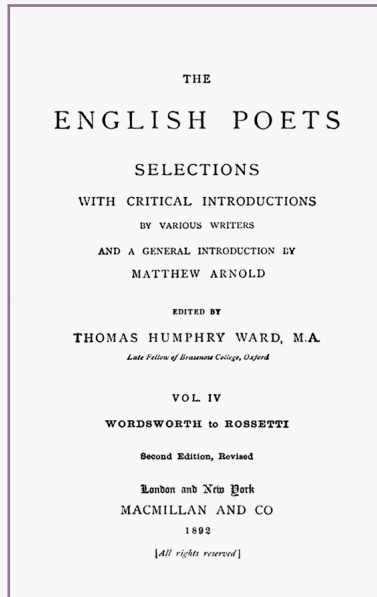
Mr. Lilly's judgments are not seldom as compact, as aphoristic, as these; and, if only by way of a variation of routine, in this age of foregone conclusions, it is a pleasure to see gifts and accomplishments such as his in service, not as a mere matter of course, on the side of Revolution. 35

III.
Introductions

1.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Thomas Humphrey, ed. *The English Poets:
Selections with Critical Introductions
by Various Writers and a General Introduction
by Matthew Arnold.*
Oxford, Macmillan, 1880, vol. 4, pp. 102–114.





Samuel Taylor Coleridge

[Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born at Ottery Saint Mary in the year 1772, was educated at Christ's Hospital and Jesus College, Cambridge, and died in 1834, at Highgate, in the house of Mr. Gillman, under whose friendly care he had passed the last eighteen years of his life, during which years he wrote but little. His first volume of poems was published at Bristol in 1796, and in 1798, Wordsworth's famous volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, to which Coleridge contributed *The Ancient Mariner*, together with some other pieces. *Christabel*, after lying long in manuscript, was printed in 1816, three editions of it appearing in one year; and in the next year Coleridge published a collection of his chief poems, under the title of *Sibylline Leaves*, "in allusion," as he says, "to the fragmentary and wildly-scattered state in which they had been long suffered to remain." A desultory writer both in prose and verse, he published the first really collective edition of his *Poetical and Dramatic Works* in the year 1828, in three volumes arranged by himself; a third and more complete issue of which, arranged by another hand, appeared in 1834, the year of his death. The latest reprint, with notes and an excellent memoir, and some poems not included in any earlier collection, is founded on that final edition of 1834.]

COLERIDGE'S prose writings on philosophy, politics, religion and criticism, were but one element in a whole life-time of endeavours to present the then recent metaphysics of Germany to English readers, as a legitimate expansion of the older, classical and native, masters of what has been variously called the *a priori*, or absolute, or spiritual, or Platonic view of things. To introduce that spiritual philosophy, as represented by the more transcendental parts of Kant, and by Schelling, into all

subjects, as a system of reason in them, one and ever identical with itself, however various the matter through which it was diffused, became with him the motive of an unflagging enthusiasm, which seems to have been the one thread of continuity
5 in a life otherwise singularly wanting in unity of purpose, and in which he was certainly far from uniformly at his best. Fragmentary and obscure, but often eloquent, and always at once earnest and ingenious, those writings, supplementing his remarkable gift of conversation, were directly and indirectly influential, even on some the furthest removed from Coleridge's
10 own masters; on John Stuart Mill, for instance, and some of the earlier writers of the *high-church* school. Like his verse, they display him also in two other characters—as a student of words, and as a psychologist, that is, as a more minute observer than
15 other men of the phenomena of mind. To note the recondite associations of words, old or new; to expound the logic, the reasonable soul, of their various uses; to recover the interest of older writers who had had a phraseology of their own—this was a vein of enquiry allied to his undoubted gift of tracking
20 out and analysing curious modes of thought. A quaint fragment on “Human Life” might serve to illustrate his study of the earlier English philosophical poetry. The latter gift, that power of the “subtle-souled psychologist,” as Shelley calls him, seems to have been connected with a tendency to disease in the physical
25 temperament, to something of a morbid want of balance in the parts where the physical and intellectual elements mix most intimately together, with a kind of languid visionariness, deep-seated in the very constitution of the “narcotist” who had quite a gift for “plucking the poisons of self-harm,” and which
30 the actual habit of taking opium, accidentally acquired, did but reinforce. This morbid languor of nature, connected both with his fitfulness of purpose and his rich delicate dreaminess, qualifies Coleridge's poetic composition even more than his prose; his verse, with the exception of his avowedly political
35 poems, being, unlike that of the “Lake School,” to which in some respects he belongs, singularly unaffected by any moral, or professional, or personal effort and ambition,—“written,” as he says, “after the more violent emotions of sorrow, to give

him pleasure, when perhaps nothing else could;” but coming thus, indeed, very close to his own most intimately personal characteristics, and having a certain languidly soothing grace or cadence, for its most fixed quality, from first to last. After some Platonic soliloquy on a flower opening on a fine day in February, he goes on— 5

Dim similitudes

Weaving in mortal strains, I’ve stolen one hour
From anxious self, life’s cruel task-master!
And the warm woings of this sunny day 10
Tremble along my frame and harmonise
The attempered organ, that even saddest thoughts
Mix with some sweet sensations, like harsh tunes
Played deftly on a soft-toned instrument.

The expression of two opposed yet allied elements of sensibility in these lines is very true to Coleridge;—the grievous agitation, the grievous listlessness, almost never entirely relieved, with a certain physical voluptuousness. He has spoken several times of the scent of the bean-field in the air: the tropical notes in a chilly climate—his is a nature which will make the most of these, which finds a sort of caress in these things. “Kubla Khan,” a fragment of a poem actually composed in some certainly not quite healthy sleep, is perhaps chiefly interesting as showing, by the mode of its composition, how physical, how much a matter of a diseased and valetudinarian temperament in its moments of relief, Coleridge’s happiest gift really was; and, side by side with “Kubla Khan,” should be read, as Coleridge placed it, the “Pains of Sleep,” to illustrate that retarding physical burden in his temperament, that “unimpassioned grief,” the source of which was so near the source of those pleasures. Connected also with this, and again in contrast with Wordsworth, is the limited quantity of his poetical performance, which he himself regrets so eloquently in the lines addressed to Wordsworth after his recitation of *The Prelude*. It is like some exotic plant just managing to blossom a little in the somewhat un-English air of Coleridge’s own birth-place, but never quite well there. 15
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The period of Coleridge's residence at Nether Stowey, 1797–1798, was his *annus mirabilis*. Nearly all the chief works by which his poetic fame will live were then composed or planned. What shapes itself for criticism as the main phenomenon of Coleridge's poetic life, is not, as with most poets, the gradual development of a poetic gift, determined, enriched, retarded, by the circumstances of the poet's life, but the sudden blossoming, through one short season, of such a gift already perfect in its kind, which thereafter deteriorates as suddenly, with something like premature old age. Connecting this phenomenon with the leading motive of his prose writings, we might note it as the deterioration of a productive or creative power into one merely metaphysical or discursive. In the unambitious conception of his function as a poet, and in the limited quantity of his poetical performance, as I have said, he was a contrast to his friend Wordsworth. That friendship with Wordsworth, the chief "developing" circumstance of his poetic life, comprehended a very close intellectual sympathy; and in this association chiefly, lies whatever truth there may be in the popular classification of Coleridge as a member of what is called the "Lake School." Coleridge's philosophical speculations do really turn on the ideas which underlay Wordsworth's poetical practice. His prose works are one long explanation of all that is involved in that famous distinction between the Fancy and the Imagination. Of what is understood by both as the imaginative quality in the use of mere poetic figures, we may take some words of Shakespeare as an example:—

My cousin Suffolk,
My soul shall thine keep company to heaven;
Tarry, sweet soul, for mine, then fly abreast.

The complete infusion here, of the figure into the thought, so vividly realised that though the birds are not actually mentioned yet the sense of their flight, conveyed to us by the single word "abreast," comes to be more than half of the thought itself;—this, as the expression of exalted feeling, is an instance of what Coleridge meant by Imagination. And this sort of iden-

tification of the poet's thought, of himself, with the image or figure which serves him, is the secret, sometimes, of a singularly entire realisation of that image, which makes this figure of Coleridge's, for instance, 'imaginative':—

Amid the howl of more than wintry storms, 5
The halcyon hears the voice of vernal hours
Already on the wing.

There are many such figures both in Coleridge's prose and verse. He has too his passages of that sort of impassioned contemplation on the permanent and elementary conditions of nature and humanity, which Wordsworth held to be the essence of the poetic life, and its object to awaken in other men—those "moments," as Coleridge says, addressing him,— 10

Moments awful,
Now in thy inner life, and now abroad, 15
When power streamed from thee, and thy soul received
The light reflected, as a light bestowed.

The whole of the poem from which those lines are taken, "composed on the night after Wordsworth's recitation of a poem on the growth of an individual mind," is, in its strain of impassioned contemplation, and in the combined justness and elevation of its philosophical expression— 20

high and passionate thoughts
To their own music chanted;—

entirely sympathetic with *The Prelude* which it celebrates, and of which the subject is, in effect, the generation of the spirit of the "Lake poetry." The "Lines to Joseph Cottle" have the same philosophically imaginative character; the "Ode to Dejection" being Coleridge's most sustained effort of this sort. 25

It is in a highly sensitive apprehension of the aspects of external nature that Coleridge identifies himself most closely with one of the main tendencies of the "Lake School;" a ten- 30

dency instinctive, and no mere matter of theory, in him as in Wordsworth. That record of the

green light
Which lingers in the west,

5 and again, of

the western sky
And its peculiar tint of yellow green,

which Byron found ludicrously untrue, but which surely needs no defence, is a characteristic example of a singular watchfulness for the minute fact and expression of natural scenery, pervading all he writes—a closeness to the exact physiognomy of nature, having something to do with that idealistic philosophy, which sees in the external world no mere concurrence of mechanical agencies, but an animated body, informed and made expressive, like the body of man, by an indwelling intelligence. It was a tendency, doubtless, in the air, for Shelley too is affected by it, and Turner, with the school of landscape which followed him. “I had found,” Coleridge tells us,

20 That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive
 Their finer influence from the world within;
 Fair ciphers of vague import, where the eye
 Traces no spot, in which the heart may read
 History and prophecy....

25 and this induces in him no indifference to actual colour and form and process, but such minute realism as this—

The thin grey cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull;

30 or this, which has a touch of “romantic” weirdness—

Nought was green upon the oak
But moss and rarest misletoe;

or this—

There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan, 5
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky;—

or this, with a weirdness again, like that of some wild French
etcher— 10

Lo! the new-moon winter-bright!
And over-spread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread,
But rimmed and circled with a silver thread,) 15
I see the old moon in her lap, foretelling
The coming on of rain and squally blast.

He has the same imaginative apprehension of the silent and un-
seen processes of nature, its "ministries" of dew and frost, for
instance; as when he writes in April—

A balmy night! and though the stars be dim, 20
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall find
A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.

Of such imaginative treatment of landscape there is no better in-
stance than in the description of *the Dell*, in "Fears in Solitude"— 25

A green and silent spot amid the hills,
A small and silent dell! O'er stiller place
No singing sky-lark ever poised himself—
But the dell,
Bathed by the mist is fresh and delicate 30

As vernal cornfield, or the unripe flax
When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve,
The level sunshine glimmers with green light—
 The gust that roared and died away
5 To the distant tree—
 heard and only heard
In this low dell, bowed not the delicate grass.

This curious dwelling of the mind on one particular spot, till it seems to attain real expression and a sort of soul in it—a mood
10 so characteristic of the “Lake School”—occurs in an earnest political poem, “written in April, 1798, during the alarm of an invasion;” and that silent dell is the background against which the tumultuous fears of the poet are in strong relief, while the quiet sense of it, maintained all through them, gives a real poetic unity to the piece. Good political poetry—political poetry
15 that shall be permanently moving—can, perhaps, only be written on motives which, for those whom they concern, have ceased to be open questions and are really beyond argument; and Coleridge’s political poems are for the most part on open
20 questions. For although it was a great part of his intellectual ambition to subject political questions to the action of the fundamental ideas of his philosophy, he was still an ardent partisan, first on one side, then on the other, of the actual politics of the end of the last and the beginning of the present century,
25 where there is still room for much difference of opinion. Yet “The Destiny of Nations,” though formless as a whole, and unfinished, has many traces of his most elevated speculation, cast into that sort of imaginative philosophical expression, in which, in effect, the language itself is inseparable from, or a part
30 of the thought. “France: an Ode,” begins with the famous apostrophe to Liberty:—

Ye Clouds! that far above me float and pause,
 Whose pathless march no mortal may control!
 Ye Ocean-Waves! that wheresoe’er ye roll,
35 Yield homage only to eternal laws!
 Ye Woods! that listen to the night-bird’s singing,

Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
 Save when your own imperious branches swinging,
 Have made a solemn music of the wind!
 Where like a man beloved of God,
 Through glooms which never woodman trod, 5
 How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
 My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I wound,
 Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
 By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound!
 O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high! 10
 And O ye Clouds that far above me soar'd!
 Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
 Yea, everything that is and will be free!
 Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
 With what deep worship I have still adored 15
 The spirit of divinest liberty.

And the whole ode, though, in Coleridge's way, not quite equal
 to that exordium, is an example of strong national sentiment,
 partly in indignant reaction against his own earlier sympathy
 with the French republic, inspiring a composition which, in 20
 spite of some turgid lines, really justifies itself as poetry, and has
 that true unity of effect which the ode requires. Liberty, after
 all his hopes of young France, is only to be found in nature:—

 Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,
 The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the waves! 25

In his changes of political sentiment Coleridge was asso-
 ciated with the "Lake School;" and there is yet one other very
 different sort of sentiment in which he is one with that school,
 yet all himself, his sympathy, namely, with the animal world.
 That was a sentiment connected at once with the love of out- 30
 ward nature in himself and in the "Lake School," and its asser-
 tion of the natural affections in their simplicity; with the home-
 liness and pity, consequent upon that assertion. "The Lines to a
 Young Ass," tethered,

Where the close-eaten grass is scarcely seen,
While sweet around her waves the templing green,

which had seemed merely whimsical in their day, indicate a vein of interest constant in Coleridge's poems, and at its height
5 in his chief poems—in *Christabel*, where it has its effect, as it were antipathetically, in the vivid realisation of the serpentine element in Geraldine's nature; and in *The Ancient Mariner*, whose fate is interwoven with that of the wonderful bird, the curse for whose death begins to pass away at the Mariner's
10 blessing of the water-snakes, and where the moral of the love of all creatures, as a sort of religious duty, is definitely expressed.

Christabel, though not printed till 1816, was written mainly in the year 1797. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* was printed as a contribution to the *Lyrical Ballads*, in 1798. These
15 two poems belong to the great year of Coleridge's poetic production, his twenty-fifth year. In poetic quality, above all in that most poetic of all qualities, a keen sense of and delight in beauty, the infection of which lays hold upon the reader, they are quite out of proportion to all his other composition. The form
20 in both is that of the ballad, with some of its terminology, and some also of its quaint conceits. They connect themselves with that revival of ballad literature, of which Percy's *Relics*, and, in another way, Macpherson's *Ossian* are monuments, and which afterwards so powerfully affected Scott.

25 Young-eyed poesy
All deftly masked as hoar antiquity,—

The Ancient Mariner, as also in its measure *Christabel*, is a "romantic" poem, impressing us by bold invention, and appealing to that taste for the supernatural, that longing for a
30 shudder, to which the "romantic" school in Germany, and its derivatives in England and France, directly ministered. In Coleridge personally, this taste had been encouraged by his odd and out-of-the-way reading in the old-fashioned literature of the marvellous—books like Purchas's *Pilgrims*, early voyages like Hakluyt's, old naturalists and visionary moralists like
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Thomas Burnet, from whom he quotes the motto of *The Ancient Mariner*—*Facile credo, plures esse naturas invisibiles quam visibiles in rerum universitate, &c.* Fancies of the strange things which may very well happen, even in broad daylight, to men shut up alone in ships far off on the sea, seem to have arisen in the human mind in all ages with a peculiar readiness, and often have about them, from the story of the theft of Dionysus downwards, the fascination of a certain dreamy grace, which distinguishes them from other kinds of marvellous inventions. This sort of fascination *The Ancient Mariner* brings to its highest degree; it is the delicacy, the dreamy grace in his presentation of the marvellous, which makes Coleridge's work so remarkable. The too palpable intruders from a spiritual world, in almost all ghost literature, in Scott and Shakespeare even, have a kind of coarseness or crudeness. Coleridge's power is in the very fineness with which, as with some really ghostly finger, he brings home to our inmost sense his inventions, daring as they are—the skeleton ship, the polar spirit, the inspiriting of the dead bodies of the ship's crew; *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* has the plausibility, the perfect adaptation to reason and the general aspect of life, which belongs to the marvellous when actually presented as part of a credible experience, in our dreams. Doubtless the mere experience of the opium-eater, the habit he must almost necessarily fall into of noting the more elusive phenomena of dreams, had something to do with that; in its essence, however, it is connected with a more purely intellectual circumstance in the development of Coleridge's poetic gift. Some one once asked William Blake, to whom Coleridge has many resemblances, when either is at his best (that whole episode of the inspiriting of the ship's crew in *The Ancient Mariner* being comparable to Blake's well-known design of *The Morning Stars Singing Together*), whether he had ever seen a ghost, and was surprised when the famous seer, who ought, one might think, to have seen so many, answered frankly, "Only once!" His "spirits," at once more delicate, and so much more real than any ghost—at once the burden and the privilege of his temperament—like it, were an integral element in his every-day life. And the difference of mood expressed in that question and

its answer, is indicative of a change of temper in regard to the supernatural, which has passed over the whole modern mind, and of which the true measure is the influence of the writings of Swedenborg: and what that change is we may see, if we compare the vision by which Swedenborg was called, as he thought, to his work, with the ghost which *called* Hamlet; or the spells of Marlowe's *Faust* with those of Goethe's. The modern mind, so minutely self-scrutinising, if it is to be affected at all by a sense of the supernatural, requires to be more finely touched than was possible in the older romantic presentment of it. The spectral object, so crude, so impossible, has become plausible, as "the blot upon the brain | That *will* show itself without," and is understood to be but a condition of one's own mind, for which, according to the scepticism latent at least in so much of our modern philosophy, the so-called real things themselves are but *spectra*, after all.

It is this finer, more delicately marvellous supernaturalism, the fruit of his more delicate psychology, which Coleridge infuses into romantic narrative, itself also then a new, or revived thing in English literature; and with a fineness of weird effect in *The Ancient Mariner*, unknown in those old, more simple, romantic legends and ballads. It is a flower of medieval, or later German romance, growing up in the peculiarly compounded atmosphere of modern psychological speculation, and putting forth in it wholly new qualities. The quaint prose commentary, which runs side by side with the verse of *The Ancient Mariner*, illustrates this—a composition of quite a different shade of beauty and merit from that of the verse which it accompanies, connecting this the chief poem of Coleridge with his philosophy, and emphasizing in it that psychological element of which I have spoken, its curious soul-lore.

Completeness, the perfectly rounded unity and wholeness of the impression it leaves on the mind of a reader who really gives himself to it,—that, too, is one of the characteristics of a really excellent work, in the poetic, as in every other kind of art; and by this completeness *The Ancient Mariner* certainly gains upon *Christabel*,—a completeness, entire as that of Wordsworth's "Leech-gatherer," or Keats's *Saint Agnes' Eve*,

each typical in its way of such wholeness or entirety of effect on a careful reader. It is Coleridge's own great complete work, the one really finished thing, in a life of many beginnings. *Christabel* remained a fragment—the first, and portions of a second, part, on which two other parts should have followed, each with its own “conclusion;” and we seem to have lost more by its incompleteness than the mere amount of excellent verse; for what Coleridge tells us about it suggests the notion of a very exquisitely limited design, with that pleasing sense of unity, which is secured in *The Ancient Mariner*, partly by the skill with which the incidents of the marriage-feast break in, dreamily, from time to time, upon the main story; and with which the whole nightmare story itself is made to end, so pleasantly and reassuringly, among the clear, fresh sounds and lights of the bay, where it began, with

The moon-light steeped in silentness
The steady weather-cock.

So different from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in regard to this completeness of effect, *Christabel* illustrates the same complexion of motives, the same intellectual situation. Here too the work is that peculiar to one who touches the characteristic motives of the old romantic ballad in a spirit made subtle and fine by modern reflection, and which we feel, I think, in such passages as—

But though my slumber had gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon mine eye;—

and—

For she belike, hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep;—

and again—

With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

And the gift of handling the finer passages of human feeling,
at once with power and delicacy, which was another of the re-
sults of that finer psychology, of his exquisitely refined habit of
5 self-reflection, is illustrated by a passage on Friendship in the
Second Part:—

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
10 And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
15 With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
20 To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between;—
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
25 Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

I suppose these lines leave almost every reader with a quick-
ened sense of the beauty and compass of human feeling; and
it is the sense of such richness and beauty which, in spite of
30 his “dejection,” in spite of that burden of his morbid lassitude,
accompanies Coleridge himself through life. A warm poetic
joy in every thing beautiful, whether it be a moral sentiment,
like the friendship of Roland and Leoline, or only the flakes of
falling light from the water-snakes—this joy, visiting him, now
35 and again, after sickly dreams, waking or sleeping, as a relief not

to be forgotten, and with such a power of felicitous expression that the infection of it passes irresistibly to the reader,—this is the predominant quality in the matter of his poetry, as cadence is the predominant quality of its form. “We bless Thee for our creation!” he might have said, in his later period of definite religious assent, “because the world is so beautiful; the world of ideas—living spirits, detached from the divine nature itself, to inform and lift the heavy mass of material things; the world of man, above all in his melodious and intelligible speech; the world of living creatures and natural scenery; the world of dreams.” What he really did say, by way of “A Tombless Epitaph,” is true enough of himself—

Sickness, 'tis true,
 Whole years of weary days, besieged him close,
 Even to the gates and inlets of his life! 15
 But it is true, no less, that strenuous, firm,
 And with a natural gladness, he maintained
 The citadel unconquered, and in joy
 Was strong to follow the delightful Muse.
 For not a hidden path, that to the shades 20
 Of the beloved Parnassian forest leads,
 Lurked undiscovered by him; not a rill
 There issues from the fount of Hippocrene,
 But he had traced it upward to its source,
 Through open glade, dark glen, and secret dell, 25
 Knew the gay wild flowers on its banks, and culled
 Its med'cinable herbs. Yea, oft alone,
 Piercing the long-neglected holy cave,
 The haunt obscure of old Philosophy,
 He bade with lifted torch its starry walls 30
 Sparkle, as erst they sparkled to the flame
 Of odorous lamps tended by Saint and Sage.
 O framed for calmer times and nobler hearts!
 O studious Poet, eloquent for truth!
 Philosopher! contemning wealth and death, 35
 Yet docile, childlike, full of Life and Love!
 O framed for calmer times and nobler hearts!

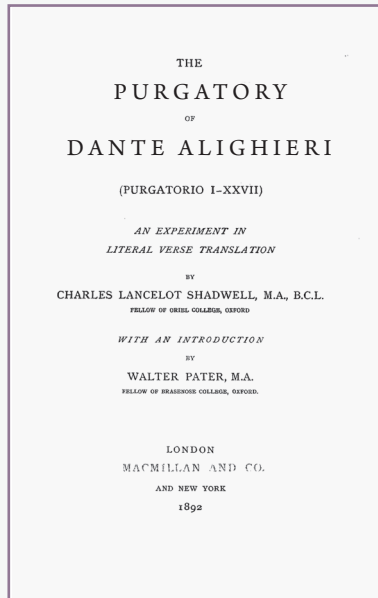
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2.

Introduction To *The Purgatory* of Dante Alighieri

Dante Alighieri. *The Purgatory*.
An Experiment in Literal Verse Translation.
Transl. Charles Lancelot Shadwell,
London, Macmillan, 1892, pp. xxiii–xxviii.





Introduction To *The Purgatory* of Dante Alighieri

“SA RÉPUTATION s’affermira toujours parce qu’on ne le lit guère,” says Voltaire of Dante: and just there certainly he would seem to have overpassed the limit of his critical method, its capacity for dealing with great matters. Yet Voltaire did but reflect the general unfitness of the last century in regard to the Middle Age, of whose spirit Dante is the central embodiment; for, late in that century, the “universal-minded” Goethe himself explains, much to the surprise of the reader of to-day, why, passing through Assisi, he inspected carefully an average specimen of old Roman architecture, but was careful not to inspect the frescoes of Giotto in the church of Saint Francis, work, done, it has been thought, under Dante’s immediate influence. 5 10

We have certainly “changed all that that;” and the unaffected interest of our own generation in the *Divina Commedia* is more than a mere element of the medievalism which marks the later half of the nineteenth century. The causes of this medievalism, which has at least secured for posterity what three careless centuries had left us of the art of the Middle Age, would probably reduce themselves in the main to the influence of reaction. That poetic period, poetic as we see it, perhaps a little illusively, has been a refuge from the mere prose of our own day as we see it, most of all in England. But there seems to be something more than just this, something more positive in character, and in closer alliance with the genius of the nineteenth century itself, in the interest which Dante commands among us,—his popularity with the many, his sufficiency for the devotion of a select number of admirable scholars, whose fault assuredly it will not be if the minutest point about him or his work remains obscure. 15 20 25

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By way of explaining such devotion in contrast to the indifference of preceding centuries it would of course be enough to say that Dante was a great poet, one of the greatest of poets, and that in our own age, sympathetic, eclectic, cosmopolitan, full of curiosity and abounding in the “historic sense,” certain barriers to a right appreciation of him have been removed. He has handled on a grand scale the grandest of subjects, in a way which after all fair comparison must be declared unique, and so as to make it his own—that immense intellectual deposit of thirteen believing centuries—with a generous outlay of himself, of his own richly endowed and richly cultivated personality, of what is most intimate and peculiar in it. On scrupulous orthodoxy he has impressed a deep personal originality, after a manner to which we may well think one only in the course of many generations could have been equal. The religious ideal of that age, the theoretic construction which catholicism puts on the facts of nature and history, is for him, in spite of an invading rationalism already at work about him, itself also still an authentic fact. Devoutly assuming the reality of that ideal, he goes boldly through the world in all its variety of good and evil, with powers of insight everywhere adequate to its wonder, its beauty and sorrow, the awful experiences of the saved, the tried, the lost. His subject, like the course of his own life which had brought it home so close to him, has its harsh episodes; but he did not forget that his design was after all to treat it as a literary artist, to charm his readers; and with no disloyalty therefore to its essential character, he has displayed in his work a wonderful urbanity and composure, the craftiest interweaving of its parts, a deliberate evenness of execution, a sense of unity and proportion, yet also a command of every sort of minute literary beauty, an expressiveness, a care for style and rhythm at every point, the evidence of which increases upon the critical reader as his attention becomes microscopic. No one anywhere near him in time had united powers and acquirements so varied, in a literary monument so consistently realised. Consider, for instance, the philosophic power of Canto XXV. of the *Purgatory*, side by side with the moral power of Canto XVII. 91–139, with the moral delicacy of Canto III, in the matter of Manfred es-

pecially, and with the various descriptive effects of Canto II. Yes, Dante is in very deed a great poet, great enough to be independent of the mere mental habits of one age or another. Yet he too had to pass through ages with no natural ear for him; while it is only the good fortune of the present generation that its turn for eclecticism, removing prejudice, has fitted it for a really intelligent and critical stud of Dante's work, encouraged for its reward therein by certain special aspects of Dante's genius which are in close kinship with its own. The artistic and literary work of the Middle Age, the art of Dante's friend Giotto for example, we value in large measure for its very strangeness, its unlikeness to what is nearer in date to ourselves. But Dante, remote and strange as he may be, in sentiment, in his politics, and for many by his religious faith, is nevertheless found to meet certain tendencies, actually in us, half-way; and by expressing does but further promote them. 5 10 15

One of the points then, a point of manner, so to speak, at which Dante repelled the last century while he directly attracts our own, is the minuteness of his handiwork, of his habits of observation, and of the equivalent expression, or fine shade of expression. Such care for the elaboration of detail in Dante's work had something in common with the art of that day, with what must be called its *naïveté*, as we feel it when Dante writes: 20

As birds that seek to Nilus warm
In winter, now in squadron form, 25
Now swifter flight design
And lengthen into line:

XXIV. 64–67.

or

Folk beneath its branches there 30
Crying I know not what there were,
With hands uplifted all,
As eager children call

To one who grants not their request:
But still to give their longing zest
Upholds aloft the prize
Nor hides it from their eyes:

5

XXIV. 106–111.

and again in the so circumstantial note he takes of the fact that Dante's still mortal body casts a shadow among the shadowless people of the other world:—

10 That very flesh is this
 Whereof his body is.

V. 33.

In Dante's minuteness of touch there was in fact something of that art of miniature painting,

Ch' alluminare è chiamata in Parisi.

15 Our own delight in it, the welcome we give to minute detail of that kind, uncompromising "realists" as we must needs be, connects itself with the empirical character of our science, our philosophic faith in the concrete, the particular. To the age of Johnson abstraction, generalisation, seemed to be of the
20 essence of art and poetry, a principle which the taste of the nineteenth century has inverted in favour of that circumstantial manner of which every Canto of the *Divina Commedia* would afford illustration.

25 But the modern artist, the modern student of art, of Dante's art, while he demands it in any record of the external world, will value this minuteness, this minute perfection, even more perhaps in the treatment of mental phenomena, when the intelligence which touched so finely the niceties of visible colour and outline turns to the invisible world, noting there
30 also with a like subtlety the intimacies of the soul. The modern, as such, is undeniably a somewhat skilful psychologist.—We have lived so long with ourselves! And just here surely we find another link between the peculiarities of Dante's genius and

the “subjectivities” of the characteristic student of to-day. Amid the larger outlooks of the *Divina Commedia* we are again and again reminded that its author is also the poet of the *Vita Nuova*. His own sensibility, already so strongly in evidence there, makes him now an equally delicate interpreter of the mental or spiritual ways of others. 5

And in the hour, before the morn,
When wakes the swallow’s note forlorn,
Haply amid her singing
Her woes to memory bringing, 10

The hour when loosed from thought our mind
Leaves pilgrim-like her flesh behind,
And borne along in dreams
Almost a prophet seems,

Even then to me was vision given: 15
IX. 13–19.

And in accordance with what we might have expected, the sensibility, the fineness of touch, there indicated, is at its height in the placid and temperate regions of the *Purgatorio*—a realm of grey but clear light:—it is there that the delicacies, alike of the visible and the invisible world, really tell. 20

And there is another reason why for the modern student the *Purgatorio* should be the favourite section of the *Divina Commedia*. An age of faith, if such there ever were, our age certainly is not: an age of love, all its pity and self-pity notwithstanding, who shall say?—in its religious scepticism, however, especially as compared with the last century in its religious scepticism, an age of hope, we may safely call it, of a development of religious hope or hopefulness, similar in tendency to the development of the doctrine of Purgatory in the church of the Middle Age:— 30

quel secondo regno
Dove l’ umano spirito si purga:—

The star-set spheres they gain.
XI. 31–36.

And the breadth of Dante's theological horizon connects itself with that generous eclecticism which finds in "the house of many mansions," due place for Virgil and other sublime spirits of the Pagan world amid the infants unbaptised of the dispensation of Christ; as also with a certain mundane sense, throughout his great work, of poetry and scholarship, of classic or Pagan poesy holding its own beside the poetry of inspiration, as the Empire subsists side by side with the Church.—

La morta poesi risurga!

Awake dead Poesy and inspire
The servant of the Muses' choir,
I. 7.

Like his persuasion that earthly and personal gifts will not lose their charm and purpose in another life, that, "though we know not what we shall be," Casella will still exercise there his wonted musical skill,¹ Dante's large-minded treatment of all forms of classic power and achievement marks a stage of progress, from the narrower sentiment of the Middle Age, towards "humanism," towards the mental attitude of the Renaissance and of the modern world.

A minute sense of the external world and its beauties, a minute sense of the phenomena of the mind, of what is beautiful and of interest there, a demand for wide and cheering outlooks in religion, for a largeness of spirit in its application to life:—these are the special points of contact between Dante and the genius of our own century. And withal Dante is a great poet, one of the greatest of poets, great like Sophocles and Shakespeare by a certain universality in his appeal to men's minds, and independent therefore of the special sensibilities of

¹"Know ye not we are but the worm | Born the angelic moth to form?"
X. 124–5.

a particular age. If the characteristic minds of the last century, for instance, were apt to undervalue him, that was because they were themselves of an age not of cosmopolitan genius, but of singularly limited gifts, gifts temporary and local, so to speak, the products of which survive, for the most part, only indirectly by efforts of historic rehabilitation. And as Dante is not only popular but has intelligible reasons for his popularity with us, there have been in our day translations of him excellent in various ways. With the exception however of some portions of Longfellow's, and in considerable degree of Cayley's, they fail in the "mysticity" which is so characteristic of the original, a quality in which Rossetti would have done justice to the *Divina Commedia*, if we may judge by his version of the *Vita Nuova*, so studiously close yet so spontaneous, so much the converse of second-hand in its effect upon us.

The writer of the translation here presented to English readers, having allowed me the pleasure of seeing his work from time to time during its growth, has now asked me to say a few candid words by way of preface. His reproduction of a poem full certainly of "the patience of genius" is itself a work of rare patience and scholarship, conspicuously free from

the haste
By which all action is disgraced.

la fretta
25 *Che l' onestade ad ogni atto dismaga.*
III. 10-11.

I speak of his version however as but a general reader, having no special knowledge of Dante such as his. Still, interesting as I know his has been and will be to scholars, it is for the general reader after all that translations are made. Such general readers then will, I believe, find here a translation made in the sense of what I have tried to indicate as characteristic of the *Divina Commedia*, a version singular in its union of minute and sensitive fidelity almost to the very syllables of the original, with that general sense of composure and breadth of effect which

gives to the great medieval poem the air of a "classic." It is this note which the metre of Marvell's "Ode" itself strikes, the note of a dignified plain-song, capable however on demand of a high degree of expressiveness. The translator has explained in detail his reasons for adopting it; its essential equivalence to Dante's *terza rima*. With a writer whose vocabulary is so significant and searched through as that of Dante, whose words withal are so sensitive and picturesque, there can be no fidelity which does not include a certain literal exactness. Partly because he is so minute a "realist," he is one of those artists whose general effect largely depends on vocabulary, on the minute particles of which his work is wrought, on the colour and outline of single words and phrases, and this must obviously be lost in anything like free or haphazard translation. It seems obvious that to convey the impression of such work into another language, translation must be true in detail, and supposing rhythm and vernacular effect secured, the more literal it is the better. The translator's business with Dante, then, may be likened to the copying of a drawing or other design upon transparent tracing-paper. Let the eye be true, the hand steady, the pencil fine, and, making sure of the fidelity of its movement from point to point, the translator, hardly less than his reader, will be surprised at the large and general faithfulness of the reproduction thus assured. In such way the reader of this translation will, I think, from time to time have a pleasant sense of the reproductive capacity of our language, as he compares the opposite pages of the Cantos which follow. Let him turn for instance to Canto V. 52-57, XII. 16-69 and XIV. 97-123.

So far as I know, nothing quite like this has yet been done for presenting Dante to English readers, in union with the attractiveness of metrical form, and a scholarly care for English style. Out of the very literality here maintained has come an evenness, a dignity of manner, a poetic effect, wholly unarchaic, and true to what must be called the un-provincial or cosmopolitan air of the *Divina Commedia*— cosmopolitan, though Dante's work be nevertheless the peculiar and perfect flower of the Middle Age. Dante has his varieties of power and appeal

to the reader; some readers may think that he rises and falls;¹ he argues, narrates, pauses, surprises us with sudden heats of feeling, as in the grand outburst against Italy, drawn from him at the sight of Sordello's generous welcome of Virgil: he has his
5 patient moods, he permits himself much harshness of imagery and vocabulary, though this too is subdued by the repose natural to the width and greatness of his theme. His translator following him, with humble scholarly purpose, has really trod in his steps; rising and falling with him, if so it be; and he has been
10 perhaps not least successful in the speculative or philosophic passages (Canto IV. 1–12, for example, and XVIII. 19–75), so difficult, yet so fascinating to the modern student of earlier modes of thought than our own.

The true test of a work of imagination, and therefore of
15 any veritable presentment of it in the way of translation, is that it should enfold one, so to speak, in its own atmosphere, that one should feel able to breathe in it. I have had such a feeling in reading what follows. The translator has explained why he left off with a sense of completeness at the end of the twenty-seventh
20 Canto, but studious readers will, I think, regret with me that he found reason so to do.

¹“Thou seest, my Reader, how I raise | My theme, nor should it thee amaze | If greater art sustain | The matter of my strain.” IX. 70–72.”



IV. Essay

On Wordsworth

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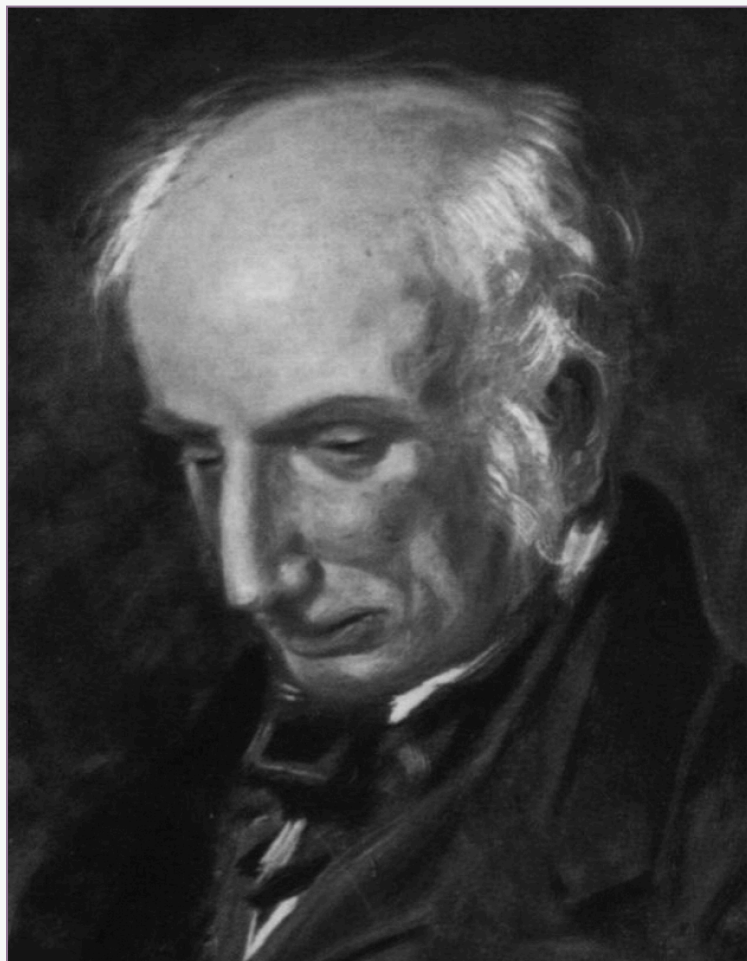
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On Wordsworth



SOME English critics at the beginning of the present century said a great deal concerning a distinction, of much importance, as they thought, in the true estimate of poetry, between the Fancy and another, profounder faculty, the Imagination. This metaphysical distinction, borrowed originally from the writings of German philosophers, and perhaps not always clearly apprehended by those who talked of it, involved a far deeper and more vital distinction, with which indeed all true criticism more or less directly has to do, the distinction namely between higher and lower degrees of intensity in the poet's perception of his subject, and in his concentration of himself upon his work. Of those who dwelt upon the metaphysical distinction between the Fancy and the Imagination, it was Wordsworth who made the most of it, assuming it as the basis for the final classification of his poetical writings; and it is in these writings that the deeper and more vital distinction which, as I have said, underlies the metaphysical distinction, is most needed and may best be illustrated.

For nowhere is there so perplexed a mixture as in Wordsworth's own poetry, of work touched with intense and individual power, with work of almost no character at all. He has much conventional sentiment, and some of that insincere poetic diction against which his most serious critical efforts were directed; the reaction in his political ideas, consequent on the excesses of 1795, makes him at times a declaimer on moral and social topics; and he seems sometimes to force an unwilling pen and write by rule. By making the most of these blemishes it is possible to obscure the real aesthetic value of his work, just as his life also, a life of much quiet delicacy and independence, might easily be placed in a false focus, and made to appear a

somewhat tame theme in illustration of the more obvious parochial virtues. And those who wish to understand his influence, and experience his peculiar savour, must bear with patience the presence of an alien element in Wordsworth's work, which never coalesced with what is really delightful in it, nor underwent his special power. Who that values his writings most has not felt the intrusion there from time to time of something tedious and prosaic? Of all great poets, perhaps he would gain most by a skilfully made anthology. Such a selection would show perhaps not so much what he was, or to himself or others seemed to be, as what by the more energetic and fertile tendency in his writings he was ever tending to become; is, therefore, to the imaginative reason. And the mixture in his work, as it actually stands, is so perplexed that one fears to miss the least promising composition even, lest some precious morsel should be lying hidden within, the few perfect lines, the phrase, the single word even, to which he often works up mechanically through a poem, almost the whole of which may be tame enough. He who thought that in all creative work the larger part was *given* passively to the recipient mind, who waited so dutifully upon the gift, to whom so large a measure was sometimes given, had his times also of desertion and relapse, and he has permitted the impress of these too to remain in his work. And this duality there, the fitfulness with which the higher qualities manifest themselves in it, gives the effect in his poetry of a power not altogether his own, or under his control, which comes and goes when it will, lifting or lowering a matter poor in itself; so that that old fancy which made the poet's art an enthusiasm, a form of divine possession, seems almost literally true of him.

This constant suggestion of an absolute duality between higher and lower moods, and the work done in them, stimulating one always to look below the surface, makes the reading of Wordsworth an excellent sort of training towards the things of art and poetry. It begets in those who, coming across him in youth, can bear him at all, a habit of reading between the lines, a faith in the effect of concentration and collectedness of mind in the right appreciation of poetry, an expectation of things in this order, coming to one in the way of a true discipline of the

temper as well as of the intellect. He meets us with the promise that he has much, and something very peculiar, to give us, if we will follow a certain difficult way, and seems to have the secret of a special and privileged state of mind. And those who have undergone his influence, and followed this difficult way, are like people who have passed through some initiation, a *disciplina arcana*, by submitting to which they become able constantly to distinguish in art, speech, feeling, manners, that which is organic, animated, expressive, from that which is only conventional, derivative, inexpressive.

But although the necessity of selecting these precious morsels for oneself is an opportunity for the exercise of Wordsworth's peculiar influence, and induces a kind of just criticism and true estimate of them, yet the purely literary product would have been more excellent had the writer himself purged away that alien element. How perfect would have been the little treasury shut between the covers of how thin a book! Let us suppose the desired separation made, the electric thread untwined, the golden pieces, great and small, lying apart together. What are the peculiarities of this residue? What special sense does Wordsworth exercise, and what instincts does he satisfy? What are the subjects and the motives which in him excite the imaginative faculty? What are the qualities in things and persons which he values, the impression and sense of which he can convey to others in an extraordinary way?

An intimate consciousness of the expression of natural things, which weighs, listens, penetrates, where the earlier mind passed roughly by, is a large element in the complexion of modern poetry. It has been remarked again and again; it reveals itself in many forms, but is strongest and most attractive in what is strongest and most attractive in modern literature; it is exemplified almost equally by writers as unlike each other as Senancour and Théophile Gautier; as a singular chapter in the history of the human mind, its growth might be traced from Rousseau to Chateaubriand, from Chateaubriand to Victor Hugo; it has doubtless some latent connection with those pantheistic theories which have largely exercised men's minds in some modern systems of philosophy; it is traceable even in

the graver writings of historians; it makes as much difference between ancient and modern landscape as there is between the rough masks of an early mosaic and a portrait by Reynolds or Gainsborough. Of this new sense the writings of Wordsworth
5 are the central and elementary expression; he is more simply and entirely occupied with it than any other. There was in his own character a certain contentment, a sort of religious placidity, seldom found united with a sensibility like his, which was favourable to the quiet, habitual observation of inanimate, or
10 imperfectly animate, existence. His life of eighty years is not divided by profoundly felt incidents; its changes are almost wholly inward, and it falls into broad, untroubled spaces. What it most resembles is the life of one of those early Italian or Flemish painters, who, just because their minds were full of heavenly
15 visions, passed, some of them, the better part of sixty years in quiet, systematic industry. This placid life matured in him an unusual, innate sensibility to natural sights and sounds, the flower and its shadow on the stone, the cuckoo and its echo. The poem of "Resolution and Independence" is a storehouse of
20 such images; for its fulness of imagery it may be compared to Keats's *The Eve of Saint Agnes*. To read one of his longer pastoral poems for the first time is like a day spent in a new country; the memory is crowded for a time with precise and vivid images—

25 The pliant harebell swinging in the breeze
 On some grey rock;—

 The single sheep and the one blasted tree
 And the bleak music from that old stone wall;—

 In the meadows and the lower ground
 Was all the sweetness of a common dawn;—

30 And that green corn all day is rustling in thine ears.

Subtle and sharp as he is in the outlining of visible imagery, he is most subtle and delicate of all in the noting of sounds; so that he conceives of noble sound as even moulding the hu-

man countenance to nobler types, and as something actually
“profaned by visible form or image.” He has a power likewise
of realising and conveying to the consciousness of the reader
abstract and elementary impressions, silence, darkness, absolute
motionlessness; or, again, the whole complex sentiment 5
of a particular place, the abstract expression of desolation in
the long white road, of peacefulness in a particular folding of
the hills. In the airy building of the brain, a special day or hour
even, comes to have for him a sort of personal identity, a spirit
or angel given to it, by which, for its exceptional insight, or the 10
happy light upon it, it has a presence in one’s history, and acts
there as a separate power or accomplishment; and he has celebrated
in many of his poems the “efficacious spirit” which, as he
says, resides in these “particular spots” of time.

That sense of a life in natural objects, which in most poetry 15
is only a rhetorical artifice, is in Wordsworth the assertion
of what for him is almost literal fact. To him every natural object
seemed to possess more or less of a moral or spiritual life,
to be capable of a companionship with man full of finesse and
expression, of inexplicable affinities and subtle secrets of inter- 20
course. An emanation, a particular spirit, belonged not to the
moving leaves or water only, but to the distant peak arising suddenly
by some change of perspective above the nearer horizon, to the
passing space of light across the plain, to the lichened
Druid stone even, for a certain weird fellowship in it with the 25
moods of men. It was like a “survival” in him of that primitive
condition, which some philosophers have traced in the history
of human culture, in which all outward objects alike, even the
works of men’s hands, were believed to be endowed with life
and animation, and the world was full of souls; that mood in 30
which the old Greek gods were first begotten, and which had
many strange aftergrowths. In the early ages this belief, delightful
as its effects in poetry often are, was but the result of a crude
intelligence. But in Wordsworth this power of seeing life, this
perception of a soul, in inanimate things, came of an exceptional 35
susceptibility to the impressions of eye and ear, and was at
bottom a kind of sensuousness. At least it is only in a temperament
exceptionally susceptible on the sensuous side that this

sense of the expressiveness of outward things comes to be so large a part of life. That he awakened “a sort of thought in sense” is Shelley’s just criticism of this element in Wordsworth’s poetry.

5 And it was through nature thus ennobled by a semblance
of passion and thought that he approached the spectacle of hu-
man life. Human life indeed is, at first, but an additional, acci-
dental grace on this expressive landscape. When he thought of
man, it was of man as in the presence and under the influence
10 of these effective natural objects, and linked to them by many
associations. The close connection of man with natural objects,
the habitual association of his thoughts and feelings with a par-
ticular spot of earth, has sometimes seemed to degrade those
who are subject to its influence, as if it did but reinforce that
15 physical connection of our nature with the actual lime and clay
of the soil, which is always drawing us nearer to our end. But for
Wordsworth these influences tended to the dignity of human
nature, because they tended to tranquillise it. He raises nature
to the level of human thought to give it power and expression;
20 he subdues man to the level of nature, and gives him thereby
a certain breadth and coolness and solemnity. The leech-gath-
erer on the moor, the woman *stepping westward*, are for him
natural objects, almost in the same sense as the aged thorn, or
the lichened rock on the heath.

25 Religious sentiment, consecrating the affections and
regrets of the human heart, above all that pitiful care and awe
for the perishing human clay, of which relic-worship is but the
corruption, has always had much to do with localities, with the
thoughts which attach themselves to actual scenes and places.
30 What is true of it everywhere, is truest of it in those secluded
valleys where one generation after another maintains the same
abiding-place; and it was on this side that Wordsworth seized
religion most strongly. Consisting, as it did so much, in the rec-
ognition of local sanctities, in the habit of connecting the stones
and trees of a particular spot of earth with the great events of
35 life, till the low walls, the green mounds, the half-obliterated
epitaphs seemed full of voices and a sort of natural oracles, the
very religion of these people of the dales seemed but another
link between them and the earth, and was literally a religion

of nature. It tranquillised them by bringing them under the placid rule of traditional and narrowly localised observances. "Grave livers," they seemed to him under this aspect, with stately speech, and something of that natural dignity of manners which underlies the highest courtesy. 5

And seeing man thus as a part of nature, elevated and solemnised in proportion as his daily life and occupations brought him into companionship with permanent natural objects, his very religion forming new links for him with the narrow limits of the valley, the low vaults of his church, the rough stones of his home, made intense for him now with profound sentiment, he was able to appreciate passion in the lowly. He chooses to depict people from humble life, because, being nearer to nature than others, they are on the whole more impassioned, certainly more direct in their expression of passion, than other men; it is for this direct expression of passion that he values their humble words. In much that he said in exaltation of rural life he was but pleading indirectly for that sincerity, that perfect fidelity to one's own inward presentations, to the precise features of the picture within, without which any profound poetry is impossible. It was not for their tameness, but for this passionate sincerity, that he chose incidents and situations from common life, "related in a selection of language really used by men." He constantly endeavours to bring his language near to the real language of men; but it is to the real language of men, not on the dead level of their ordinary intercourse, but in select moments of vivid sensation, when this language is winnowed and ennobled by excitement. There are poets who have chosen rural life for their subject for the sake of its passionless repose, and there are times when Wordsworth extols the mere calm and dispassionate survey of things as the highest aim of poetical culture; but it was not for its passionless calm that he chose the scenes of pastoral life; and the meditative poet, sheltering himself from the agitations of the outward world, is in reality only clearing the scene for the exhibition of emotion, and what he values most is the almost elementary expression of elementary feelings. 35

And so he has much for those who value highly the concentrated expression of passion, who appraise men and women by their susceptibility to it, and art and poetry as they afford the spectacle of it. Breaking from time to time into the
5 pensive spectacle of their daily toil, their occupations near to nature, come the great elementary feelings, lifting and solemnising their language and giving it a natural music. The great, distinguishing passion came to Michael by the sheepfold, to Ruth by the wayside, adding these humble children of the
10 furrow to the true aristocracy of passionate souls. In this respect Wordsworth's work resembles most that of George Sand in those novels which depict country life. With a penetrative pathos, which puts him in the same rank with the masters of the sentiment of pity in literature, with Meinhold and Victor
15 Hugo, he collects all the traces of vivid excitement which were to be found in that pastoral world; the girl who rung her father's knell; the unborn infant feeling about its mother's heart; the instinctive touches of children; the sorrows of the wild creatures even, their home-sickness, their strange yearnings; the
20 tales of passionate regret that hang by a ruined farm-building, a heap of stones, a deserted sheepfold; that wild, gay, false, adventurous outer world, which breaks in from time to time to bewilder and deflower these quiet homes; not "passionate sorrow" only for the overthrow of the soul's beauty, but the loss of
25 or carelessness for personal beauty itself, in those whom men have wronged, their pathetic wanness; the sailor "who, in his heart, was half a shepherd on the stormy seas;" the wild woman teaching her child to pray for her betrayer; incidents like the making of the shepherd's staff, or that of the young boy laying
30 the first stone of the sheepfold;—all the pathetic episodes of their humble existence, their longing, their wonder at fortune, their poor pathetic pleasures, like the pleasures of children, won so hardly in the struggle for bare existence, their yearning towards each other in their darkened houses, or at their early
35 toil. A sort of biblical depth and solemnity hangs over this strange, new, passionate, pastoral world of which he first raised the image, and the reflection of which some of our best modern fiction has caught from him.

He pondered much over the philosophy of his poetry, and reading deeply in the history of his own mind, seems at times to have passed the borders of a world of strange speculations, inconsistent enough, had he cared to note such inconsistencies, with those traditional beliefs, which were otherwise the object of his devout acceptance. Thinking of the high value he set upon customariness, upon all that is habitual, local, rooted in the ground, in matters of religious sentiment, you might sometimes regard him as one tethered down to a world, refined and peaceful indeed, but with no broad outlook, a life protected, but somewhat narrowed, by the influence of received ideas. But he is at times also something very different from this, and something much bolder. A chance expression is overheard and placed in a new connection, the sudden memory of a thing long past occurs to him, a distant object is relieved for a moment by a random gleam of light—accidents turning up for a moment what lies below the surface of our immediate experience—and he passes from the humble graves and lowly arches of “the little rock-like pile” of a Westmoreland church on bold trains of speculative thought, and comes from point to point into strange contact with thoughts which have visited from time to time far bolder and more wandering spirits.

He had pondered deeply, for instance, on those strange reminiscences and forebodings which seem to make our lives stretch before and behind us, beyond where we can see or touch anything, or trace the lines of connection. Following the soul backwards and forwards on these endless ways, his sense of man’s dim, potential powers became a pledge to him, indeed, of a future life; but carried him back also to that mysterious notion of an earlier state of existence, the fancy of the Platonists, the old heresy of Origen. It was in this mood that he conceived those oft-reiterated regrets for a half-ideal childhood, when the relics of Paradise still clung about the soul—a childhood, as it seemed, full of the fruits of old age, lost for all in a degree in the passing away of the youth of the world, lost for each over again in the passing away of actual youth. It is this ideal childhood which he celebrates in his famous “Ode on the Recollections of Childhood,” and some other poems which may be grouped

around it, like the lines on “Tintern Abbey;” and something like what he describes was actually truer of him than he seems to have understood; for his own most delightful poems were really the instinctive productions of earlier life; and most surely
5 for him “the first diviner influence of this world” passed away more and more completely in his contact with experience.

Sometimes, as he dwelt upon those moments of intense imaginative power, in which the outward object seems to take colour and expression, a new nature almost, from the prompt-
10 ing of the observing mind, the actual world seemed to dissolve and detach itself, flake by flake, and he himself seemed to be the creator, and when he would the destroyer, of the world in which he lived;—that old isolating thought of many a brainsick mystic of ancient and modern times.

At other times, again, in those moments of intense suscepti-
15 bility, in which he seemed to himself but the passive recipient of external influences, he was attracted by the thought of a spirit of life in outward things, a single all-pervading mind in them, of which man, and even the poet’s imaginative energy, are but moments,—that old dream of the *anima mundi*, the
20 mother of all things and their grave, in which some had desired to lose themselves, and others had become indifferent to the distinctions of good and evil. It would come sometimes like the sign of the *macrocosm* to Faust in his cell; the network of man
25 and nature was pervaded by a common universal life; a new, bold thought lifted him above the furrow, above the green turf of the Westmoreland churchyard, to a world altogether different in its vagueness and vastness, and the narrow glen was full of the brooding power of a universal life.

And so he has something also for those who feel the
30 fascination of bold speculative ideas, who are really capable of rising upon them to conditions of poetical thought. He uses them, indeed, always with a very subtle feeling for those limits within which alone philosophical imaginings have any place
35 in true poetry, and using them only for poetical purposes, is not too careful even to make them consistent with each other. To him, theories which for other men bring a world of technical diction, brought perfect form and expression, as in those

two lofty books of the *Prelude*, which describe the decay and the restoration of Imagination and Taste. Skirting the borders of this world of bewildering heights and depths, he got but the first exciting influence of it, that joyful enthusiasm which great imaginative theories prompt, when the mind first comes to have an understanding of them; and it is not under the influence of these thoughts that his poetry becomes tedious or loses its blitheness. He keeps them, too, always within certain bounds, so that no word of his could offend the simplest of those simple souls which are always the largest portion of mankind. But it is, nevertheless, the contact of these thoughts, the speculative boldness in them, that constitutes, at least for some minds, the secret attraction of much of his best poetry—the sudden passage from lowly thoughts and places to the majestic forms of philosophical imagination, the play of these thoughts over a world so different, enlarging so strangely the bounds of its humble churchyards, and breaking such a wild light on the graves of christened children.

And these moods always brought with them faultless expression. In regard to expression, as of feeling and thought, the duality of the higher and lower moods was absolute. It belonged to the higher, the imaginative mood, and was the pledge of its reality, to bring the appropriate language with it. In him, when the really poetical motive worked at all, it united with absolute justice the word and the idea, each in the imaginative flame becoming inseparably one with the other, by that fusion of matter and form which is the characteristic of the highest poetical expression. His words are themselves thought and feeling; not eloquent or musical words merely, but that sort of creative language which carries the reality of what it depicts directly to the consciousness.

The music of mere metre plays but a limited, yet a very peculiar and subtly ascertained function in Wordsworth's poetry. With him metre is but an additional, accessory grace on that deeper music of words and sounds, that moving power, which they exercise in the nobler prose no less than in formal poetry. It is a sedative to that excitement, an excitement sometimes almost painful, under which the language of poetry and prose

alike attains a rhythmical power, dependent on some subtle adjustment of the elementary sounds of words themselves to the image or feeling they convey, and independent of their metrical combination. Yet some of his pieces, pieces prompted by a sort
5 of half-playful mysticism, like the "Daffodils" and "The Two April Mornings," are noticeable for a certain quaint gaiety of metre, and rival by their perfect execution in this respect similar pieces among our own Elizabethan or contemporary French poetry. Those who take up these poems after an interval of
10 months, or years perhaps, may be surprised at finding how well old favourites wear, how their strange inventive turns of diction or thought still send through them the old feeling of surprise. Those about Wordsworth were all great lovers of the older English literature, and oftentimes there came out in him a noticeable
15 likeness to our earlier poets; he quotes unconsciously, but with new power of meaning, a clause from one of Shakespeare's sonnets; and, as with some other men's most famous work, the "Ode on the Recollections of Childhood" has its antitype¹. He drew something too from the unconscious mysticism of the
20 old English language itself, drawing out the inward significance of its racy idiom, and the not wholly unconscious poetry of the language used by the simplest people under strong excitement, language therefore at its source.

The office of the poet is not that of the moralist, and the
25 first aim of Wordsworth's poetry is to give the reader a peculiar kind of pleasure. But through his poetry, and through this pleasure in it, he does actually convey to the reader an extraordinary wisdom in the things of practice. One lesson, if men must have lessons, he conveys more clearly than all, the supreme importance of contemplation in the conduct of life.
30

Contemplation, impassioned contemplation,—that is with Wordsworth the end in itself, the perfect end. We see the majority of mankind going most often to definite ends, lower or higher ends as their own instincts may determine; but the end
35 may never come, and the means not be quite the right means,

¹ Henry Vaughan's "Retreat."

great ends and little ones alike being for the most part distant, and the ways to them in this dim world somewhat vague. Meantime, to higher or lower ends, they move too often with something of a sad countenance, with hurried and ignoble gait, becoming unconsciously something like thorns, in their anxiety to bear grapes; it being possible for individuals in the pursuit of even great ends, to become themselves thin and impoverished in spirit and temper, thus diminishing the sum of perfection in the world at its very sources. We understand this when it is a question of mean or of intensely selfish ends, of Grandet or Javert. We think it bad morality to say the end justifies the means, and we know how false to all higher conceptions of the religious life is the type of one who is ready to do evil that good may come. We contrast with such dark, mistaken eagerness, a type like that of Saint Catherine of Siena, who made the means to her ends so attractive, that she has won for herself an undying place in the *House Beautiful*, not by her fairness of soul merely, but by those quite different qualities which commend themselves to the poet and the artist.

Yet for most of us the conception of means and ends covers the whole of life, and is the exclusive type or figure under which we represent our lives to ourselves. Such a figure, reducing all things to machinery, though it has on its side the authority of that old Greek moralist who has fixed for succeeding generations the outline of the theory of right living, is too like a mere picture or description of men's lives as we actually find them to be the basis of the higher ethics. It covers the meanness of men's daily lives, and much of the dexterity and the vigour with which they pursue what may seem to them the good of themselves or of others; but not the intangible perfection of those whose ideal is rather in *being* than in *doing*; not those manners which are in the deepest as in the simplest sense morals, and without which one cannot so much as offer a cup of water to a poor man without offence; not the part of "antique Rachel," sitting in the company of Beatrice; and the higher morality might well endeavour rather to draw men's attention from the conception of means and ends in life altogether.

Against this predominance of machinery in life Wordsworth's poetry, like all great art and poetry, is a continual protest. Justify rather the end by the means, it seems to say; whatever may become of the fruit, make sure of the flowers and
5 the leaves. It was justly said therefore by one who had meditated more profoundly than others on the true relation of means to ends in life, and on the distinction between what is desirable in itself and what is desirable only as machinery, that when the battle which he and his friends were waging had been won,
10 the world would need more than ever those qualities which Wordsworth was keeping alive and nourishing.¹

That the end of life is not action but contemplation, *being* as distinct from *doing*, a certain disposition of the mind, is in some shape or other the principle of all the higher morality. In poetry, in art, if you enter into their true spirit at all, you
15 touch this principle in part; these, by their very sterility, are a type of beholding for the mere joy of beholding. To treat life in the spirit of art, is to make life a thing in which means and ends are identified. This then is the true moral significance of art and
20 poetry. Wordsworth, and other poets who have been like him in ancient or more recent times, are the masters, the experts, in this art of impassioned contemplation. Their work is, not to teach lessons, or enforce rules, or even to stimulate us to noble ends, but to withdraw the thoughts for a little while from the
25 mere machinery of life, to fix them with appropriate emotions on the spectacle of those great facts in man's existence which no machinery affects, "on the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature,"—on "the operations of the elements
30 and the appearances of the visible universe, on storm and sunshine, on the revolutions of the seasons, on cold and heat, on loss of friends and kindred, on injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, on fear and sorrow." To witness this spectacle with appropriate emotions is the aim of all culture; and of
35 these emotions poetry like Wordsworth's is a great feeder and

¹ *Fortnightly Review*, June, 1873. "The Death of Mr. Mill."

stimulant. He sees nature full of sentiment and excitement; he sees men and women as parts of nature, passionate, excited, in strange grouping and connection with the grandeur and beauty of the natural world: images, in his own words, “of man suffering amid awful forms and powers.” 5

Such is the figure of the more powerful and original poet, hidden away in part under those weaker elements in Wordsworth’s poetry which for some minds determine their entire character; a poet somewhat bolder and more passionate than might at first sight be supposed, but not too bold for taste or poetry; an unimpassioned writer, you might sometimes fancy, yet thinking the chief aim, in life and art alike, to be a certain deep emotion; seeking most often the great elementary passions in lowly places; having at least this condition of all impassioned work, that he aims always at an absolute sincerity of feeling and diction, so that he is the true forerunner of the deepest and most passionate poetry of our own day; yet going back also, with something of a protest against the conventional fervour of much of the poetry popular in his own time, to those older English poets, whose unconscious likeness often comes out in him. 10
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20



V.

Imaginary Portrait

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2. An English Poet

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IMAGINARY PORTRAITS

2. AN ENGLISH POET

By WALTER PATER

Edited by May Ottley

When Mr. Pater died, in 1894, there was found among his papers a certain amount of fragmentary work, including a few incomplete chapters of *Gaston de Latour*, what promised to be a characteristically penetrating and illuminating study of Dr. Johnson, and an essay entitled *Imaginary Portraits*, 2. *An English Poet*. All these were written in his own exquisite handwriting in the manner peculiar to him, on quarto-size white or bluish-tinted paper with the carefully spaced lines, the blanks left here and there to be filled in, after laborious thought and search, with two, sometimes even three, possible words, from which, in the end, "le mot juste" was to be chosen: the closely-packed leaves, each one numbered, and so, page after page, finished at last, and tied together finally with a neat scrap of ribbon. From this meticulously careful and uniform method, Mr. Pater never seems to have deviated. It is a witness to the spirit of the artist to whom fidelity in detail meant what it means to the architect, or to the builder of a great ship; an inalienable and essential part of the perfected work. Those who knew Mr. Pater personally, or those who seem to see the reflection of his elusive, austere, high-souled character in what he wrote and the way in which he wrote, must needs be struck by the singular quality of the style and the man—the subtle blending of strength and beauty, of power and delicacy, of restraint and imagination, of the Puritan and the Platonic—which gives him an individual stamp and an individual place among great English prose writers. "He who blows through bronze may breathe through silver."

The title of the essay printed here is significant—*Imaginary Portraits*, Number 2. The first essay to be published under a similar heading was that most perfect autobiographical gem, *The Child in the House*, which appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* in August, 1873. Closely associated with this is *Emerald Uthwazi*, the noble and moving record of those far-off, unforgettable days and experiences of the writer's boyhood under the shadow of the Cathedral at Canterbury. It was written soon after Mr. Pater's last visit to his old school, in the summer of 1871, a visit which revived fading memories, and evoked an

Imaginary Portraits 2. An English Poet (1931)

THE great characteristic of the *Pays de Caux*, the district from which our Norman conquerors mostly came, is the singular arrangement by which each of its farms is isolated from the outer world by a dense enclosure of trees. These square enclosures are dotted all over the high country, otherwise treeless—
5 a broad expanse of corn declining to the edge of the white cliffs. On the sea-side of the enclosure the trees grow leaning from the salt wind—a smooth sloping wall of little rusty knots and twigs, the long bands of grey lichen growing thickly over them and keeping up in winter a faint semblance of foliage. The gate
10 is usually surmounted by a rough pent-house, overgrown with moss and tall house-leeks, and the heavy stone gate-posts will be sometimes quaintly carved. In the space within there is room and to spare for the large straggling barns and the house with its white plastered walls. There is room for a garden also,
15 and a careless orchard, where the blossoms hang almost motionless all their season through, although a strong wind may be abroad without, rocking roughly the bigger trees. The apples will be full of goodly juices, for the salt comes but faintly to them. Here the principle of the *chez-soi* is complete; in winter
20 especially when the snow lies in deep drifts around the place, one has time for fancies, and the English girl, married to the plain young Norman farmer, who found in the furrow one autumn morning a golden Roman coin with a clear high profile on it which looked to her as might an image of immortal youth,
25 is left alone with her day-dreams.

She showed the thing to the Curé, who told her how in the old Pagan times the darkened minds of men had been wont to think much more of the perishable beauty of the body than Christians are allowed to do.
30

And about that time when the little *bath* down below at the mouth of a tiny river, where the great ship came in, level with the rim of the cliffs, was filled with visitors from Paris, a bright figure came one afternoon when there were a thousand
5 dancing shadows on the grass, and leaned upon the gate, a slim figure with delicate hands and golden hair growing crisply half down his forehead, and just such a profile as that on the golden medal. He has too, what the medal has not, colour—white and pale red, and just a touch of amber where the salt air of the
10 channel has taken him. He leaned on the gate and asked her for one of the red apples which were lying in the grass and talked to her and laughed as he pressed his little white teeth through the crisp fruit. His mother is a great lady in Paris; nevertheless he finds it pleasant to talk with the pale English girl at the Norman farm, and he came and leaned on the gate again another
15 afternoon.

Then the charmed, still autumn weather was suddenly broken up with a great rain; the wild Carrara mountains of cloud rose in a long line, passing slowly to the North-East, and
20 all the visitors forsook the *bath* hastily, and went back to Paris.

Then all through that winter her heart was gently aflame, so that she conceived many quaint sentimentalities which to the eye of a poet might have revealed the delicate spirit which lay within her. Coming upon her stillness and isolation, the
25 train of fancies which hung about the golden medal put a strange tincture of refinement upon all her daily habits. She sheltered the budding rose bush in its pot near the chimney corner and began to fancy that such things as flowers really felt neglect even, and pined over their own short lives, and a little
30 heart seemed breaking in each leaf that glided golden from the trees. So the rose bush was blossoming there in the red light on Christmas Day. But as the year's warmth came again and the sun penetrating the trees of the court threw again a legion of little dancing shadows up the white wall of her chamber where
35 she kept the miniature of her dead mother above a posy of wild flowers, corn-cockles and yellow daisies, in a grey jar brought from Rouen fair, the fire in her heart was burning strong and wild and the light fancies were no longer at her will.

The bright figure with the low forehead never came to lean on the gate again, and the next winter she had in all the world nothing but the ashes of her fire, and the medal with the old Pagan face. I seem to see her taking still languidly those little household pleasures possible for those who are really stricken at heart underneath, with an expression I have sometimes seen on the faces of persons of very humble lot looking out on the world with a sort of wistfulness, in half conscious weariness of a life-task below their ideas and longing for a different one they can so easily imagine! yet quiet and modest withal, and faithful in affection to the plain young Frenchman she had married so young and to whose child, a fragile creature, she presently gave what remained of her own life. 5 10

That was the poet's mother. The languid child went early away to be reared in the braver air of its English relations among the stern Cumberland mountains. 15

When the traveller visits some celebrated spot among the mountains, Swiss or English even, to admire the deep lake or the precipice with its rose at twilight, doubly celebrated perhaps just now for the gallant adventure which ended in loss of life there a month before, there is sometimes in his coming thus for mere amusement, did we but truly realise it, a contrast pathetic enough. For in these scenes, however beautiful, there are, over and above, those absolutely suffering, under whose windows we pass so ignorantly, waiting there so longingly for the reliever who comes not, those who in the full possession of their powers are in some sense bondmen there, those for whom the beautiful restful valley is but the barrier which shuts them from a possible happier field they know or dream of for the exercise of gifts felt slumbering within them. The solemn girdle of hills which seem to raise our jaded thoughts to themselves for a moment, does but shut them off from opportunity, from the city, the university, the brave gathering place of art, where the business of the mind is done, and the sacred fire is kept up whence their minds also might take sacred fire. 20 25 30 35

There are a certain number every year who from these deep clefts of human life, prompted by mere commonplace or vulgar needs, break out for their *Wanderjahr*, to try their for-

tunes for better or worse in different places, returning home sometimes at the last, or lost oftener, as a large number of all migratory flocks never return. But one's pity is rather with that smaller number who with fully conscious desire for it never
5 succeed in breaking out on their spiritual *Wanderjahr*. I never visit these places—places which the traveller only visits in summer, shuddering even then sometimes at the real chilliness there, so unproportioned to the shower which caused it—without meeting as I fancy, some of those who have been thus
10 compelled to remain, to become consciously the mere material of a hard mechanical existence unsuited to them, and wonder that this impression does not often repress for people the pleasure of coming thither with a chill greater than that physical one. It is like visiting some place of exile or punishment, so alien
15 yet so intimate, where the sensitive eyes now and then gaze at you as you pass along the graceless street, lingering into it for a few moments out of that forbidden garden where life is gayer, the inhabitants of which are yet so much more numerous than those, say, of Hallstadt, or [] where the children's only treat
20 is to eat sometimes the little white loaves of ordinary people's tables.

At such a place in Cumberland, a little town in one of its sterner districts, there was a boy, who felt, the whole year's experience being reckoned up, little but its physical hardness.
25 He was the child of the consumptive girl who died amid such strange yearnings of heart at that Norman farm. And the rose after sunset, strangers looked up for so enthusiastically to the line of highest rocks above the fells, for him did but leave them more of the colour of ashes than before. The water-fall which
30 chose to plunge down just into the middle of the town where the dwellings lay closest together, clinging grotesquely like pine trees to the steep mountain side, and which was as the chief accent of the place in the visitors' memory, was for the inhabitants useful indeed to grind the corn for their coarse bread, but
35 from the boy's point of view estimable only as for six days out of seven so much roughening of the air which set so sharply along the sunless streets; while he found the lake itself as it was perhaps always, a little wanting in celestial blueness. He felt with

the vicissitudes of the whole year's round of the place upon him, the really dominant note of mere inclemency in a scenery supposed by summer visitors simply grand; and all through one exceptionally fine season which had brought thither more than the usual number of visitors, two things only of it all had 5
coaxed out his capacity for liking—a red honey-suckle over the gateway of the grange, the one more stately habitation in the place, in remarkably free flower this year, and a range of metal screen-work, twisted with fantastic grace into wreaths of flames or flowers, noticed now for the first time, making fine shadows 10
in the pale sunlight on the mellow white-washed wall of the old church as he sat there on Sundays, himself except that thing, the one touch of delicacy in its rudeness, and which seemed to him to hold somehow of that honey-suckle in flower and belong with it to a warmer heaven. 15

The honeysuckle was an exotic from France, the colour of its flower ripening from a peerless white to brown gold, with a whole round of fragrant changes in the spirit of the tiny thing still fragrant in death. And that ancient metal hand-work with its dainty traces of half-vanished gilding, an exotic that too from 20
Augsburg where such metal flowers and flames are plenteous, really was a precious work of art, so that people of taste, though the boy did not know that, came from distant places to inspect it, and the pleasure in him at the fineness of a thing like that which made him think sometimes that *he* would be an artist in 25
metal and be relieved of his dark heat of fancy in metal flower-work, marked already clearly enough his instinctive gift for the recognition of the seal of a master's hand. Afterwards, when he was understood to be a poet, this, a peculiar character as of flowers in metal, was noticed by the curious as a distinction in 30
his verse, such an elastic force in word and phrase, following a tender delicate thought or feeling as the metal followed the curvature of the flower, as seemed to indicate artistic triumph over a material partly resisting, which yet at last took outline from his thought with the firmness of antique forms of mastery. 35

Those two slight things, then, the French honeysuckle and its image in the old German's forge-work, had met half-way a certain graciousness in his nature, the happier complement or

reverse of that peevishness which the reader does not fail to see and may think a mere ague of the mind in him.

And a time came when the sense of certain gracious things not exotic, neglected in that early mountain abode, its
5 morsels of more delicate texture, the native beauty of things that respond happily enough there to that severe northern air, such as the harebell and the heath, came to him freshly as if then first seen, and with a great reaching out of appetite towards them out of a feverish southern land, all the softer
10 elements of that life at the lake side detached themselves from his memory and hung like a mirage over an imagined place he would fain have been in. For there were things, a delicate beauty about the Cumberland farm the boy never looked at; the tender plumage of the water birds' breasts, for instance, against
15 the dark lake as they went in squadron down it, leaving the long curves as if drawn with some fine artist's pen on the still surface at evening. He might have been thawed at least by the scent of the wood-lilies in spring, the scent of the free-flowing winds even at sunset, by the old immemorial poetry of the murmur of
20 innumerable bees. But he valued none of these things.

A dim brooding divination of a great far-off world, the focus of all power and passion, where all precious things might well be plenteous, "the world," as we say, but as divined in ideal
25 mood by the fine unprostituted soul of poetic youth, already possessed him. Those impassable mountains reinforcing the barrier of his birth as he thought, did but stimulate by limitation the imaginative sense of it. Beyond them flowed the tide of real existence, great affairs and great creations. Just so definite and no more was his sense of it! As yet he hardly connected it
30 even with the life of great cities, and what the boy needed was rather fitting stimulus for the senses, some concrete imagery which might fix the wandering vision, that visible garment of which he saw not so much as the hem, means of expression or translation through which that dim brooding infinite sense, im-
35 aginativeness, might take hold, and he be relieved of the stifling weight of it. Only with his peculiar temper, chilled, repressed a little as with partly-suspended animation, it was necessary that

such imagery should be exotic, that it should come with some secret of excitement, stirring him deftly from without.

And so it was only by pity sometimes he could check his distaste for the hard things mostly about him.

And one other object there was which had fixed his wandering gaze with a care for the visible beauty of it, afterwards powerfully superseded by that instinct of pity; the golden heads of two twin creatures almost never apart, in one common life of smiles, at the window in the thatch, on the door-step, under the elder-bushes. But they died early, chilled through by the dripping air of the mountain side, and touched him with a poignant sense of responsibility in love towards the house which became so still as they went to their tiny graves, leaving him alone with the benign, homely, silent woman who had made herself as his mother. That special appreciation of the maternal character which seems to cling to all creatures taken early from the breast, with a sort of unsatisfied yearning all their lives long, expanded in his poetic sense till he recognised its magnetic sweetness even in animal life, with a strange awe, and could fancy on the faces of ruddy school-boys the pressure of their mother's kisses, and between their lips the milk teeth still. A deep sense of warmth and rest at mind in the plain home burnt strong as at a red hearth in him, correcting what there was of selfishness in that longing for an exquisite and refined existence. And that odd yearning for the maternal character was as it were the more spiritual equivalent in this child so early taken from the breast, of the other merely sensuous longing for that warmer soil out of which exotic flowers or flowers of metal would naturally grow.

So it was with some leave takings, and with the sense of something torn within, as the boat drew away from the lakeside, that he departed at last to school. But here, in; the quiet of holiday afternoons, in the westward light of the long windows of the bare whitewashed room or in golden hours next morning of waking before time, a passion for reading came to him; and he found the exotic full-blown at last in books of prose and poetry. A sleepless, ever-shifting curiosity drove him far, hither and thither, to and fro, through the world of imaginative literature or what might stimulate imagination; the scarcely credible

passages of science or travel or old life of kings and courtiers—
often by devious ways and to points of view sometimes far re-
mote from general reading. But a virile critical power summon-
ing successive ideas of these impressions was awake too, and
5 with a canon already very distinctly ascertained, of the meas-
ures and values to him of matters in the literary order. Coming
to literature from so meagre a world, an actual world so meagre
and grey, and depending on it for the satisfaction of his entire
nature, of his very keenly awakened senses along with the rest
10 of it, he must hold as his theory of the valuation of the products
of art, that unless it were in some sort a revelation real as heat
and cold, a discovery of hidden or distant things desirable to
see, it was for him practically nowhere. The good book would
be like an actual place visited, and to which one might return
15 again and again at discretion for the infallible exercise therein
of a special recognised influence, a certain controlling atmos-
phere, always to be experienced there, when one had a will to
turn the key, acting almost independently of effort on one's
own part, and remaining as an objective material fact while the
20 pilgrim shifts to and fro. The shore with its tang of salt air, the
house where you are to hear such or such songs, see such pic-
tures, meet such people, or that great temple to which the sick
came from afar to sleep, sure that a sacred dream would come
to reveal how the sickness might be healed and with no fee due
25 to the priests from the poor boy for letting him lie there; the
genuine literary creations of past time have been not less pal-
pable in influence; and a true education mainly consists in the
well-pondered experience of what we shall find on demand in
these places.

30 A series of such charmed places in literature the boy dis-
covered and mapped out for himself [. . .]

There was this mood which with the desire of literary
form, the ideal of literary life—became a motive high enough
to purge out of an ambitious youth all that was common or un-
clean, and prompted an ideal so high that once to have con-
35 ceived it, “il suffit que la pensée vous en soit venue pour que ma
vie en demeure consolée et charmée.” There was the novelist
with whom one lived in delicately haunted old New England

mansions and Tuscan castles, country houses, yet far above the real America, or Italy, Apennine Tuscany even. There was one master of imaginative prose who might seem to bear on his single shoulders the whole Alpine world with no detail missing from root to crest, another raised a Valhalla of wild romantic architecture in which the heroes of all time sat together at last at their bitter heady wine. There was a poet through whom the expression of being “in the spirit” seemed clearly explained as he bore one deep into the Campagna of Rome or along the tender French coast; another whose English birds’ song was sweet alike over lawn and fen-land; another whose reflections were like lonely chapels piled out of the ruins of holy places older still; another whose sacristy was a rich one—full—like the treasury of St. Mark’s, of golden ornaments and *incense of Palestine*.

But it was not in lively-coloured modern books only that he was exercised; the intellectual hunger drew him freely into older English literature of many periods, and still always with a savour before all things of the style—how things were said—of manner—those elements of taste or of literary production which, because they are so delicately and individually apprehended and are yet so real, resemble physical sensations and may rightly be said to be the matter of a literary sense. Browne, Webster, Chapman he discovered for himself on the neglected bookshelves and made his own anthology from them. For him in these retrospective studies, as in all true appreciation of objects of art, the manner was the matter. What was strange was that, although half of foreign birth, he had come to be so sensitive of the resources of the English language, its rich expressiveness, its variety of cadence (the language of “...”) with all the variety of that soft modulation at which foreigners with an ear wonder and admire. Expression, it may be verbal expression, holds of what may be called the feminine element and tradition in things, and is one of those elemental capacities which the child takes for the most part from its mother.

And such inheritance of an instinctive capacity for utterance he, the boy, had developed among the racy sources of fully male English speech among the Cumberland mountains,

and among people to whom a great English poet attributed a certain natural superiority in the use of words.

And so it happened that while he hardly felt at all the impress of that same rich temperance in English scenery and English character, the English tongue had revealed itself to him as a living spirit of mysterious strength and sweetness and he had elected to be an artist in that. Out of the greyness and austerity of a school in which the senses pined while the fancy declined fondly towards a more exquisite mode of living, the boy required from words, and not in vain, in books, the picture, the tuberoso, the marble face, the fading light on ancient cities, all that was not actually there for ear and eye, above all the genius of refinement; and this not as the new subject of writing, its more obvious and immediate presentations, but by a subtler operation from the style, the ether-like manner of the thing. So written language came to be form and colour as well as sound to him, exotic perfume almost. Having nothing else to live on, he extracted all they could yield from words, and his sense of them came to be curiously cultivated at all points. "Words, words, words!" cries Hamlet, stamping as he thinks all things with the very symbol of nothingness. To this poetic nature, sick like Hamlet, in a world partly "out of joint," words by themselves win not indeed more than daily food, yet sufficient to satisfy the cravings of that appetite in him which lives not by bread alone.

In the acquisition of this imaginative matter, and the cultivation of this delicate verbal cunning, his manner of proceeding was very sober and hard, as of one bent seriously on a task. There was even a kind of intellectual voluptuousness in that straining after means of sensation in books, kept up with so much of unfaltering purpose through so many years of strenuous youth, something of that physical greed you might trace in the extremely full lip and nostril, below the expectant, lifted, ethereal eyes and brow, feeding yet in the early day on the language of books, but expanding perhaps hereafter into quite other forms of appetite. And the manner of this hard firm-set diligence [] was smiled on kindly by a companion, the influence of whose gentle nature was yet towards the correction

of what was hard or selfish in it. This friend was his confidant in many things, above all the boy's poetry. For in himself too gradually out of intent pondering over the work of others, the power of choice utterance was felt coming; and in those scraps of writing which the boyish poet shaped so well, so nearly perfectly, the friend found in turn the excitement, the stimulus, the fining influence of flight into new dainty places which the young poet had experienced in books. 5

For the strange boy himself there was a curious sense of relief in seeing thought or fancy, housed at last in the fragment of writing compressed, truly by many shapings, to some delightful inward pattern or ideal, which yet had weighed on him like a burden; for if your words regarding it are to be fragrant, he would say, you must have been for a time in slavish possession of the flower. It was a great pleasure, however pallid and intellectual, to have the literary morsel lying among the books, though for the eyes of one reader only, like a woman's ornament or a child's toy or a sea-shell lying safe in the casket. And what was noticeable in the work was still what is rarest in the work of voluble younger poets, a certain hardness like that of a gem or cameo, and as it were a sharp keeping of the thing in hand. It was like a portraiture outlined in severe relief, though in itself a wonderful fancy work in a manner, somehow not altogether unlike that of the metal honeysuckle. 10 15 20

For that power of the metal-worker was still guiding his hand, its effect seen at first in a mere word or phrase, as it might be one day in ode or epic and always as with the seal of a master's triumph over matter, agate or steel, which having resisted somewhat on the way and then finally shaped, his thought might well retain its impress forever. 25 30

And his capacity, in nowise dwindling hitherto, though in so meagre a soil, suddenly found its opportunity—a fortunate circumstance, while it deferred the more material cares of life, enabled him still in earliest manhood to depart southwards, and visit, at his own humour, those foreign lands, so much longed after, in the company of his chosen friend. It was like coming after years of enforced severity in youth into a great inheritance. That intellectual life within life which had involved 35

for him, so far, a certain bitter self-reliance and a somewhat sad sort of walking by faith, enlarged now rapidly to something ripe and full, like the sudden enrichment of the youthful body itself in its propitious year. It is in this, so poetical a situation, as he
5 tarries awhile for the coming of his friend at a place where he sees the sea for the first time, that the reader is to contemplate him.

He is on the coast of France, not far from the old Norman farm, which however he does not visit as it has passed into the hands of strangers, his father also having died in one of
10 those years which already seem distant, leaving him a small inheritance. The coming even so far southwards from the narrow Cumberland valley he felt like a removal in the abstract from North to South. The sparkling light and lovely colours here in the brilliant air blent themselves to a unity very soothing to
15 one's animal spirits. The merely physical exhilaration which came with those smooth winds from the sea, the over-wrought sensibility with which he seemed to appreciate the material elements as it were of their balm and salt, coaxing him into a sort of renewed life, might, perhaps, to an experienced eye, have
20 been the sign of the action already within him of that strange malady which holds so closely of the too-clinging humours of our English climate, which is also, in part, a matter of inheritance, and was established in him by that long tension of spirit to which the distinction of his intellectual quality was due. But
25 so it was that above all intellectual or poetic enjoyment of the novelties around him there preponderated a wholly physical satisfaction in the quickening impulse of the air, the breath of the sea and sand, weeds in blossom or turning to decay. And as he waited for his friend that they might start on their wanderings together, not unwilling to linger a little among the voices
30 of the toy-like French children at play, all Europe in its priceless art and choicer scenery crowded together, seemed to hang just beyond the horizon in his fancy, like some precious stone, with soft shiftings and variations.

35 That place with its vast grey, yellow-lichened Norman church, lay amidst the sand dunes grown richly about with wild marigold and yellow horned poppies at the mouth of a river which came down from the tranquil French cornfields, with a

sudden breadth and openness towards the sea in the last few miles of its course. And the boy savoured profoundly all the poetry, the quickening influence for the fancy, of the tidal character of this river, the strong pulse of the invisible sea rising so subtly along its windings, till the blue water far inland almost touched the corn; of the gradual change to a sort of greatness in its character as it came nearer to the coast, dropping one by one all its inland marks till the sheep on the marshy flats and open spaces beside it, must feed on the bitter wild lavender and you might mark the last pale dwarf-rose tree beside the disused boat a-shore.

Then the weird, weather-bleached signals to guide the sailors among the quicksands at the river's mouth became visible; and still through all flowed down the bold current of sweet spring-water distinguishable still by its colour till it rolled under the line of white foam, between the white lighthouses, of the harbour. The long black and white jetties, printed clearly on the warm background of sky and sand between which the river flows out through the sea-gates [] give one a dry walk far along the sands stretching away on three sides of one, of a warm yellow colour, variegated by numberless small pools and rilletts of blue water, between which the white sea-gulls are running quickly backwards and forwards.

The traces of dark masts seemed almost at rest in the quiet space of sea beyond, you could count the little steeped towns above the white breakers on successive headlands. A group of fishermen in coats of the same soft yellow as the sand start up from the bed of sea-grass where they have been lying at watch, and draw their boat down towards the water along a deeper channel just filled by the returning tide. Perhaps no phase of coast scenery brings the sentiment of the strange life of the sea more intimately home to one than those parts of the coast where at low water the tide falls far away, leaving many miles of sand, dropping out of sight almost, till the hour when laden with new salts and new odours it floods the foundations of the town. How hard when all is at the flood to think of the far-off whisper across the sand! [.] The variety and expansiveness of the peculiar scene witnessed thus for the first time

in mature manhood seemed to unseal his sense of the actual life of men as passionate or graceful. Fancies, divinations of a real experience as a thing that might be refulgent with ideal light and satisfy a poetic soul, germinating rapidly in him a warmth, 5 a *souffle*, almost like love towards the friend who was coming, came to him, as the strong air from the waves and the scent of the beanfield met about him [...]



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