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SELECTIONS FROM THE ÆSTHETES

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THE
RELIGION OF BEAUTY

SELECTIONS FROM THE ÆSTHETES

With an Introduction

by

RICHARD ALDINGTON



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* Believed to be "Michael Field."

† Pseudonym of Katherine Harris Bradley (1846-1914) and Edith Emma Cooper, (1862-1913).

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INTRODUCTION

I

THE following selection of poetry and prose grew almost by accident out of unutilised reading and notes made in preparing selections from Wilde and Pater and, at an earlier date, an attempt at the English Anthology. In thinking over the problems of selecting from the corpus of poetry in English, I came more and more to believe that some admirable previous attempts lost impetus by trying to include too many worthy minor poets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the age of exuberance, between 1580 and 1650, there was such vitality in verse that the anthologist can afford to welcome many minor poets, especially since the passage of three centuries has done its work of winnowing. The minor poets of the eighteenth century are often so conventional, so pedestrian, so unpoetic that it is only rarely one even wants to include a specimen.

This is not true of the nineteenth century, which opened with a number of first-rate poets and produced an astonishing number of lesser poets. True, in the first half or even two-thirds of the century these minor poets were apt to be anecdotal, domestic, tearfully religious, hortatory, sentimental, and therefore not attractive to readers of to-day. On the other hand, in the last third of the century there flourished a number of poets with a more attractive outlook, most of whom were ignored by the philistinism of their own day, and who certainly cannot be much read to-day since they are almost all out of print. Some of these formed a considerable part of what must be called the *Æsthetic Movement*; others passed through the *Æsthetic phase*; and most were to some extent influenced by *Æstheticism*.

Some of these poems were preserved by anthologists. The Oxford Book had a few. A larger and better selection (which ought not to be out of print) is to be found in *An Anthology of 'Nineties' Verse* of the late A. J. A. Symons, who quite rightly included such poets as John Addington Symonds and Eugene Lee-Hamilton, belonging to a generation before that of the Rhymers Club. Without meaning to be censorious I must say that in many other anthologies the same poems recur, simply because they are accessible only in earlier anthologies, the books themselves being so rare. I have volumes of verse (and

some of prose) which seem never to have been reprinted, the single editions of which were limited to 450, 400, even 150, ironically labelled "for England *and* the United States". What an appetite for new poetry the æsthetic age must have had.

These truths may cause the reader to halt and ask himself: "If so many of these poems fell 'still-born from the press' some fifty to seventy years ago, and at best have survived as fragments in corners of anthologies, what on earth is the good of trying to revive them?" The point, which readers are bound to make, is a pertinent one, and I must try not to shirk it. The whole question of minor poetry becomes involved, both contemporary and of the past. John Addington Symonds—who appears in this collection both as poet and as prose-writer—had an unhappy faculty for tormenting himself about many problems, and did not fail to worry about this one. By nature, and still more by the contagion of Oxford culture, he was a poet, but his critical sense, sharpened by acute self-consciousness, made him uneasily suspicious that he was not a great poet and not even a very good minor poet. In the late sixties, Symonds had been reading some of the voluminous work of his friend, Roden Noel, and thus reflected:

"Is it worth while spending time on writing verses which, with all their thought, feeling, and occasional gorgeousness of colour, are not first rate? Would it not be better to enjoy and do daily work? . . . None but the peaks of Parnassus ought to be trodden while we have the Greeks and Virgil and the Italians and Goethe and Schiller and our own five or six great ones. Tennyson and Browning get near the peaks. But for the crowd, developed or undeveloped into vocalism, what *raison d'être* is there?" (*Letters and Papers of J. A. Symonds*. John Murray. 1923.)

Well, there is one point of view, expressed fairly enough if with a certain amount of morbid self-probing: i.e. if a poet does not think that he is writing as well as the finest minds of the last three thousand years, he ought not to write at all. But this begs the question of who is to say where supreme merit lies, and seems to put an unnatural premium on such conceit and self-mistaking as afflicted the unfortunate painter, Haydon. When Shakespeare—to take the most obvious case—was at the beginning or even in the heyday of his career, who thought of him as among the greatest of post-classical poets? The university wits sneered at him, his most enthusiastic defenders were the unlettered actors whose pockets he filled; and only

after his death appeared such effusive panegyrics as those of Ben Jonson, William Basse and Milton, which—most people probably would agree—were rather poetic exercises in the Renaissance manner than expressions of genuine critical convictions. Thus, if a contemporary poet in a mood of serious self-examination comes to the conclusion that his work is not quite as good as Catullus's, he will have a ninety-nine point nine per cent chance of being right, but can always comfort himself with the fractional doubt.

Symonds's remarks might also be held to imply that as readers we ought not to meddle with minor poets until we have thoroughly absorbed the masters of European poetry from Homer to, let us say, Wordsworth. No doubt there is something in this, but it is a tall order for anyone who is not a professional scholar, and quite impossible for the average man and woman trying to earn a living in our somewhat baffling modern Utopias. An Oxford First with a large and virtually untaxed private income (which was the enviable status of J. A. Symonds) might afford such luxuries, but we who are less fortunate may not unreasonably claim the right to converse occasionally with minds more on our own level.

An entirely opposite point of view is sometimes recorded by writers for the less expensive periodicals of to-day. If they are sincere—and they have every reason to be—the inexorable standards of excellence implicit in the work of the poetic artists in the European tradition are "Unfair to Living Poets", as an American strike-picket's placard might phrase it. According to this view, all the poets of the past are "extinct" and their work if not actually destroyed should at any rate be neglected. The only poets the public should be allowed to read are the "untried" ones of the day. Who will not sympathise? *Pereant qui nostra . . . !* is a cry which has echoed through the ages, and who knows whether the burning of the great library at Alexandria may not have been the work of discontented Moderns? The theory that all art is tending to the condition of journalism is only too consonant with the spirit of the age. Yet, as readers, we may perhaps protest against the austerity of such poetic rationing.

Yet another view, of a more mystical sort, on this topic of ancient versus modern poetry has been expressed by another critic. It is, briefly, that only the writings of contemporary poets "keep alive" the poetry of the past. This is a mystery I do

not feel capable of discussing, yet the thought that "we Moderns" are "keeping alive" Shakespeare, Lucretius and Euripides must cause a few chuckles, I should think, even in bleak and frustrated times.

All these arguments and points of view tend to be abstract and unconvincing. Luckily, I can put before the reader a little concrete evidence that the reading public both in England and America during the 1880s and 1890s were perfectly ready to take selections of these poets in large numbers, provided (1) That they were sponsored by someone in whose taste the public had confidence, and (2) That they were issued at a price so low that the poets could not possibly be paid anything. Take, for example, William Sharp's *Sonnets of This Century*, i.e. the nineteenth. True, the book contained work from the earlier part of the period, but I should say that quite half of it was supplied by æsthetic poets. Two-hundred and seventy sonnets were sold for the sum of one shilling, or rather more than twenty-two for a penny; and the book sold at least thirty thousand copies.

In America the English æsthetic poets were made available (in tasteful little books) by the public-spirited action of the late Thomas B. Mosher of Portland, Maine, who took advantage of the American copyright law to reprint any contemporary English poet who was unprotected and who happened to take Mr. Mosher's fancy. It was thus possible for him to issue quite extensive selections of these poets at prices within reach of the public purse, and not at the fantastic sum of three-and-sixpence at which the original books were issued, or even a dollar in the very rare cases where the poet was famous enough to be printed and published in America within the statutory time limit for copyright.

These facts were some reassurance, at least on the squalid level of sales—which, however, it would be unwise to disregard entirely. On a somewhat higher level, the conviction grew upon me as I collected and read these poets that they ought not to be separated from the Æsthetic Movement in general. The æsthètes have been ignored or jeered at for so long that to read and defend these elegant outcasts became almost obligatory, and was at all events a defiance of critical tyranny. To rally round Wilde and Pater was in consequence not only a pleasure but a duty. There seemed no good reason for omitting the prose of the æsthètes from the present book,

since in some cases it equalled and in others outshone their verse. Having conceded this point of agreeing to a miscellany, it was surely natural to think of *The Yellow Book* as one's model, with a free and easy mingling of verse and prose instead of a segregation on more academic lines.

Though the idea of a potpourri of æsthetes may not be unacceptable to the reader, the somewhat arbitrary limits of the collection—Ruskin to Rachel Annand Taylor—will perhaps prove a little harder to justify. Naturally I should disregard any enquiries of an insidious nature, such as: "What *precisely* do you mean by an Æsthete?", for the whole point of this desultory little campaign is that art is to be enjoyed, not dissected; but some attempt at an explanation of what has been done here seems called for.

Setting a terminal date for æstheticism is much easier than trying to fix its beginning. Æstheticism ceased to be a fashionable fad with the trial and condemnation of Oscar Wilde in 1896. The Boer War (1899–1902) put an end to it as a style among writers and artists, and it lingered into the first decade of this century only among provincials and a few resolute die-hards. I speak of the new writers and artists—those already formed either stayed as they were or (like Yeats, for instance) tried gradually and cautiously to adapt themselves to changed tastes. Yeats succeeded where others failed; yet in his early work one finds a spontaneous charm and loveliness not present in the more pondered intellectualist work of his later years.

The most courageous and gifted of the "die-hards" was Rachel Annand Taylor, who did not begin to publish until 1904; and consequently her books were received largely with indifference and even with hostility. In saying this I am thinking of her poetry. Her *Leonardo the Florentine* has been—and still is—widely read in the United States, but is out of print in England. It happens in these art movements or styles that just as they are ending someone comes along who concentrates and summarises what many predecessors have separately achieved. Everybody knows how the early Milton did this for English Renaissance poetry. In *Leonardo the Florentine* Mrs. Taylor concentrated what Pater, Symonds and Wilde had said about the Renaissance, and did it better, with wider knowledge and more sensitive judgment. *Leonardo the Florentine* is a *tour de force*, if you like; but it is very much more than that. To sustain that eloquent, coloured, sensitive prose without

flagging through so long a book and over so many topics was an extraordinary technical accomplishment. But, in addition, Mrs. Taylor gave—and gave lavishly—a vividly imaginative interpretation and recreation of the picturesque past. That is what the æsthetic critics-as-artists were trying to do for more than half a century; and she did it better than any of them.

The achievements of Mrs. Taylor as poet are more likely to be disputed, since the qualities of her poetry are precisely those which are least in the intellectual fashion of the day. Oscar Wilde was fond of applying to himself Keats's words about poets, who should be:

“Misers of sound and syllable, no less
Than Midas of his coinage.”

Mrs. Taylor has more right to it, though she is far indeed from being a miser of beautiful words. With a vocabulary as rich as Francis Thompson's, though less archaistic, Seicento and self-conscious, she is as much a master of the sonnet form as Rossetti. Indeed, to be perfectly truthful, I prefer her Fiametta sonnets to most of those in *The House of Life*, though possibly Rossetti's greater prestige will prevent others from making the acknowledgment. Behind these ornate and jewelled poems we perceive a delicate and sensitive spirit which has suffered intolerable pain and disappointment but has also known extraordinary pleasures and ecstasies. Rightly she spoke of herself as one of those women “equally inimical and heretical to the opposing camps of hausfrau and of suffragist”. While, therefore, there is an element of the arbitrary in ending with this artist—and in strict chronology there may be one or two examples here later in time—still her work does mark the end of the Æsthetic Movement, after which Wardour Street was deserted for Bloomsbury, the æsthete became the high-brow, the Lover-of-Beauty was replaced by the intellectual exhibitionist.

Ruskin is far from being the earliest of English æsthetes. To go back no further in history than the sixteenth century, we might justly say that Lyly was an æsthete with his “Euphues”, whose “delicate fopperies of speech” won at least qualified approval from Pater. John Evelyn in the seventeenth century, at least during his Italian journey, was an æsthete. Read, for instance, his description of the Villa Borghese “on Mons Pincius”, with his enthusiastic admiration for “this Elysium of

delight", its groves and gardens and fountains, its "volary" and "vivarium", and its walls "covered with antique incrustations of history"—all of which and much more in the same tone were silently appropriated by John Shorthouse for his æsthetic-religious novel, *John Inglesant*, which was such a success in the 1880s.

Even more to the point is the eighteenth-century example of Thomas Gray, who, in so many of his tastes and sensibilities, was a pioneer for the English æsthete of the next century, and who anticipated Goethe and even Rousseau. Gray's æsthetic discoveries include the landscapes of the Alps and of Italy, the Grande Chartreuse of Savoy, the English lakes, Italian music, Provençal poetry, the northern Sagas, poetic natural history, and even the novels of Marivaux. It was Gray who initiated Walpole into the poetry of ruins and of Roman Catholic ritual in ancient cathedrals. But Gray was so remote from his contemporaries that for most of his life he had not a soul to understand and sympathise with him. His clutching at Bonstetten in his later years is poignant evidence of Gray's loneliness. Discouragement and indolence constantly thwarted him; and posterity was left to discover his æsthetic interests from letters and fragmentary notes, while Goethe assumed the foremost place as the exponent of self-culture as a way of life. The frustration and personal unhappiness of Gray only too significantly foreshadowed similar sufferings for his successors in the next century.

With that century "influences" and "predecessors" became so numerous and complex that attempts to disentangle them would be tedious to the reader, and enumeration become a catalogue. Indisputably the most potent single influence on the English æsthete was that of the Romantic poets from Blake to Keats. It is touching to read how for many people at the time the light of the world seemed quenched when Byron died. True, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Landor and Southey still lived, but their inner fires were dying down—in Southey's case had they ever burned at all?—while Byron's flared to the end. Poetry is the one English art, and its dominating influence goes far towards explaining the "literary" nature of the fine arts during the æsthetic period. Much also must be attributed to the revelation of Continental towns and their art after the long island imprisonment of the Napoleonic wars. Something—perhaps much—should also be attributed to the development of

sensibility—an indefinable growth of refinement among so much that was coarse, vulgar and even brutal.

Signs of this may be noticed everywhere, struggling out from the enormous dullness of the surrounding philistinism. You can see it in the lives of the dandies, a living protest against the respectable bores. It crops up unexpectedly in the diaries of Peninsular War officers, who in the midst of their campaigns often make appreciative remarks on the picturesque and romantic aspects of Spain and Portugal. It showed itself still more obviously in the religious movements, puritanically with Wesleyanism and Evangelicism, and, much more to our purpose, with the ritualistic Tractarians of Oxford. Nobody can fail to notice how closely the æsthetes were connected with Oxford or how many of them (including Ruskin, Morris, Burne-Jones, Pater and many minor figures) had originally intended to take Holy Orders. Even Rossetti was so far influenced that the Dante in his "Dante Drawing an Angel" (1857) is an ascetic and intellectual young curate somewhat astonished to find himself transported to the Lung' Arno.

Addington Symonds was influenced by ritualism as a school-boy at Harrow, and in his candid way has left some amusing notes on his own antics and those of undergraduates at Oxford. At Harrow Symonds and his friend Bosanquet followed a Ritualist friend "to compline" and:

"... donned surplices and tossed censers, arrayed altars in our studies, spent spare cash on bits of execrable painted glass to dull our dingy windows, and illuminated crucifixes with gold dust and vermillion."

This must have been about 1855-56. Writing from Oxford on 3rd June, 1860, to his sister Charlotte, Symonds gives a more satirical sketch of "a very High Church acquaintance of mine, who came in redolent of incense":

"He had been to a friend's rooms, who is of the same persuasion, and found him at service. 'Accordingly,' said he, 'I vested myself in my sky-blue cassock, then I put on a white chasuble with gold border, after that the stole and maniple; and lastly the biretta. Thus attired, we went through the service.'"

This young man informed Symonds that he possessed "a triptych with ruby-glass doors, containing an ivory crucifix on an ebony stand"; that he paid seven shillings a pound for his incense, and had given money for a Welsh choir to be "clothed with due vestments".

One would need to be morose indeed not to laugh at that pompous young man; but in his defence we must remember the drabness of middle-class life, the spreading blight of industrial ugliness and squalor, against which this sort of thing was a natural if foolish protest. To condemn it wholesale as "escapism" is to miss the point. Of course it is "escapism", but that only means that all people have feelings and senses and aspirations which must struggle for some kind of expression and satisfaction. The ridiculous young man in his sky-blue cassock is less to be condemned than the people who had left him no other outlet for the æsthetic instincts normal to every child and young person. Some such frustrated yearning existed in many of the middle classes, who at that time had so rapidly acquired and were continuing to acquire political power and wealth they hardly knew how to use. But before they could accept the "religion of art", which so naturally followed art as part of religion, they had to be assured and reassured as to its moral respectability. The person who accomplished this task, with the fervour and energy and some of the methods of a revivalist, was of course John Ruskin.

Before going into the curious case of John Ruskin, I should like just to mention two unintentional predecessors of the æsthetes. One of these was Disraeli, who experimented in many forms of self-expression in his young days, and who, in the period of *Alroy*, *Contarini Fleming* and *Venetia*, was an æsthete of a flamboyant and bumptious kind as well as a would-be dandy who reminded unsympathetic onlookers of Mr. Mantalini. Late in life, during his melancholy last premiership, Disraeli revived the memories of those days and of his travels in Italy with the volumes of Symonds's *Renaissance*. After due praise Disraeli noted that the work's great defect was that it "lacked style". The truth of this cannot be denied; and it is all the more convincing because so much truer of Disraeli's own writings.

Lack of style cannot be charged against the second of these figures, George IV. He is the only English prince since Charles I who combined a genuine love of the arts with independent taste and the courage to spend money royally. As a result of political hatreds, often enough combined with a hearty loathing for the arts, the Regent was systematically vilified for a century. Recent writers have shown how considerable were his services to art. The extent of this influence and its value

must remain uncertain, but it was upon the whole used to create respect for the arts and for artists in a nation where so many sections of society were indifferent or hostile.

Curiously enough, George IV was indirectly responsible for the fortune that made Ruskin's career possible. It was the Regent's taste for sherry which set the fashion for that wine among the wealthy classes, and made the fortunes of the wine-merchants Ruskin, Telford, Doumecq and Co. John Ruskin inscribed on his father's grave-stone the statement that he was "an entirely honest merchant"; as well he might be, with a business depending wholly on quality, but otherwise so neat, so easy, so simple and so prosperous that Mr. John James Ruskin, after starting life as a penniless Scot, was able to live a very comfortable life and bequeath his son a hundred and fifty thousand gold pounds.

John Ruskin was a man of remarkable sensibility, of very high character, of the best intentions, with an intense love of Nature in many moods and aspects, a poetical temperament, a real appreciation of some types of literature, an essentially religious outlook on life, and an incoherent, capricious taste for the fine arts. He should have written enthusiastic travel books, gorgeous with purple patches, for Turner and Stanfield, or in later life the Pre-Raphaelites, to illustrate. Unfortunately, his home training, the ambitions of his parents and a liberal dose of Scotch conceit caused much misdirection of his energies and abilities.

We have to remember that Ruskin was essentially a failure; and that the great success he had was not of the kind hoped for either by his family or by himself. His bigotedly religious mother wanted him to be a clergyman, and his tender-hearted father used to say with tears in his eyes: "What a bishop John would have made!" John did not choose even to take Holy Orders, but this flattering opinion of his potential episcopal glory did nothing towards making him diffident. But if he disappointed his parents' ambitions, he also failed in his own. He wanted intensely to be a poet from his very early years, published assiduously in magazines, and even allowed the publication of a two-volume edition of juvenile poems which critics and public alike have forgotten. He also wanted to be a painter, and at one time imagined that he was as good as the President of the Water-Colour Society. He had scientific interests, but failed to achieve any acknowledgment from

scientists. What then was left for him but to become a critic and teacher? Unluckily his mind was disorderly and impulsive, his manner dictatorial, and still more unfortunately he fell under the influence of Thomas Carlyle, who despised his art interests, discouraged his good qualities and stimulated his faults. It is strange to think that Ruskin, in whom æsthetic feelings were genuine, chose as his mentor a bilious Scotchman, whose heroes were such grim curmudgeons as Oliver Cromwell and Frederick of Prussia, who habitually dismissed the fine arts contemptuously as "upholstery", and who described Lord Houghton's *Life of Keats* as "fricassée of dead dog" and Omar Khayyám as an "old Mahommedan blackguard". Carlyle was that modest student who, brooding over sleeping London, remarked kindly: "Two million people, most of them fools."

Just how did Ruskin harmonise that with the world of Fra Angelico, the rugged Calvinism of his Scotch forebears with the world of Titian and Veronese, the Vision of Dante with the reality of Denmark Hill? The fact is that he never did harmonise them, and the apparently rigid method—ostentatiously displayed—of even his first great prose work, the two opening volumes of *Modern Painters*, is delusive. (The title itself is a misnomer; it should have been: *Dogmatic and Discursive Notes on Turner, Nature, Miscellaneous Old Masters and Minor British Painters*.) Ruskin's interests dwelt uneasily and inharmoniously in his more and more tormented and muddled mind, unco-ordinated, mis-directed, an enormous mental chaos of the Bible, Scott, Byron, Turner, Geology, the English lake scenery, Rouen, Abbeville, Pisa, Venice, the Alps, Giotto, Carlyle, Clouds, Water, Rocks, Pre-Raphaelites, Titian, Tintoretto, Giorgione, Chamounix, Homer, Illuminated Missals, Sherry, Botany, Rome, Domestic Servants, Gentians, Edinburgh Castle, Gothic Architecture, Political Economy, the animals of Scripture, Symbolism, Silkworms, Soil Erosion, Trees, Strikes, Railways, the Val d'Arno, Field Sports, Drunkenness, Female Modesty, Road-Making, Giovanni Bellini, Charles Dickens, the Italian Question, Amiens Cathedral, Kate Greenaway, Dante, the Formation of Glaciers.

This vast farrago seldom seemed to reach any kind of order or to serve any rational purpose. There is nothing wrong in having so many interests. On the contrary. The most brilliant intellectual of his time, Aldous Huxley, has a far wider range of

interests and of curious information, but invariably has it all under control, uses it intelligently, and strikes out the most amusing and fascinating thoughts by an apt bringing together of apparently unrelated facts of life and culture. Ruskin in spite of his gifts of eloquence and appreciation failed to do this, just as he failed in his personal and private life. It is surely significant that all three of the women in whom he was deeply interested at different stages of his life, including the one who married him, all found cogent though different reasons for soon getting rid of him.

Such was the man who appointed himself Preacher on Art to the British Public and was later appointed by the University of Oxford to be the first Slade Professor of Fine Art.

Among the less cultured elements of the time there was a deeply-rooted belief that artists and all who were attached to the arts and believed them to be important were mad. By a strange and triumphant coincidence, the first Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford was mad, or became so shortly after his appointment in 1869. As early as August, 1871, Ruskin showed himself so much the victim of hallucinations as to believe in his "plague-cloud of the nineteenth century", with its "strange, bitter, blighting wind", its "dry black veil" of cloud and "fitful shaking" of leaves, which he attributed to "dead men's souls, flitting hither and thither". In November, 1874, he printed the astonishing confession:

"I am always wanting to be something else than I am. I want to be Turner; I want to be Gainsborough; I want to be Samuel Prout; I want to be the Doge of Venice; I want to be Pope; I want to be Lord of the Sun and Moon. The other day, when I read that story in the papers about the dog-fight, I wanted to be able to fight a bull-dog." (*Fors Clavigera*, Letter 48.)

Nobody seemed to have noticed that this sort of thing was a serious symptom, though some of the more astute Oxonians do seem to have remonstrated with the professor, on the ground that this was not the way to awaken love and reverence for the Fine Arts in a brutal and licentious public. But the professor was not to be moved by any such representations, for he, poor man, was flickering deeper into insanity. By the time (1877) that he was publishing a singularly inadequate book on Venice, entitled *St. Mark's Rest*, the Oxford professor was addressing his fellow-countrymen in England as follows:

"VIVA SAN MARCO.

"You wretched little cast-iron gaspipe of a cockney that you are, who insist that your soul's your own, as if anybody else would ever care to have it! is there yet life enough in the molecules, and plasm, and general mess of the making of you, to feel for an instant what that cry once meant, upon the lips of men?"

I wish Prophet John had told us and that I could pass on the information, but alas! the question is rhetorical. John evidently didn't think we could "feel for an instant" what it meant, and diverges from the painful thought by way of Hebrew, Greek and Latin inscriptions to a "bas-relief of the twelve sheep and little caprioling lamb".

At this point the question may well be asked: "In view of all this how is it possible to believe that Ruskin had so great an influence?" It must be pointed out that this influence was probably strongest in the fifties and sixties, while the above quotations are from the period of decline during the seventies. Ruskin's faults as a writer unfortunately grew upon him with time, in spite of the fact that his autobiography (*Præterita*, 1885-89) is probably his finest piece of prose. But in the early work which made his reputation and established his influence, much that we should now consider a mistake or even absurd in an art critic was of great service.

Ruskin's main audience came chiefly from the newly emancipated and enriched children of the trading and industrial classes. They were glad to be rich, but the more sensitive among them shrank from the ugliness and squalor which industry has not yet succeeded in avoiding. In their puritan tradition "Art" was suspect as a snare of the Evil One and a symptom of "decadent Romanism". For people accustomed to take their intellectual sustenance in the form of sermons, it was reassuring to be lectured about art in the dogmatic tones of a hectoring preacher. Ruskin preached æsthetic—and later, economic—sermons on the "Book of Nature" and the "Book of Art" as clergymen preached on the "Book of Kings" or the "Book of Daniel". His immense farrago of relevant and irrelevant information exactly filled up that blankness of mind which is apt to afflict the uninitiated when suddenly confronted with, say, Giotto's wall paintings or Lombard Romanesque architecture.

In his first books Ruskin told this guileless public many things they would never have discovered for themselves but

which they were very glad to hear, since this quieted their consciences. The best art, Ruskin told them, was the most moral art, and naturally the most moral art was Christian art. Pre-Christian art was inferior artistically as well as morally (though even here he was inconsistent on occasions) and the "pagan" Renaissance was an abomination. The highest art consisted in knowing as much about mineralogy, rock formation, mountains, botany, cloud formation and so forth as John Ruskin knew, and then copying these features in "Nature" with the utmost fidelity. The Israelities, for some inscrutable reason, had never been inspired to paint landscapes or to study Alpine scenery. That had been wisely reserved for one of God's Englishmen, J. M. W. Turner. There were practically no nudes in Turner's work—at least in those he publicly exhibited.

According to Monsieur Jacques Bardoux, the French author of a sympathetic study of Ruskin, England in 1841 had nineteen Art Schools with 3,000 students, and in 1856 sixty schools with 42,400 pupils. He takes these figures from one of Ruskin's Cambridge lectures, so they are subject to the doubt attaching to all Ruskinesque statistics; and there is no way of proving or disproving M. Bardoux's contention that this extraordinary increase was due entirely to Ruskin's "campagne acharnée". It may be so, but a far more conclusive example of his influence occurred when he intervened on behalf of the then new Pre-Raphaelite painters.

The story has been often told, and all that is necessary to recall here is that Madox Brown, Holman Hunt, Rossetti, Millais and others had to endure violent abuse from the newspaper hacks when they began exhibiting and (rather unwisely) allowed it to be known that they called themselves the P.R.B. *The Times*, for example, said it would "extend no toleration to a mere senile imitation of the cramped style, false perspective, and crude colour of remote antiquity", adding that "it wanted not . . . faces bloated into apoplexy or extenuated to skeletons . . . morbid infatuation . . . mere eccentricity". (Pretty good, that, as an accurate report on Millais and Hunt, the two painters under review.) Then, on May 13th, 1851, Ruskin charged thunderously to the rescue with one of his knock-me-down letters to the editor, under which and its successors *The Times* cringed warily and permitted the P.R.B. to live. Yet it seems clear that without

Ruskin's help the P.R.B. would have been extinguished. How much of a service to art this was must be decided by the reader's prejudices in painting; but was it not true that the P.R.B. was about the best England had to show at the time? It is also worth noting that Ruskin came first to the defence of Hunt and Millais, not of Rossetti and Brown. Only when assured that their tendencies were not "Romanist and Tractarian" did Ruskin come over whole-heartedly and finally approve Rossetti's pupil, Burne-Jones, with the exquisitely appropriate phrase: "Jones, you're gigantic."

The boundless self-confidence and dogmatic manner which enabled Ruskin to cow the press and considerable sections of the public sometimes led him into difficulties. In laying down the law about the uncertain "science" of political economy he was merely more emphatic and offensive and not necessarily more ignorant than other experts. But he was unwise to challenge reputable scientists on their own ground, to correct Tyndall on the subject of glaciers and Darwin on biology. Even in his own supposedly infallible art taste, he was liable to error in elementary matters of fact. Early in 1875, for instance, he took Cardinal Manning to see Burne-Jones's newly completed "Mirror of Venus". The painter was out, and Mrs. Burne-Jones took the great men to see the picture. The Cardinal asked whether it was in oil or water-colour.

"It was an oil picture, but that was a point in Edward's work not to be decided at a glance - his method in both mediums being very similar - and Ruskin was silent until he had examined it carefully. Kneeling down so as to look more closely into the workmanship of the foreground, in a few seconds he came to a conclusion, and raising his eyes said, so quietly and authoritatively, 'Pure water-colour, my lord,' that I felt no inclination to contradict him." (*Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones* by E. B.-J.)

And the moral of that is: When about to dogmatise, even on matters you are supposed to know pretty well, always whisper, "Pure water-colour, my lord," and then count to five before speaking.

Ruskin had said that the Pre-Raphaelites would probably turn out to be the most important school of painters England had produced for three hundred years, though just what important English painters he imagined were flourishing about 1540 is hard to say. The diverse fates of these painters and poets were curious and lamentable. Millais, after eloping with

Mrs. Ruskin, abandoned the unpopular views of his early friends and became a most prosperous portrait-painter, advertising himself at the Academy with subject pictures which became more and more an abject truckling to the bad taste of his patrons. Brown spent years of hard-working poverty painting the legendary history of Manchester in symbolical and unlikeable murals. Holman Hunt used his "faithful violet eyes" to see every hair on the Scapegoat and to niggle over every possible symbol in "The Light of the World". Brown's grotesquely glowering young man in the "Last of England" and Holman Hunt's "Dickensian couple" (of the Steerforth-Little Em'ly breed) in the "Awakening Conscience" are painful episodes in the history of British painting. Rossetti and his pupil Burne-Jones, who both possessed taste and humour, shut themselves up and painted their dreams.

The interior decoration of Ruskin's homes at Denmark Hill and Brantwood were—it is unanimously agreed by friends and enemies—in poor taste. Yet his influence was most durable through the interior decorating and arts and crafts productions of William Morris and Co. They lasted well into this century, and had considerable influence abroad, especially in Germany and America. Morris and Walter Crane, among others, were also converted by Ruskin's socialism, and the influence of Morris's *News from Nowhere* (an absurd piece of Ruskinesque wishful thinking) lasted until the days of the politicians George Lansbury and Ramsay Macdonald.

Ruskin never knew of the blunder he made about Burne-Jones's oil or water-colour, and it was fortunate for their friendship that Mrs. Burne-Jones kept it to herself until after his death. Ruskin did not take correction easily. On one occasion he had dogmatised freely and heavily about some frescoes of the Trecento on the assumption that they were by Giotto, and the experts Crowe and Cavalcaselle proved—or seemed to prove—that they were by Memmi. Thereafter Ruskin may be found trying pathetically hard to prove Crowe and Cavalcaselle wrong on trifling points of no importance whatever.

With all his faults, whether of taste or temper, Ruskin was fundamentally a good man, and so much dominated by æsthetic impulses—which he often succeeded in imposing on other people however irrational and personal the impulses

were—that he must be considered the first in time if not the most important of the nineteenth-century English æsthetes. A passage in *Præterita* relates with disarming naïveté how young Ruskin's judgments on his Oxford tutors were all fundamentally æsthetic. It was so with him in everything, even in the crisis of religious doubt which harried almost every sensitive person of the epoch. Ruskin deconverted himself from the rigid Protestantism of his youth partly by æsthetic repulsion from a dissenting chapel meeting on a dull Sunday in Turin, partly by discovering that the godless Paolo Veronese painted better than the godly Fra Angelico. After his first mental illness he re-converted himself to another type of Christianity—a sort of unorthodox liberal Catholicism—by persuading himself that some remote brushwork by Giotto (which he was allowed to contemplate by special permission of the monks from a scaffolding erected behind the altar at Assisi) was better than Veronese's. The line of argument may seem irrelevant and tenuous. But, although he would not have acknowledged it, Nature, and Art as the human response to Nature, really formed Ruskin's religion all along. He wanted the best artists to be Christians because he wanted to please his parents by remaining a Christian, but when he discovered—or thought he discovered—that a non-Christian artist was better than a Christian artist, with inexorable integrity he instantly ceased to be a Christian. On the other hand, when weakened by illness and longing for the æsthetic consolations of religion, he had little difficulty in unconsciously arranging an æsthetic scene for dramatic reconversion. He could also boast that the monks had never allowed anyone else to climb up behind the altar merely to look at the painting; but this gratification to vanity was subsidiary and not essential. It is asserted, however, that about this time Cardinal Manning thought that Ruskin might be a convert worth having.

Ruskin's political and economic theories and preaching are so involved with his religious views that they are impossible to disentangle. It was from persistent reading of the Bible that Ruskin convinced himself that what he called usury was wicked, though he was incapable of distinguishing between the money-lender preying on misfortune or extravagance and the normal banking transactions necessary to finance commerce. But here too the real basis was æsthetic. Because landscapes were wrecked by new railways, factories and rows of insanitary

cottages, once clear air darkened with smoke and meadow silences shattered by the rattle of machinery, brooks and rivers polluted, villages made slums, old picturesque houses torn down to make shop fronts, and, in short, the England and Europe built up in beauty over ten centuries cynically exploited for gain—because of that, Ruskin became a revolutionary socialist. And if all along he protested vehemently that he was an old-fashioned Tory, that was merely because he chose to identify his views with those he attributed to Homer, Dante and Sir Walter Scott.

Setting aside the poets, who were never really Ruskinians in practice whatever they may have been in theory, those who revolted against Ruskinism and changed the moral climate of æstheticism were the Oxonians, Walter Pater and John Addington Symonds. We are probably justified in putting 1867 as the crucial year, because it was then that Pater began publishing his Renaissance studies in periodicals, and Symonds, after much anxious thought and consultation with Jowett, decided to write the *History of the Renaissance in England*, which in 1870 he changed to the *Renaissance in Italy*. Pater was then twenty-eight, Symonds twenty-seven: and not only had both felt the impulse to express a view of the Renaissance radically different from Ruskin's intolerance and medievalism, but both (in spite of considerable differences) were by temperament and training alien to Ruskin, though equally æsthetic in sensibility and outlook.

When A. C. Benson published his *English Men of Letters* study of Pater he said that Pater never wrote any poetry, which was indeed then the universal belief. A more enquiring though eccentric biographer, Wright of Olney, brought evidence to prove that in his youth Pater had written poetry continuously. If the few preserved scraps are authentic, Pater was certainly right to destroy all the verse he had written; and here again we have a case of the æsthetic critic rising from the failure of a poet. Pater was far from possessing Ruskin's fire and energy, Ruskin's over-confident belief in cherished prejudices and passion for reforming the world. Pater inherited some money but was glad enough to find the financial haven of a College Fellowship to shelter him. He was sluggish, timid, almost furtive in manner, cautious in everything except talk, yet by no means immune either from misrepresentation or a kind of persecution. This wary, blinking bachelor, for whom

two spinster sisters kept house, was represented by one of Ruskin's disciples (W. H. Mallock) as a dangerously seductive sensualist; and Jowett, who had encouraged Pater as an undergraduate, later did everything possible to thwart him. The curious difference between Pater as he looked and was, and Pater as he talked, thought and wrote, is one of those pleasing paradoxes which remind us that writers are very seldom as exciting as their books.

Very wisely Pater abandoned Ruskin's truculent episcopal manner and all display of knowledge, all symbolical interpretation, not relevant to the matter in hand. This was an advantage, and so also was the fact that Pater was trained in the philosophy of the schools and was compelled to keep his knowledge of the philosophers fresh in order to carry out his tutorial duties. One of Pater's pupils has recorded gratefully the impartiality with which Pater expounded the doctrines of the various schools of ancient philosophy—a feat which would have been quite impossible to Ruskin. Again, Pater had made a study of German philosophy, which Ruskin, if he knew at all, knew only at second-hand; and it was through Pater and J. A. Symonds that English readers were initiated into Goethe's "ideal of self-culture" which formed so essential a part of the æsthetic ideal. This, as many have noted, is a transference of the Christian idea of individual salvation of the soul to the sphere of literature and art. It is quite contrary to the more recent religion of progressive humanity, and self-immolation for the collective mass.

That a person so inoffensive and a writer so nearly academic as Pater should have excited the resentment of the orthodox to the extent he did, must cause surprise. It is now generally admitted that powerful influence prevented Pater from obtaining the Junior Proctorship and "other university promotion". But then orthodoxy on the defensive is always suspicious, and during the theological reverses of the 1860s onwards the very words "Epicurean" and "hedonist" inspired dislike and real or affected contempt. Oxford of course knew that a hedonist was not "an immoral Greek", as the newspapers imagined, and that Epicureanism, far from encouraging the legendary excesses of Roman emperors and their imitators, was a philosophy for valetudinarians and elderly pensioners of a reflective turn of mind. Pater, to do him justice, professed rather to be a follower of Aristippus, about whose life some

entertaining anecdotes are recorded by Diogenes Laertius. What was this Cyrenaicism which caused so much censorious comment?

"To keep the eye clear by a sort of exquisite personal alacrity and cleanliness, extending even to his dwelling-place; to discriminate, ever more and more fastidiously, select form and colour in things from what was less select; to meditate much on beautiful visible objects, on objects, more especially, connected with the period of youth—on children at play in the morning, the trees in early spring, on young animals, on the fashions and amusements of young men; to keep ever by him if it were but a single choice flower, a graceful animal or sea-shell, as a token and representative of the whole kingdom of such things; to avoid jealousy, in his way through the world, everything repugnant to sight; and should any circumstance tempt him to a general converse in the range of such objects, to disentangle himself from the circumstance at any cost of place, money, or opportunity; such were in brief outline the duties recognised, the rights demanded, in this new formula of life." (Walter Pater. *Marius the Epicurean*.)

This, in spite of its affectation of expression and its bland assumption of a society organised solely for his convenience, is what Pater attempted through various phases of life and to a great extent achieved. He agreed with Ruskin to the extent of finding the contemporary world of politics and industry detestable. He agreed with Ruskin also in setting the highest value on art. But in every other respect no two men could be more temperamentally opposed. The religion which Ruskin tried to make an incendiary torch was for Pater a calm candle in a tranquilly lovely sanctuary. Ruskin's call to politico-economic action was totally ignored by Pater, who thought it the duty of the sage to accept human society as he finds it and to seek only his own æsthetic salvation, convinced beforehand that the bettering of one social condition only means the worsening of another. The contrast might be prolonged almost indefinitely. It is enough to add that the Renaissance, which Ruskin so often used as a synonym for moral wickedness and æsthetic bad taste, was Pater's ideal. He never mentions Ruskin in *The Renaissance*, but does obliquely show Ruskin's readers how wrong-headed their hero had been, and enjoyed the gentle satisfaction of introducing his noisy predecessor to one of the most imaginative and artistically gifted of Raphael's predecessors, Sandro Botticelli. While Pater's interpretation of Botticelli may seem far-fetched and unsound, it was Pater (and

not Ruskin) who introduced Botticelli to the English-speaking world in 1870.

The present disfavour clouding Pater's fame is due chiefly of course to the violent repudiation of all æstheticism of his gentle Epicurean kind. But even those who are capable of making the mental readjustment needed may fail because they expect him as a writer to be something he is not. He is not a biographer, a story-teller or a novelist, and it is inviting disappointment to read *Imaginary Portraits* and *Marius* as anything but essays. The world of the biographer and novelist is kinetic and active, that of the essayist static and contemplative. *Marius* is a series of essays dealing with the intellectual and artistic and spiritual life of Romans at the time of the Antonines; it is scarcely a novel. Indeed, are not most intellectualist and "psychological" novels really only disguised essays on some characters and a situation? The gift of "mere" story-telling is rarer than is supposed; and its union with intellectual distinction and poetic sensibility unusual.

To do him justice, Pater made little attempt to achieve popularity or even to attract any but a small public of university readers. His maximum popularity as a writer occurred in the period between his death in 1894 and the beginning of the *Gotterdammerung* of Europe in 1914.

The attempt at popularising æstheticism was made by a third Oxford man, the son of a famous Bristol doctor, both named John Addington Symonds. Like Ruskin, the younger Symonds had a devoted father, inherited a large fortune, travelled much, and suffered from a hyper-sensitive nervous temperament. He followed Ruskin in winning the Newdigate Prize, but had a more successful academic career, taking first-class honours and being elected a Fellow of Magdalen. Symonds also broke down under the strain of his work at Oxford. In him there appears definitely a homosexual tendency, which afterwards came to be associated so unjustly with Oxford and the æsthetes. (It was just as pronounced in the "singers of democracy", Whitman and Carpenter.) That Symonds suffered appallingly, not only from the tuberculosis which attacked him before he was thirty but from his divided sexual nature, must be clear to any sympathetic reader of *In the Key of Blue* and of the fragments of autobiography contained in H. F. Brown's memoir. Certainly Symonds did not deserve Swinburne's hideous jest over the newly-closed grave at "the Platonic

amoris of blue-breeched gondoliers who is now in Aretino's bosom." This, by the way, comes in Swinburne's eulogy of Jowett, who had just inscribed on that grave the touching words: "*Ave carissime, nemo te magis in corde amicos fovebat, nec in simplices et indoctos benevolentior erat*—Adieu, beloved, no man ever more cherished his friends or was kinder to simple and unlearned persons".

Like Ruskin, J. A. Symonds published much poetry, and though much more successful he failed to meet his own standards or to engage the attention of immediate posterity as a poet. Perhaps he came nearest to success with the poems of *Clifton and a Boy's Love* and *In the Key of Blue*, and then in the best of his translations, particularly from Michaelangelo, Campanella and his favourite, Poliziano. As Jowett hints in an earlier part of the Latin epitaph just quoted, Symonds was consumed with ambitions for an important literary career. Failing as a poet and debarred by his health from the heavy labours needed for original research, he turned his attention to criticism, teaching and lecturing, and eventually produced a series of popular books on various aspect of European culture which in time made him known to a wide and grateful public. For more than a generation most English-speaking tourists in Italy read parts of Symonds's *Renaissance* and the two Tauchnitz volumes of *Sketches in Italy*.

If we look at the four Oxford men—Ruskin, Pater, Symonds and Wilde—who were the main theorists and prose leaders of the æsthetes, Symonds will to-day be found most repaying to a young reader or to a mature reader trying to find the best these writers have to give. J. A. Symonds has received little official and academic praise. He has been disparaged by schools of criticism as far apart as the writers of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* and his near namesake, Arthur Symons. True, J. A. Symonds lacks Wilde's wit and light touch; he does not have Ruskin's prophetic energy and fire; and his prose is not finely organised into delicate word mosaics, like Pater's. He shares with them that tendency to the purple patch ("word painting", Symonds liked to call it) which had so irresistible an attraction for these frustrated poets. While admitting that they are not the best models of severe, classical prose, we may perhaps feel that these gorgeous passages have their charm and have been unduly disparaged. Moreover, Symonds was also the victim of his nervous temperament and the peculiar

circumstances of his health and fortune. In spite of his admirable industry it is hard not to suspect at times that he worked on a subject only as long as it amused and stimulated him, and was too ready to pass on to something fresh before his work was perfected. This is not true of his best writing, which was evidently carefully revised, but does apply to much of his work, particularly the essays and some of the more careless verse translations. As a stylist, he was too often content with approximate writing and ready-made phrases. His generalisations are sometimes trite and commonplace, sometimes far-fetched; and his elaborate comparisons strike the reader on some occasions as forced, on others as positively infelicitous, and nearly always unnecessary.

He must have been a good lecturer and teacher, for he has the valuable gift of kindling with enthusiasm for his subject, and the rarer gift of being able to arouse a similar feeling in his audience. You seldom get the impression that his writing is a task, that he is reciting a lesson, and never that he is feigning a pleasure he does not really experience. He is best when he is most concrete, when expounding some admired writer or artist or when trying to express the feelings evoked in him by some beautiful landscape or town or building. The least readable portions of his *Renaissance* are the political and religious sections in *The Age of the Despots* and *The Catholic Reaction*. Although they owe much to Burckhardt, the volumes on *The Humanists* and *The Fine Arts* are good; and the volumes on Italian literature are better than any work of the kind in English. If Symonds was "no scholar" in the narrow academic sense (and the same is true of the other three writers linked with him) he was widely-read, and possessed a delicacy of taste and sensibility which always avoided pretentiousness, dullness and pedantry. It does not matter very much whether Symonds's "views" were always sound—these opinions on literature and the arts are always changing—but what was important is that his books did give great pleasure to many persons with a taste for the arts and can still evoke a longing to visit the places he describes so pleasantly or revive memories of them.

He was a man of considerable moral courage. True, he had the incalculable support of a large unearned income, but without it he must have succumbed, and would have done nothing. He did not shirk responsibilities. Like so many of

his time Symonds went through mental agonies of religious doubt, complicated in his case by serious illness, exhausting struggles against his homosexual tendencies, and a nervous sensibility which was especially wrought upon by the emotional experience of English cathedral music. He refused to rest on any of the theological compromises offered him by Jowett, and fought out his problems to the verge of mental collapse—saved at the verge, he believed, by the devotion of his wife, Catherine North, during one dreadful night of mental crisis at Cannes. He took comfort in Goethe's *In Ganzen, Guten, Schönen, resolut zu leben*, and in the "Hymn of Cleanthes" (233–232 B.C.) with its lesson of submission to the mystery of things, "Nothing befalls on the earth, O Lord, but with sanction of thee . . ."

In his autobiography Symonds did not try to conceal his failings, failures, discouragements and faults. In fact one is inclined after a time to protest at his self-depreciation and diffidence and to think that he over-stresses them. Certainly Brown's memoir fails almost wholly to reveal the charm and gaiety which endeared Symonds to so many different types of people—a scholar such as Conington, a Bohemian like R. L. Stevenson, a society girl like Margot Tennant (Lady Oxford and Asquith), and the peasants of Gräubunden. The chief happiness of his last years came from the devotion and intelligent companionship of his daughter, Margaret, afterwards Mrs. Vaughan.

At this point something should be said about Whistler, the one American included in this collection. I have not included other Americans, even such well-known London expatriates as Henry James, Henry Harland and Logan P. Smith, partly because of the pressure on space, but chiefly because æstheticism was British and on the whole uncongenial to Americans. Mark Twain's *Connecticut Yankee* might be taken as an embodiment of the average American attitude. Whistler himself, though an æsthete in his fashion, was intensely hostile to the English æsthetes and did all he could to discredit them—efforts which culminated in his libel action against Ruskin in 1878 and in his "Ten O'Clock" lecture in 1885.

The libel action was a somewhat ill-chosen piece of self-advertising—it was grotesque from the outset for an artist to appeal to a judge and jury to decide a point of art criticism—and did Ruskin little harm and Whistler unfortunately a good

deal, in spite of Joseph Pennell's painful efforts to prove the contrary. Let us see what really happened. The alleged libel, which appeared in *Fors Clavigera* under date June 18th, 1877, ran as follows:

"For Mr. Whistler's own sake, no less than for the protection of the purchaser, Sir Coutts Lindsay ought not to have admitted works into the gallery in which the ill-educated conceit so nearly approached the aspect of wilful imposture. I have seen, and heard, much of Cockney impudence before now; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face."

I have already mentioned some of the unhappy symptoms of the insanity which for years had been menacing Ruskin, and it should be remembered that in February, 1878, only eight months later, Ruskin's mind collapsed into complete insanity from which he really never recovered wholly. It was the insanity and not Whistler's libel action or anything Whistler said or did which put an end to Ruskin's career as prophet of art and terminated his first period as Slade Professor at Oxford. To conceal that fact is to misrepresent the whole episode. For years Ruskin's enemies had been whispering and sneering that he was mad, and unhappily they turned out to be right. Yet there was truth in what the madman was called on to answer for as a libel. Much as we rejoice in Whistler, we cannot deny that he was "ill-educated" (he was in fact dismissed from West Point for ignorance) and "conceited" and "a coxcomb" and "impudent". Surely all that is part of the fun of Whistler? Who on earth expects a well-educated, modest, unaffected and courteous Whistler? He himself was always asserting his claims to being "gentlemanly" in a way which no genuine aristocrat ever does. Whether it was "gentlemanly" to persist in a law suit against a man who was so mentally ill that his doctors positively refused to allow him to appear in court is a matter of taste and opinion. When the case was tried, the verdict was for the plaintiff (Whistler) with one farthing damages; and that meant only that the Court decided there had been a technical breach of the law, but the jury decided that they did not think the plaintiff had suffered any injury. Moreover, by ordering the plaintiff to pay his own costs, the Court certainly implied that the action was a frivolous one which ought never to have been brought. Owing to his failure to pay these costs Whistler was made a bankrupt. Ruskin, who had given away so much of his large fortune, had his costs paid by a

spontaneous public subscription. It is hard to see exactly where Whistler secured the "triumph" claimed for him by Pennell and his other toadies.

On the other hand, the "Ten O'Clock" was a quite a different thing, and in its own way a genuine triumph. This lecture expressed a view then comparatively unknown to the English though of course perfectly familiar to Paris art students—that of the irresponsible godlike artist and his immense superiority to the *épiciers*, whose only function in life was to buy the works of contemporary artists. Long before Whistler's day this had been the actual or pretended belief of the French Romantics, such as Thomas Couture (1815–1879), as reported by the American painter, George Healey:

"He (i.e. Thomas Couture) divided the world into two distinct classes: artists—that is, those whom God created to be the masters of the world—and the others, whom he called with infinite contempt '*les bourgeois*'. The greatest statesmen, kings, noblemen or shopkeepers were all '*bourgeois*'—that is, inferior beings who should consider it an honour to buy pictures or statues at the highest possible rates. As to allowing them the right of directing in any way the artist they employed, that was not to be thought of. Their first duty was to be eternally satisfied, grateful, and enthusiastic." (*Reminiscences of a Portrait Painter* by George P. A. Healey, Chicago, 1894.)

Naturally Whistler did not put it as crudely as that, although the whole story of his relations with his patrons is a demonstration of his efforts to enforce the theory; but his doctrine of art for the artist's sake as expounded in the "Ten O'Clock" really means just that. Probably the doctrine has done other artists harm by encouraging them to over-estimate their importance as well as by stimulating the very natural antagonism of the "*bourgeois*". The other doctrine of "non-literary art", which accompanied Whistler's romantic *vie de Bohème* conception of "The Artist" has impoverished the plastic arts by cutting them off from life and from culture, and in extreme cases reducing them to a set of more or less barren technical tricks.

Mrs. Whistler said of her famous husband: "Jimmy's all right so long as he keeps away from pen and ink"—by which she meant, from writing the spiteful and not too funny letters he has rather unwisely preserved in his book. The admirable Whistler was the artist who worked with etching needle, in pastel and in water-colour, on the lithographer's stone and in oils; the letter-writer was a misfortune which must be accepted and overlooked in his genius. It is hard to estimate with any

certainly what influence Whistler's genius had in England during his life. Probably he had a considerable if not decisive influence in turning a later generation of English æsthetes away from Italy and Switzerland to Dieppe and Montmartre, as we may see by comparing the cultural world of Ruskin, Rossetti and J. A. Symonds with that of the later Wilde, Arthur Symonds and Dowson. The substitution of the French Impressionists for the Italian Quattrocentisti, of Verlaine for Dante, marks off the nineties from the earlier and more robust epochs of æstheticism.

The fourth of the Oxford æsthetes is of course Oscar Wilde. With his flamboyance, his craving for notoriety, his charm and insolence and affectations, Wilde seemed sent by some Philistine divinity as a caricature of the æsthete. He, more than anyone, embodied æstheticism in the vague resentment and dislike of the common man, and Wilde's downfall was hailed with equal rapture by the London street mob as well as by the self-styled gentlefolk who a few months earlier had been flattered when he condescended to enliven their dull dinner tables with his witty monologues. When in the bitterness of his heart the fallen Wilde said that he had made his name a low by-word among low people, he spoke the sad but exact truth.

The opinion which dismisses Wilde's poetry as beneath contempt no longer can be sustained. It is perhaps not saying much if one claims that he was a better poet than Symonds and Ruskin; but, however derivative, Wilde's poetry has the merit of being readable. In his own time Wilde was not a popular or coterie success as a poet. With his instincts as a showman, Wilde had foreseen this, and provided against it by a device which perhaps deceived some people into thinking he was read as a poet in his lifetime. Such people read that in 1881-82 Wilde's poems went through five editions; but as a matter of fact after each 200 copies the press was stopped and the next 200 were marked as another edition. Only 1,250 copies were printed in all, and of these about 220 remained unsold, and ten years later, in 1892, were re-issued as an alleged sixth edition! Yet between 1911 and 1914 the *Selected Poems of Oscar Wilde* had a great vogue, passing through eight impressions, of which the first two alone accounted for 30,000 copies. Any poet who thinks that this was not on account of the poetry but merely because Oscar had been gaoled might make the experiment of getting himself sentenced, and see what happens.

Like his three æsthetic predecessors, Oscar, as a frustrated poet, turned to teaching, lecturing and writing about art rather than practising it. Some of his lectures have been preserved, but in spite of some good passages are among his less interesting work, along with the pretentious letters to the press on æsthetic topics. Only in *Vera* did he come so near dullness as in his *Soul of Man Under Socialism*, which perhaps explains why the latter is the one work for which he is now praised. Wilde of course cared nothing for socialism, and the essay or lecture is a mere *boutade*, though it contains a few of his brilliant epigrams.

Apart from his poems, Wilde's most successful æsthetic writing is to be found in his dialogues—*The Decay of Lying* and *The Critic as an Artist*. There are certainly æsthetic passages in *Dorian Gray*, but narrative was not Wilde's strong point, while the dialogues even were tending toward the artificial stage comedy-farce of which Wilde was, by universal consent, a master. Yet it is well worth noting how readable these dialogues still are, more readable than Pater or even than Symonds, from whose work they so obviously derive. If they were the mere journalism they are said to be, how is it that they are still so readable after more than half a century?

Just about that period of time elapsed between the publication of Ruskin's first, rabidly Protestant, volumes of *Modern Painters* and the amoral—one might say painfully and self-consciously immoral—*Intentions*. The title seems to imply that they were not intended to pave the way to an ethical Paradiso. Where those *Intentions* eventually led their author the world knows only too well. It is a strange paradox—the Æsthetic Movement, which started when James Ruskin gave his son Prout's drawings and pious Mrs. Ruskin suggested they might visit the places sketched, received its death wound when Wilde stood in the dock at the Old Bailey.

In his poem, *The Garden of Eros*, Wilde pays flowery compliments to the English poets he then admired—the immediate predecessors and inspirers of the æsthetic poets. They are Keats, who:

“ . . . sleeps in silent rest
Beneath the Roman walls, and melody
Still mourns her sweetest lyre . . . ”

Shelley:

"One silver voice to sing his threnody . . ."

Swinburne:

". . . that fiery heart, that morning star
Of re-arisen England . . ."

William Morris:

". . . our sweet and simple Chaucer's child,
Dear heritor of Spenser's tuneful reed . . ."

Rossetti:

"Whose double laurels burn with deathless flame . . ."

To whom he adds Burne-Jones, a "gentle solemn Spirit:"

". . . all the world for him
A gorgeous-coloured vestiture must wear,
And sorrow take a purple diadem . . ."

This is Oscar at his most vulnerable, and it is not surprising that coarse fellows rushed into *Punch* with rude parodies. But the list is valuable as giving us the poetic heroes of the young æsthete of the eighties and some indication of what was meant by that very indefinable phrase "æsthetic poetry". I should be inclined to add Coleridge, Arnold and Tennyson; Coleridge for *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan*, Arnold because Wilde himself so obviously imitates the poet of *Thyrsis* and *The Scholar-Gipsy*, and Tennyson because of his immense influence—"in those days all reading men were Tennysonian".

Rossetti, Morris and Swinburne, as the leaders of the æsthetic school, appear in the body of this book, though sparingly, as I do not wish to load it with matter too familiar. But something should be said about their predecessors as they appeared to the æsthetes. In Shelley they admired the lyrics, *Prometheus Unbound* (Wilde's poem just quoted specifically refers to Panthea), *Adonais*, *Epipsychidion*, *The Witch of Atlas*, and *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*.

It was in *The Witch of Atlas*, that "lovely lady garmented in light" that Shelley came nearest to being a purely æsthetic poet:

"For she was beautiful—her beauty made
The bright world dim, and everything beside
Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade . . ."

Here is the imagination, free from all burden of social wrongs, compensating utopias and even the stress of human life, delighting itself with sensuous images of ideal loveliness, an escape on Ariel's wings to a faery land of Beauty:

“ . . . she took her spindle,
 And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and three
 Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle
 The clouds and waves and mountains with; and she
 As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle
 In the belated moon, wound skilfully;
 And with these threads a subtle veil she wove—
 A shadow for the splendour of her love.

The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling
 Were stored with magic treasures—sounds of air,
 Which had the power all spirits of compelling,
 Folded in cells of crystal silence there;
 Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling
 Will never die—yet ere we are aware,
 The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,
 And the regret they leave remains alone.

And there lay Visions swift, and sweet, and quaint,
 Each in its thin sheath, like a chrysalis,
 Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint
 With the soft burthen of intensest bliss.
 It was its work to bear to many a saint
 Whose heart adores the shrine which holiest is,
 Even Love's:—and others white, green, gray, and black
 And of all shapes—and each was at her beck.

And odours in a kind of aviary
 Of ever blooming Eden-trees she kept,
 Clipped in a floating net, a love-sick Fairy
 Had woven from dew-beams while the moon yet slept;
 As bats at the wired window of a dairy,
 They beat their vans; and each was an adept,
 When loosed and missioned, making wings of winds,
 To stir sweet thoughts or sad, in destined minds.”

The thought in this delicate poetry is so airily fanciful, the very images so evanescent, the sensations and feelings so vague and remote from the texture of daily life that practical natures are rather annoyed than pleased by such verses, and even those who sympathise may do well to take them in sips rather than to drink off the whole goblet. Even its first reader, Mary Shelley, was disappointed (and in consequence got called “critic-bitten” by her husband) perhaps because she tried to take it all in at

one rapid reading. But the poem is filled with lovely reckless images, like this about the inevitable magic boat on which Shelley loved to dream his escape from the world of ordinariness:

"Couched on the fountain like a panther tame,
One of the twain at Evan's feet that sit—
Or as on Vesta's sceptre a swift flame—
Or on blind Homer's heart a winged thought,—
In joyous expectation lay the boat."

"The Witch's Boat" has the usual Shellean adventures among "panther-peopled forests" and "many a star-surrounded pyramid of icy crag cleaving the purple sky". But where could the æsthetes have found more congenial scenes than this landscape, with its vague reminiscences of Euripides and Lucretius:

"Where, like a meadow which no scythe has shaven,
Which rain could never bend, or whirl-blast shake
With the Antarctic constellations paven,
Canopus and his crew, lay the Austral lake—
There she would build herself a windless haven
Out of the clouds whose moving turrets make
The bastions of the storm . . ."

Or this, which at any rate in its opening sounds more like some poet of the eighteen-eighties than Shelley:

"By Moeris and the Mareotid lakes,
Strewn with faint blooms like bridal chamber floors,
Where naked boys bridling tame water-snakes,
Or charioteering ghastly alligators,
Had left on the sweet waters mighty wakes
Of those huge forms—within the brazen doors
Of the great Labyrinth slept both boy and beast
Tired with the pomp of their Osirian feast."

And it was congenial to the æsthetes to turn away, like the Witch, from those "troubled forms of sleep".

"Not to be mirrored in a holy song—
Distortions foul of supernatural awe,
And pale imaginings of visioned wrong."

But however attractive Shelley's bright drifting reveries of natural beauty to one section of the æsthetes and his utopianism to the Ruskin reformers section, their true master of song was

Keats. We are apt to take Keats for granted, as an accepted part of the corpus of English poetry, but the more he is read the more he will be admired. It is astounding that a lad, cooped up all his life in England, with no better guides than Leigh Hunt and R. B. Haydon, should have produced so much of the loveliest poetry in a style which abounds with so many felicitous images of beauty. George Saintsbury has pointed out that the immature style of *Endymion* bears some likeness to that of the seventeenth-century poem, Chamberlayne's *Pharonnida*. There is some truth in this, and it seems to indicate that such a style is a natural outcome of a close study of Tudor-Stuart poetry, but Keats went far beyond Chamberlayne. And how much did he leave unwritten? It was as if, dying so young, he bequeathed to the nineteenth century the task of trying to finish his uncompleted work, which a host of minor poets attempted, but attempted in vain.

The æsthetes admired almost everything of Keats except such obvious false starts as his attempts at poetic drama and at Byronism in *The Cap and Bells*. There is no need to quote from any of these poems, but there is one, *The Eve of Saint Mark*, the opening of which was especially admired by the Pre-Raphaelites and æsthetes. It runs:

“Upon a Sabbath-day it fell;
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,
That call'd the folk to evening prayer;
The city streets were clean and fair
From wholesome drench of April rains;
And, on the western window-panes,
The chilly sunset faintly told
Of unmatured green valleys cold,
Of the green thorny bloomless hedge,
Of rivers new with spring-tide sedge,
Of primroses by shelter'd rills,
And daisies on the aguish hills.

Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell:
The silent streets were crowded well
With staid and pious companies,
Warm from their fireside orat'ries;
And moving, with demurest air,
To evensong, and vesper prayer.
Each arched porch, and entry low,
Was fill'd with patient folk and slow,
With whispers hush, and shuffling feet,
While play'd the organ loud and sweet.

The bells had ceased, the prayers begun,
 And Bertha had not yet half done
 A curious volume, patch'd and torn,
 That all day long, from earliest morn,
 Had taken captive her two eyes,
 Among its golden broideries;
 Perplexed her with a thousand things—
 The stars of Heaven, and angels' wings,
 Martyrs in a fiery blaze,
 Azure saints and silver rays,
 Moses' breastplate, and the seven
 Candlesticks John saw in Heaven,
 The winged lion of Saint Mark,
 And the Covenantal Ark,
 With its many mysteries,
 Cherubim and golden mice."

Except for "the aguish hills" there is not an epithet or a line in that but has an exquisite felicity, and its curious remote mood is one which greatly attracted the Pre-Raphaelite poets. The later æsthetes preferred Keats in the more sensuous and luxurious mood of *Isabella* and *The Eve of Saint Agnes*, *Endymion* and the *Odes*.

Of course all poets take hints from each other—isn't that what is really meant by pompous phrases about "the tradition"? — and one of the most obvious differences between good poets and bad is that good poets improve the hints and bad poets spoil them. Take, for instance, these lines of Walter Scott:

"Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel harp,
 Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
 And little reck I of the censure sharp
 May idly cavil at an idle lay . . ."

Which suggested William Morris's:

"The idle singer of an empty day."

The next stanza of Scott's poem has the lines:

"Receding now, the dying numbers ring
 Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell,
 And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
 A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—
 And now 'tis silent all—Enchantress, fare thee well!"

Which Keats beautifully adapted to his own purpose:

"Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
 In the next valley-glades:
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
 Fled is that music:—do I wake or sleep?"

There are many such suggestions in older poets of a style which a younger poet adopts and develops. Take this, for example:

"And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes
 And hands which offer early flowers,
 Walk smiling o'er this paradise;
 Above, the frequent feudal towers
 Through green leaves lift their walls of gray;
 And many a rock which steeply lowers,
 And noble arch in proud decay,
 Look o'er this vale of vintage-bowers . . ."

Might you not say that was Tennyson? And yet, in fact, it comes from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. Tennyson, of course, was much more a follower of Keats than of Byron. Indeed, it would probably be true to say that he was the greatest of all the many Keatsians of the nineteenth century. After Shelley and Keats, Tennyson himself was for a time the chief master of the æsthetes. But it was not the Tennyson who was received at the palace and the cottage, the Tennyson of the *Idylls* and *Maud* and *The Princess*, but of *The Lady of Shalott*, *The Palace of Art*, the first *Morte d'Arthur*, *St. Agnes's Eve*, *Sir Galahad* and the first *Mariana*. This last poem the æsthetes particularly admired. Here is the 1833 or æsthetes' version of *Mariana in the South*:

"Behind the barren hill upsprung
 With pointed rocks against the light,
 The crag sharpshadowed overhung
 Each glaring creek and inlet bright.
 Far, far, one lightblue ridge was seen,
 Looming like baseless fairyland;
 Eastward a slip of burning sand,
 Dark-rimmed with sea, and bare of green.
 Down in the dry salt-marshes stood
 That house darklatticed. Not a breath
 Swayed the sick vineyard underneath,
 Or moved the dusky southernwood.
 'Madonna,' with melodious moan
 Sang Mariana, night and morn,
 'Madonna! lo! I am all alone,
 'Love-forgotten and love-forlorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,
 From her warm brow and bosom down
 Through rosy taper fingers drew
 Her streaming curls of deepest brown
 On either side, and made appear,
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
 Her melancholy eyes divine,
 The home of woe without a tear.
 'Madonna,' with melodious moan,
 Sang Mariana, night and morn,
 'Madonna! lo! I am all alone,
 Love-forgotten and love-forlorn.'

When the dawn crimson changed, and past
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,
 Low on her knees herself she cast,
 Unto our lady prayéd she.
 She moved her lips, she prayed alone,
 She praying disarrayed and warm
 From slumber, deep her wavy form
 In the dark lustrous mirror shone.
 'Madonna,' in a low clear tone
 Said Mariana, night and morn,
 Low she mourned, 'I am all alone,
 Love-forgotten and love-forlorn.'

At noon she slumbered. All along
 The silvery field, the large leaves talked
 With one another, as among
 The spikéd maize in dreams she walked.
 The lizard leapt; the sunlight played:
 She heard the callow nestling lisp,
 And brimful meadow-runnels crisp,
 In the full-leavéd platan-shade.
 In sleep she breathed in a lower tone,
 Murmuring as at night and morn,
 'Madonna! lo! I am all alone,
 Love-forgotten and love-forlorn.'

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream
 Most false: *he* was and was not there.
 She woke, the babble of the stream
 Fell, and without the steady glare
 Shrank the sick olive sere and small.
 The riverbed was dusty-white;
 From the bald rock the blinding light
 Beat ever on the sunwhite wall.
 She whispered, with a stifled moan
 More inward than at night or morn,
 'Madonna, leave me not all alone,
 To die forgotten and live forlorn.'

One dry cicala's summer song
 At night filled all the gallery,
 Backward the lattice blind she flung,
 And leaned upon the balcony.
 Ever the low wave seemed to roll
 Up to the coast; far on, alone
 In the East, large Hesper overshone
 The mourning gulf, and on her soul
 Poured divine solace, or the rise
 Of moonlight from the margin gleamed,
 Volcano-like, afar, and streamed
 On her white arm, and heavenward eyes.
 Not all alone she made her moan,
 Yet ever sang she, night and morn,
 'Madonna! lo! I am all alone,
 Love-forgotten and love-forlorn."

In spite of the high quality of his poetry, his position as a critic, his preoccupation with questions of culture and taste, Matthew Arnold was too much a Wordsworthian, an intellectualist, and too disdainful of "mere" beauty to be classed with the æsthetes. He was perhaps a little over-educated, as he himself seems to suspect, and set himself standards of fussy *purisme* which handicapped a fine mind and sensitive temperament. If he is mentioned in connection with the æsthetes it is because of two or three passages of unwonted warmth, colour and sensuous charm which Oscar Wilde among others constantly tried to reproduce. There is, for example, the famous opening of the lines sung by Calicles in *Empedocles on Etna*:

"Far, far from here,
 The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
 Among the green Illyrian hills; and there
 The sunshine in the happy glens is fair,
 And by the sea, and in the brakes.
 The grass is cool, the sea-side air
 Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
 More virginal and sweet than ours."

But even more powerful in their influence on the later æsthetes were these lines from *The Scholar-Gipsy*:

"O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
 And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;
 Before this strange disease of modern life,
 With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
 Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife—
 Fly hence, our contact fear!

Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing through
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade—
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers, as in former years,
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made;
And even thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægean isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine—
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves—
And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail;
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits; and unbent sails
There where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales."

The long drawn-out simile at the end recalls the many synthetic Homeric similes in *Sohrab and Rustum* which give that other-

wise impeccable poem so curiously wooden an appearance. Here, though preposterously long, the elaborate simile remains supple and full of those sensuous concrete images the æsthetes so much admired. The passages from *Thyrsis* I have in mind are even more remote from Arnold's usual austere, not to say gnomic, manner, for he was evidently trying to reproduce the luxuriant elegiac manner of Theocritus, Moschus and Bion, which Shelley had done before him so brilliantly in *Adonais*. Wilde, at any rate, must have known the following stanzas by heart:

“So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
 When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
 Before the roses and the longest day—
 When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
 With blossoms red and white of fallen May
 And chestnut-flowers are strewn—
 So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
 From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,
 Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The boom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
 Soon will the high Midsummer pomps come on,
 Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
 Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
 Sweet-William with its homely cottage-smell,
 And stocks in fragrant blow;
 Roses that down the valleys shine afar,
 And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
 And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
 And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
 What matters it? next year he will return,
 And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
 With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
 And blue-bells trembling by the forest-ways,
 And scent of hay new-mown.
 But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see;
 See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
 And blow a strain the world at last shall heed—
 For Time, not Corydon, hath conquer'd thee!

Alack, for Corydon no rival now!—
 But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
 Some good survivor with his flute would go,
 Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;
 And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
 And relax Pluto's brow,

And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
 Of Proserpine, among whose crowned hair
 Are flowers, first open'd on Sicilian air,
 And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

O easy access to the hearer's grace
 When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
 For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
 She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
 She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
 Each rose with blushing face;
 She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
 But ah, of our poor Thames she never heard!
 Her foot the Cumnor cowslips never stirr'd;
 And we should tease her with our plaint in vain!"

It would be possible to prolong this survey of predecessors to quite inordinate lengths, particularly if foreign and ancient writers were included. There was Edgar Poe, for instance, whom the æsthetes admired rather than followed; and Henry James, whose influence did much to foster preciousness in the short-story writers of the nineties. James in his way is certainly a great writer, the ideal novelist for those who dislike novels.

The other admirations of the English æsthetes were many and varied. There was an æsthetic Homer (Butcher and Lang) and an æsthetic Vergil (Morris, Mackail); an æsthetic Theocritus and an æsthetic Greek Anthology; and they owed much to Rossetti's translations of Dante and the Trecentisti—very good translations, by the way. On principle they admired Provençal poetry, though it may be doubted whether they knew anything more about it than may be gathered from Francis Hueffer's book on the troubadours. Swinburne rewrote Villon, and, as the French influence gradually triumphed over the Italian, the æsthetes succumbed to Baudelaire and Verlaine, whom they translated indefatigably. They could all quote Gautier—"Carmen est maigre . . ."—and though the whole of *Madame Bovary* was perhaps too great a reading task for those whose eyelids were a little weary, they all knew Emma's death scene as they all knew the meeting of Richard and Lucy in *Feverel*. Swinburne, whose critical pronouncements in prose and verse consisted usually in formulating violent prejudices into heated dogma oscillating between fulsome adulation and shrieks of angry derision, kept alive a veneration for minor Tudor-Stuart dramatists against which Rossetti protested in vain.

It must all have been the greatest fun, and in retrospect raises a feeling of wistfulness. Let us hope that the æsthetes' enemies, the non-escapists, enjoy themselves as much in following the party line. . . .

But Meredith? And George Moore? And Yeats? And Vernon Lee? And . . . ? I have declared already that I do not pretend to discuss in detail all the æsthetes. There is one fact about them that may already have occurred to the reader, and it is that, although I call this collection *English* æsthetes, the most distinguished of them were not English. Swinburne and Addington Symonds and Vernon Lee (who was a Paget) and perhaps Pater (who hoped he was Dutch) may be claimed; but Rossetti was Italian, Meredith and Morris and Burne-Jones were Welshmen, Ruskin was a Scot; Wilde and Moore and Yeats were Irish. And so on. Might it not have been more accurate to call them The Anti-English Æsthetes, since they were so largely a protest of Celt and Gael against the ugliness and dullness of British industrialism?

And was Meredith, for instance, really an æsthete within the meaning of this collection? Is he not, with Browning, more truly the unacknowledged parent of the In-a-Glass-Darkly school of poetry? He was certainly too much an intellectualist to be at ease with the æsthetes.

Love in the Valley might perhaps be called an æsthetic poem, but the sequence of *Modern Love* is much too analytical, psychological and realistic for such classification though, as this collection shows, Swinburne defended it. Meredith's novels, which seem to have, and perhaps do have—all the requisite qualities of the novel as a work of art, are curiously painful to read. His characters, so carefully studied and prepared, always seem improbable, perhaps because he gives them his wit and denies them his heart. He does not live with and in his characters, but watches them live with his admirable, indeed frightening, insight. And even his "epigrams" are not quotable like Oscar's, though one would like to believe that a far finer mind was at work to produce them. Meredith, it is true, at one time lived with Rossetti and Swinburne and the æsthetes, but soon divorced himself from them. According to E. F. Benson in *As We Were*, Meredith said he had intended to kick Swinburne downstairs, but was deterred by foreseeing the clatter his horrible little bottom would make bumping from stair to stair, a kindly repayment for Swinburne's championship.

George Moore was essentially an æsthete, caring infinitely more for the fate of his prose than that of his tenants. But he would have been perhaps closer to the main body if he had not learned to write English prose in Paris, taking as his University the Café de la Nouvelle Athènes in Montmartre. This in some respects made him more of an artist than any of the Oxford-trained people, who were always a trifle *pompier*s and out of touch with the world: but then it also tended to make his judgments capricious and unstable. Anyone reading Moore for the first time can never, from the judgments already recorded, guess how the Irish-Frenchman will react to any writer or artist who comes along. His courage and honesty are admirable, for he is never afraid to speak his mind and (as he says somewhere) was ashamed only of being ashamed. So many writers in English are humbugs, but not George Moore—or at any rate his humbug is the opposite of their self-deception and self-importance. He will tell the truth, however much it may show him in a ridiculous or disagreeable part. And he is never deterred from blurting out what he thinks about even his dearest friends:

“In writing *Patience*, Gilbert thought he was copying Oscar Wilde, whereas he was drawing Willie Yeats out of the womb of Time; and when Flaubert wrote *Bouvard and Pecuchet* he thought he was creating, but he was really performing the same kind office for Plunkett and Gill, giving them names much more significant than the names they are known by in Ireland, but doing no more.” (George Moore. *Vale*.)

This intense æstheticism inevitably led to preciosities and affectations, but also formed a favourable though very limited environment for the flowering of a great many minor poets. We all dislike the term “minor poet”, with its unmistakable suggestion of a sneer, for, as Oscar reminds us with his customary good sense, a work of art is not measured by its area. But I do not know any phrase so convenient as “minor poet” to suggest a poet who does not work on the grand scale, such as Robert Browning, and does not have to his credit a considerable number of top-flight songs and short poems, such as Herrick and Burns and Shelley. John Fletcher, who, putting aside his plays, wrote about twenty first-rate songs, can never be sneeringly called a minor poet without injustice.

There are many kinds of minor poets and many degrees of merit in them—or, better, many degrees of pleasure they can give. But who will define and range them? Who determine for us exactly what in them is meritorious or pleasurable? That, I suppose, is what critics believe they do define, pleasingly blind to the fact that no species of writing is so subject to speedy mortality as criticism, few so unattractive, and few so liable to sudden, unexpected and paradoxical change. Criticism, indeed, presents us with something of a dilemma. Those who follow it too obediently or try to direct it too haughtily invariably fall into one or other of the different kinds of pedantry which modern slang labels “highbrow”. And those who reject it entirely are inevitably infected by one or many of the forms of vulgarity. We should probably use criticism chiefly as a prophylaxis—a small astringent dose of quinine against the malaria of journalism.

In revolt against the abstract criticism of the eighteenth century the English æsthetes preached and indeed frequently practised definition of Beauty in the most concrete terms. They refused to attempt the futile task of finding precise abstract definitions of such already abstract terms as Beauty, the Sublime and so forth. Nor had they reached the stage of intellectual impudence which consists in a queer sort of showing off—the critics all along obliquely trying to demonstrate how much cleverer they are than the mere makers. Criticism as a series of trite generalisations wrapped up in pretentious quasi-metaphysical language had scarcely been invented. Indeed Walter Pater (who knew something about philosophy, since he received his Fellowship for his knowledge of Hegel) was the foremost opponent of all such facile generalities and abstractions. “To philosophise is to vivify”, he says somewhere quoting a German philosopher; and this, if accepted, would seem to excuse us from reading much that has passed as philosophical criticism.

While they taught their poets to look for beauty in all concrete forms which move the senses (I avoid here the obvious tag from Théophile Gautier) the æsthetes also insisted that all Art is Praise. This strangely enough was believed by George Moore as well as by Ruskin, neither of whom however held himself very literally to his own precept—Ruskin being as incorrigible a scold as Moore was a merciless gossip. In fact, “All Art is Praise” is, like “Art for Art’s Sake”, among those

very formulæ and abstractions which the æsthetes wanted to avoid; and as both lend themselves easily to misrepresentation the two just quoted harmed them very much. They seem less baneful to-day than they appeared forty or fifty years ago. Indeed, there may be something to be said for them when so much art, under colour of realism, tends toward denigration and even life-hatred; and when writers who are not journalists with social security cards turn out to be distinguished amateurs writing only for money.

The reader will not, I hope, now expect me either to define what I mean by an æsthetic poet or to utter quasi-metaphysical commonplaces about æsthetic poetry. If we cannot take Art and Literature with a certain lightness, among the many pleasures of life, let us take to grave-digging as a relaxation. The poetical contents of this book may be taken to indicate what I think are specimens of the English æsthetic poets, but I should like to insist that these are dependent on the hazards of reading and the uncertainties of one reader's taste.

I would not have it supposed that I think every poet represented here was an æsthete always throughout his writing career. On the contrary, some, a good many, passed through a more or less fervid æsthetic phase and then emerged sometimes as enemies or at best luke-warm friends. I have inclined to mark as undergoing the æsthetic phase any poet who seriously composed ballades, rondeaus, and such elegant trifles which depend almost wholly on æsthetic effects of form. I am confirmed in this view by noticing that such of these poets as survived into a darker epoch hastened to obliterate all trace of such frivolities from their collected works. This is regrettable, for a pretty triolet or happily laboured sestina may be pleasanter to linger over than the moral platitudes or fatuous chauvinism of such writers as Alfred Austin and William Watson—the alpha and omega, so to speak, of the poetic world which, breathing heavily, deplored or denounced “The Foreigner”. After two tragical wars the brags and threatenings of such platonic heroes are distasteful. A poet, moreover, like Austin, who praised the spring because it was British, inevitably reminds me of the Andalusian cookery book which praised the sun because it shone over Spain (and nowhere else apparently), “our own National Sun”.

This brings us low, but will at all events indicate that I have sought æsthetic poetry even among the least likely writers of

the period from the eighteen-seventies to the beginning of this century. That I have missed some is certain, that I may have put in some poems which have little claim to real æstheticism is probable.

The practical difficulties of this anthology have not been lessened by the fact already referred to, that I have covered some of the ground in other books. As far as possible I have tried to avoid duplication, but it was unavoidable to give some Pater and Wilde. Until I attempted it, I had no idea how hard it is to give by quotations an adequate idea of Ruskin at his best. Perhaps the reason is that he is only at his best for brief moments, while he is often a mixture of good and bad, prejudice and wisdom, knowledge and wilful darkness. Take another problem—the prose of poets. What is one to give of Swinburne, say, or of Morris? Even in the case of Rossetti, where the choice lies mainly between *Hand and Soul* and the unfinished *Saint Agnes of Intercession*, falling back on the former looks unenterprising. Swinburne's cataracts of speech, far from convincing a reader by a "Cyclopæan ponderosity of perseverance", tend to discourage his good will. And Morris? *The Story of the Unknown Church* and *The Hollow Land*, *Gertha's Lovers* and *Lindenberg Pool* and all the other early prose pieces have one by one been considered and rejected. The longer romances, such as *The House of the Wolfings* and *The Roots of the Mountains* and so forth, contain too much of the facile fighting of a man who never heard the bitter blast of guns aimed to kill. Though this prose was admired by men so dissimilar as Yeats and George Moore, I have thought it best to limit Morris to a chapter from *News from Nowhere*, which presents us with Morris's prophecy of what education and architecture would be in Socialist England.

The reader will not, I hope, think I am so childish and mechanical as to measure the importance of a writer by the number of lines and pages allotted to him—as if one could represent eloquence by an epigram, or should drink liqueur from a pint pot. But in the case of poets so well-known and comparatively available as Rossetti, Swinburne and Morris I have deliberately kept to a few characteristically æsthetic poems, such as *Faustine*, *Love's Nocturn* and *Spell-Bound*. The much scarcer though lesser poets have been treated liberally, as less likely to be available in the present scarcity of books.

The more or less realistic short story, as practised by

Dowson and Crackenthorp, George Egerton, Ella d'Arcy, Frederick Wedmore and many others, seems quite out of place here. Should one not give something from Stevenson, such as *A Lodging for the Night* or *The Sieur de Maletroit's Door?*" But they are easily available, and Oscar's stories—*Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*—have worn less well than his other work. I think it indisputable that the contemporary Americans were better at the short story than the English. But it is a form which soon grows aged and tedious, and almost the one unbreakable anthology rule is never to include anything that bores one, however much others may have praised it.

I had intended to include specimens of the above-mentioned "æsthetic" Homer and Vergil, Theocritus and Greek Anthology, Dante and Villon and Verlaine, but soon realised that this was going to be too bulky and had to limit such material to essays which happened to quote some of them. Æstheticism, which with some was a life-long passion and substitute for religion, with others was a phase of varying duration. Even Oscar, who considered himself the prophet of what he pretentiously and absurdly called "the English Renaissance", abandoned æstheticism under the gentle suasion of the treadmill and crank handle. Strange how all discussions on the English æsthetes seem fatally to lead to some reference to that squalid drama in the Old Bailey. Whatever was condemned there, it is certain that æstheticism was not acquitted; and whatever was left undetermined, none but the wilfully blind can deny that the immense majority of the English gladly turned their backs for ever on that Beauty, whether real or ideal, of which the æsthetes had hoped so much.

In conclusion I wish to make two personal acknowledgements. I want to thank Mr. William Dibben for his energetic and unselfish help in buying for me copies of scarce books, and Mr. Alister Kershaw for his endless patience in transcribing and his always valuable suggestions and criticisms.

My title is derived from an essay by F. W. H. Myers, whose *Rossetti and the Religion of Beauty* will be found here.

I am under a special obligation to Mrs. Yeats and Mr. Medley (the executors of W. B. Yeats and George Moore respectively), who very kindly allowed me to use early texts which were afterwards revised and altered by these fastidious artists. I deliberately used these early texts as belonging to the æsthetic epoch, but these versions should not be reproduced.

THE
RELIGION OF BEAUTY
SELECTIONS FROM THE *ÆSTHETES*

JOHN RUSKIN

FROM *Modern Painters*

Few people, comparatively, have ever seen the effect on the sea of a powerful gale continued without intermission for three or four days and nights, and to those who have not, I believe it must be unimaginable, not from the mere force or size of surge, but from the complete annihilation of the limit between sea and air. The water from its prolonged agitation is beaten, not into mere creaming foam, but into masses of accumulated yeast, which hang in ropes and wreaths from wave to wave, and where one curls over to break, form a festoon like a drapery, from its edge: these are taken up by the wind, not in dissipating dust, but bodily, in writhing, hanging, coiling masses, which make the air white and thick as with snow, only the flakes are a foot or two long each; the surges themselves are full of foam in their very bodies, underneath, making them white all through, as the water is under a great cataract; and their masses, being thus half-water and half-air, are torn to pieces by the wind whenever they rise, and carried away in roaring smoke, which chokes and strangles like actual water. Add to this, that when the air has been exhausted of its moisture by long rain, the spray of the sea is caught by it as described above and covers its surface not merely with the smoke of finely divided water, but with boiling mist; imagine also the low rain-clouds brought down to the very level of the sea, as I have often seen them, whirling and flying in rags and fragments from wave to wave; and finally, conceive the surges themselves in their utmost pitch of power, velocity, vastness, and madness, lifting themselves in precipices and peaks, furrowed with their whirl of ascent, through all this chaos; and you will understand that there is indeed no distinction left between the sea and air; that no object, nor horizon, nor any landmark or natural evidence of position is left; that the heaven is all spray, and the ocean all cloud, and that you can see no farther in any direction than you could see through a cataract. Suppose the effect of the first sunbeam sent from above to show this annihilation to itself, and you have the sea picture of the Academy, 1842 "Snow-storm", one of the very grandest statements of sea-motion, mist, and light that has ever been put on canvas even by Turner. Of course it was not understood; his finest works never are; but

there was some apology for the public's not comprehending this, for few people have had the opportunity of seeing the sea at such a time, and when they have, cannot face it. To hold by a mast or a rock, and watch it, is a prolonged endurance of drowning which few people have courage to go through. To those who have, it is one of the noblest lessons of nature.

But, I think, the noblest sea that Turner has ever painted, and, if so, the noblest certainly ever painted by man, is that of the "Slave Ship," the chief Academy picture of the Exhibition of 1840. It is a sunset on the Atlantic, after prolonged storm; but the storm is partially lulled, and the torn and streaming rain-clouds are moving in scarlet lines to lose themselves in the hollow of the night. The whole surface of sea included in the picture is divided into two ridges of enormous swell, not high, not local, but a low, broad heaving of the whole ocean, like the lifting of its bosom by deep drawn breath after the torture of the storm. Between these two ridges the fire of the sunset falls along the trough of the sea, dyeing it with an awful but glorious light, the intense and lurid splendour which burns like gold, and bathes like blood. Along this fiery path and valley, the tossing waves by which the swell of the sea is restlessly divided, lift themselves in dark, indefinite, fantastic forms, each casting a faint and ghastly shadow behind it along the illumined foam. They do not rise everywhere, but three or four together in wild groups, fitfully and furiously, as the under strength of the swell compels or permits them; leaving between them treacherous spaces of level and whirling water, now lighted with green and lamp-like fire, now flashing back the gold of the declining sun, now fearfully dyed from above with the indistinguishable images of the burning clouds, which fall upon them in flakes of crimson and scarlet, and give to the reckless waves the added motion of their own fiery flying. Purple and blue, the lurid shadows of the hollow breakers are cast upon the mist of the night, which gathers cold and low, advancing like the shadow of death upon the guilty* ship as it labours amidst the lightning of the sea, its thin masts written upon the sky in lines of blood, girded with condemnation in that fearful hue which signs the sky with horror, and mixes its flaming flood with the sunlight—and cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, incarnadines the multitudinous sea.

* She is a slaver, throwing her slaves overboard. The near sea is encumbered with corpses.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Within the Vell

She holds a lily in her hand,
Where long ranks of Angels stand,
A silver lily for her wand.

All her hair falls sweeping down;
Her hair that is a golden brown,
A crown beneath her golden crown.

Blooms a rose-bush at her knee,
Good to smell and good to see:
It bears a rose for her, for me;

Her rose a blossom richly grown,
My rose a bud not fully blown,
But sure one day to be mine own.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

The Blessed Damozel

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
 Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
Fell all about my face
Nothing: the autumn-fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remembered names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened? When those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come," she said.
"Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?"

"When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! we two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
 And foreheads garlanded;
 Into the fine cloth white like flame
 Weaving the golden thread,
 To fashion the birth-robcs for them
 Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
 Then will I lay my cheek
 To his, and tell about our love,
 Not once abashed or weak:
 And the dear Mother will approve
 My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
 To Him round whom all souls
 Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
 Bowed with their aureoles:
 And angels meeting us shall sing
 To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
 Thus much for him and me:—
 Only to live as once on earth
 With Love,—only to be,
 As then awhile, for ever now
 Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
 Less sad of speech than mild,—
 "All this is when he comes." She ceased.
 The light thrilled towards her, fill'd
 With angels in strong level flight.
 Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
 Was vague in distant spheres:
 And then she cast her arms along
 The golden barriers,
 And laid her face between her hands,
 And wept. (I heard her tears.)

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

FROM *The Genius of the Vatican*

Still as I gaze, 'Sad spirit, come away!
 Thy mute meek lips most eloquently urge:
 'Why thus life's music in sad wailings merge,
 And dim with tearful toil youth's opening day?

Oh, come away! Some woodland we will seek,
And lie together by the stream, and twine
Rare flowers to wreath our hair, and drink the wine
Distilled from berries. There the day shall break
With sunshine o'er us; Hesper silently
Lead forth the silver stars that dance in heaven;
And thou shalt learn what depth of joy is given
To lips divine, immortal minstrelsy;
Till books and schools and courts and honours seem
The far-off echo of a sick man's dream.'

JOHN RUSKIN

Torcello

Seven miles to the north of Venice, the banks of sand, which near the city rise little above low-water mark, attain by degrees a higher level, and knit themselves at last into fields of salt morass, raised here and there into shapeless mounds, and intercepted by narrow creeks of sea. One of the feeblest of these inlets, after winding for some time among buried fragments of masonry, and knots of sunburnt weeds whitened with webs of fucus, stays itself in an utterly stagnant pool beside a plot of greener grass covered with ground ivy and violets. On this mound is built a rude brick campanile, of the commonest Lombardic type, which if we ascend towards evening (and there are none to hinder us, the door of its ruinous staircase swinging idly on its hinges), we may command from it one of the most notable scenes in this wide world of ours. Far as the eye can reach, a waste of wild sea moor, of a lurid ashen grey; not like our northern moors with their jet-black pools and purple heath, but lifeless, the colour of sackcloth, with the corrupted sea-water soaking through the roots of its acrid weeds, and gleaming hither and thither through its snaky channels. No gathering of fantastic mists, nor coursing of clouds across it; but melancholy clearness of space in the warm sunset, oppressive, reaching to the horizon of its level gloom. To the very horizon, on the north-east; but, to the north and west, there is a blue line of higher land along the border of it, and above this, but further back, a misty band of mountains, touched with snow. To the east, the paleness and roar of the Adriatic, louder at momentary intervals as the surf breaks on the bars of sand; to the south, the widening branches of the

calm lagoon, alternately purple and pale green, as they reflect the evening clouds or twilight sky; and almost beneath our feet, on the same field which sustains the tower we gaze from, a group of four buildings, two of them little larger than cottages (though built of stone, and one adorned by a quaint belfry), the third an octagonal chapel, of which we can see but little more than the flat red roof with its rayed tiling, the fourth, a considerable church with nave and aisles, but of which, in like manner, we can see little but the long central ridge and lateral slopes of roof, which the sunlight separates in one glowing mass from the green field beneath and grey moor beyond. There are no living creatures near the buildings, nor any vestige of village or city round about them. They lie like a little company of ships becalmed on a far-away sea.

Then look farther to the south. Beyond the widening branches of the lagoon, and rising out of the bright lake into which they gather, there are a multitude of towers, dark, and scattered among square-set shapes of clustered palaces, a long and irregular line fretting the southern sky.

Mother and daughter, you behold them both in their widowhood—*Torcello and Venice*.

Thirteen hundred years ago, the grey moorland looked as it does this day, and the purple mountains stood as radiantly in the deep distances of evening; but on the line of the horizon, there were strange fires mixed with the light of sunset, and the lament of many human voices mixed with the fretting of the waves on their ridges of sand. The flames rose from the ruins of Altinum; the lament from the multitude of its people, seeking, like Israel of old, a refuge from the sword in the paths of the sea.

The cattle are feeding and resting upon the site of the city that they left; the mower's scythe swept this day at dawn over the chief street of the city that they built, and the swathes of soft grass are now sending up their scent into the night air, the only incense that fills the temple of their ancient worship. Let us go down into that little space of meadow land.

The inlet which runs nearest to the base of the campanile is not that by which Torcello is commonly approached. Another, somewhat broader, and overhung by alder copse, winds out of the main channel of the lagoon up to the very edge of the little meadow which was once the Piazza of the city, and there, stayed by a few grey stones which present some semblance of a

quay, forms its boundary at one extremity. Hardly larger than an ordinary English farmyard, and roughly enclosed on each side by broken palings and hedges of honeysuckle and briar, the narrow field retires from the water's edge, traversed by a scarcely traceable footpath, for some forty or fifty paces, and then expanding into the form of a small square, with buildings on three sides of it, the fourth being that which opens to the water. Two of these, that on our left and that in front of us as we approach from the canal, are so small that they might well be taken for the out-houses of the farm, though the first is a conventual building, and the other aspires to the title of the "Palazzo publico", both dating as far back as the beginning of the fourteenth century; the third, the octagonal church of Santo Fosca, is far more ancient than either, yet hardly on a larger scale. Though the pillars of the portico which surrounds it are of pure Greek marble, and their capitals are enriched with delicate sculpture, they, and the arches they sustain, together only raise the roof to the height of a cattle-shed; and the first strong impression which the spectator receives from the whole scene is, that whatever sin it may have been which has on this spot been visited with so utter a desolation, it could not at least have been ambition. Nor will this impression be diminished as we approach, or enter, the larger church to which the whole group of building is subordinate. It has evidently been built by men in flight and distress, who sought in the hurried erection of their island church such a shelter for their earnest and sorrowful worship as, on the one hand, could not attract the eyes of their enemies by its splendour, and yet, on the other, might not awaken too bitter feelings by its contrast with the churches which they had seen destroyed. There is visible everywhere a simple and tender effort to recover some of the form of the temples which they had loved, and to do honour to God by that which they were erecting, while distress and humiliation prevented the desire, and prudence precluded the admission, either of luxury or ornament or magnificence of plan. The exterior is absolutely devoid of decoration, with the exception only of the western entrance and the lateral door, of which the former has carved sideposts and architrave, and the latter, crosses of rich sculpture; while the massy stone shutters of the windows, turning on huge rings of stone, which answer the double purpose of stanchions and brackets, cause the whole building

rather to resemble a refuge from Alpine storm than the cathedral of a populous city, and, internally, the two solemn mosaics of the eastern and western extremities, one representing the Last Judgment, the other the Madonna, her tears falling as her hands are raised to bless, and the noble range of pillars which enclose the space between, terminated by the high throne for the pastor and the semi-circular raised seats for the superior clergy, are expressive at once of the deep sorrow and the sacred courage of men who had no home left them upon earth, but who looked for one to come, of men "persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed".

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Love's Nocturn

Master of the murmuring courts
 Where the shapes of sleep convene!—
 Lo! my spirit here exhorts
 All the powers of thy demesne
 For their aid to woo my queen.
 What reports
 Yield thy jealous courts unseen?

Vaporous, unaccountable,
 Dreamland lies forlorn of light,
 Hollow like a breathing shell.
 Ah! that from all dreams I might
 Choose one dream and guide its flight!
 I know well
 Well her sleep should tell to-night.

There the dreams are multitudes:
 Some whose buoyance waits not sleep,
 Deep within the August woods;
 Some that hum while rest may steep
 Weary labour laid a-heap;
 Interludes,
 Some, of grievous moods that weep.

Poets' fancies all are there:
 There the elf-girls flood with wings
 Valleys full of plaintive air;
 There breathe perfumes; there in rings
 Whirl the foam-bewildered springs;
 Siren there
 Winds her dizzy hair and sings.

Thence the one dream mutually
 Dreamed in bridal unison,
Less than waking ecstasy;
 Half-formed visions that make moan
 In the house of birth alone;
 And what we
At death's wicket see, unknown.

But for mine own sleep, it lies
 In one gracious form's control,
Fair with honourable eyes,
 Lamps of an auspicious soul:
 O their glance is loftiest dole,
 Sweet and wise,
Wherein Love descries his goal.

Reft of her, my dreams are all
 Clammy trance that fears the sky:
Changing footpaths shift and fall;
 From polluted coverts nigh,
 Miserable phantoms sigh;
 Quakes the pall,
And the funeral goes by.

Master, is it soothly said
 That, as echoes of man's speech
Far in secret clefts are made,
 So do all men's bodies reach
 Shadows o'er thy sunken beach,—
 Shape or shade
In those halls portrayed of each?

Ah! might I, by thy good grace
 Groping in the windy stair
(Darkness and the breath of space
 Like loud waters everywhere),
 Meeting mine own image there
 Face to face,
Send it from that place to her!

Nay, not I; but oh! do thou,
 Master, from thy shadowkind
Call my body's phantom now:
 Bid it bear its face declin'd
 Till its flight her slumbers find,
 And her brow
Feel its presence bow like wind.

Where in groves the gracile Spring
Trembles, with mute orison
Confidently strengthening,
Water's voice and wind's as one
Shed an echo in the sun.
Soft as Spring,
Master, bid it sing and moan.

Song shall tell how glad and strong
Is the night she soothes away;
Moan shall grieve with that parched tongue
Of the brazen hours of day:
Sounds as of the springtide they,
Moan and song,
While the chill months long for May.

Not the prayers which with all leave
The world's fluent woes prefer—
Not the praise the world doth give,
Dulcet fulsome whisperer;—
Let it yield my love to her,
And achieve
Strength that shall not grieve or err.

Wheresoe'er my dreams befall,
Both at night-watch (let it say),
And where round the sundial
The reluctant hours of day,
Heartless, hopeless of their way,
Rest and call;—
There her glance doth fall and stay.

Suddenly her face is there:
So do mounting vapours wreath
Subtle-scented transports where
The black firwood sets its teeth.
Part the boughs and look beneath,—
Lilies share
Secret waters there, and breathe.

Master, bid my shadow bend
Whispering thus till birth of light,
Lest new shapes that sleep may send
Scatter all its work to flight;—
Master, master of the night,
Bid it spend
Speech, song, prayer, and end aright.

Yet, ah me! if at her head
 There another phantom lean
 Murmuring o'er the fragrant bed,—
 Ah! and if my spirit's queen
 Smile those alien words between,—
 Ah! poor shade!
 Shall it strive, or fade unseen?

How should love's own messenger
 Strive with love and be love's foe?
 Master, nay! If thus, in her,
 Sleep a wedded heart should show,—
 Silent let mine image go,
 Its old share
 Of thy spell-bound air to know.

Like a vapour wan and mute,
 Like a flame, so let it pass;
 One low sigh across her lute,
 One dull breath against her glass
 And to my sad soul, alas!
 One salute
 Cold as when death's foot shall pass.

Then, too, let all hopes of mine,
 All vain hopes by night and day,
 Slowly at thy summoning sign
 Rise up pallid and obey.
 Dreams, if this be thus, were they:
 Be they thine,
 And to dreamland pine away.

Yet from old time, life, not death,
 Master, in thy rule is rife:
 Lo! through thee, with mingling breath,
 Adam woke beside his wife.
 O Love bring me so, for strife,
 Force and faith,
 Bring me so not death but life!

Yea, to Love himself is pour'd
 This frail song of hope and fear.
 Thou art Love, of one accord
 With kind Sleep to bring her near,
 Still-eyed, deep-eyed, ah how dear!
 Master, Lord,
 In her name implor'd, O hear!

JOHN RUSKIN

FROM *Lectures on Art*

But if either our work, or our enquiries, are to be indeed successful in their own field, they must be connected with others of a sterner character. Now listen to me, if I have in these past details lost or burdened your attention; for this is what I have chiefly to say to you. The art of any country is the exponent of its social and political virtues. I will show you that it is so in some detail, in the second of my subsequent course of lectures; meantime accept this as one of the things, and the most important of all things, I can positively declare to you. The art, or general productive and formative energy, of any country, is an exact exponent of its ethical life. You can have noble art only from noble persons, associated under laws fitted to their time and circumstances. And the best skill that any teacher of art could spend here in your help, would not end in enabling you even so much as rightly to draw the water-lilies in the Cherwell (and though it did, the work when done would not be worth the lilies themselves) unless both you and he were seeking, as I trust we shall together seek, in the laws which regulate the finest industries, the clue to the laws which regulate *all* industries, and in better obedience to which we shall actually have henceforward to live, not merely in compliance with our own sense of what is right, but under the weight of quite literal necessity. For the trades by which the British people has believed it to be the highest of destinies to maintain itself, cannot now long remain undisputed in its hands; its unemployed poor are daily becoming more violently criminal; and a searching distress in the middle classes, arising partly from their vanity in living always up to their incomes, and partly from their folly in imagining that they can subsist in idleness upon usury, will at last compel the sons and daughters of English families to acquaint themselves with the principles of providential economy; and to learn that food can only be got out of the ground, and competence only secured by frugality; and that although it is not possible for all to be occupied in the highest arts, nor for any, guiltlessly, to pass their days in a succession of pleasures, the most perfect mental culture possible to men is founded on their useful energies, and their

best arts and brightest happiness are consistent, and consistent only, with their virtue.

This I repeat, gentlemen, will soon become manifest to those among us, and there are yet many, who are honest-hearted. And the future fate of England depends upon the position they then take, and on their courage in maintaining it.

There is a destiny now possible to us—the highest ever set before a nation to be accepted or refused. We are still undegenerate in race; a race mingled of the best northern blood. We are not yet dissolute in temper, but still have the firmness to govern, and the grace to obey. We have been taught a religion of pure mercy, which we must either now finally betray, or learn to defend by fulfilling. And we are rich in an inheritance of honour, bequeathed to us through a thousand years of noble history, which it should be our daily thirst to increase with splendid avarice, so that Englishmen, if it be a sin to covet honour, should be the most offending souls alive. Within the last few years we have had the laws of natural science opened to us with a rapidity which has been blinding by its brightness; and means of transit and communication given to us, which have made but one kingdom of the habitable globe. One kingdom; but who is to be its king? Is there to be no king in it, think you, and every man to do that which is right in his own eyes? Or only kings of terror, and the obscene empires of Mammon and Belial? Or will you, youths of England, make your country again a royal throne of kings; a sceptred isle, for all the world a source of light, a centre of peace; mistress of Learning and of the Arts; faithful guardian of great memories in the midst of irreverent and ephemeral visions; a faithful servant of time-tried principles, under temptation from fond experiments and licentious desires; and, amidst the cruel and clamorous jealousies of the nations, worshipped in her strange valour, of goodwill towards men?

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Hand and Soul

*Rivolsimi in quel lato
 La onde venia la voce,
 E parvemi una luce
 Che lucea quanto stella:
 La mia menta era quella.**

Bonaggiunta Urbiciani (1250)

Before any knowledge of painting was brought to Florence, there were already painters in Lucca, and Pisa, and Arezzo, who feared God and loved the art. The workmen from Greece, whose trade it was to sell their own works in Italy and teach Italians to imitate them, had already found in rivals of the soil a skill that could forestall their lessons and cheapen their labours, more years than is supposed before the art came at all into Florence. The pre-eminence to which Cimabue was raised at once by his contemporaries, and which he still retains to a wide extent even in the modern mind, is to be accounted for, partly by the circumstances under which he arose, and partly by that extraordinary purpose of fortune born with the lives of some few, and through which it is not a little thing for any who went before, if they are even remembered as the shadows of the coming of such an one, and the voices which prepared his way in the wilderness. It is thus, almost exclusively, that the painters of whom I speak are now known. They have left little, and but little heed is taken of that which men hold to have been surpassed; it is gone like time gone, a track of dust and dead leaves that merely led to the fountain.

Nevertheless, of very late years and in very rare instances, some signs of a better understanding have become manifest. A case in point is that of the triptych and two cruciform pictures at Dresden, by Chiaro di Messer Bello dell' Erma, to which the eloquent pamphlet of Dr. Aemmster has at length succeeded in attracting the students. There is another still more solemn and

- * I turned me to the side
 Whence came the voice,
 And there appeared to me a light
 That shone bright as a star:
 My own soul it was.
 (William Sharp.)

beautiful work, now proved to be by the same hand, in the Pitti gallery at Florence. It is the one to which my narrative will relate.

This Chiaro dell' Erma was a young man of very honourable family in Arezzo; where, conceiving art almost for himself, he endeavoured from early boyhood toward the imitation of any objects offered in nature. The extreme longing after a visible embodiment of his thoughts strengthened as his years increased, more even than his sinews or the blood of his life; until he would feel faint in sunsets and at the sight of stately persons. When he had lived nineteen years, he heard of the famous Giunta Pisano; and, feeling much of admiration, with perhaps a little of that envy which youth always feels until it has learned to measure success by time and opportunity, he determined that he would seek out Giunta, and, if possible, become his pupil.

Having arrived in Pisa, he clothed himself in humble apparel, being unwilling that any other thing than the desire he had for knowledge should be his plea with the great painter; and then, leaving his baggage at a house of entertainment, he took his way along the street, asking whom he met for the lodging of Giunta. It soon chanced that one of that city, conceiving him to be a stranger and poor, took him into his house and refreshed him; afterwards directing him on his way.

When he was brought to speech of Giunta, he said merely that he was a student, and that nothing in the world was so much at his heart as to become that which he had heard told of him with whom he was speaking. He was received with courtesy and consideration, and soon stood among the works of the famous artist. But the forms he saw there were lifeless and incomplete; and a sudden exultation possessed him as he said within himself: "I am the master of this man." The blood came at first into his face, but the next moment he was quite pale and fell to trembling. He was able, however, to conceal his emotion; speaking very little to Giunta, but when he took his leave, thanking him respectfully.

After this, Chiaro's first resolve was, that he would work out thoroughly some one of his thoughts, and let the world know him. But the lesson which he had now learned, of how small a greatness might win fame, and how little there was to strive against, served to make him torpid, and rendered his exertions less continual. Also Pisa was a larger and more luxurious city

than Arezzo; and when, in his walks, he saw the great gardens laid out for pleasure, and the beautiful women who passed to and fro, and heard the music that was in the groves of the city at evening, he was taken with wonder that he had never claimed his share of the inheritance of those years in which his youth was cast. And women loved Chiaro; for, in despite of the burthen of study, he was well-favoured and very manly in his walking; and, seeing his face in front, there was a glory upon it, as upon the face of one who feels a light round his hair.

So he put thought from him, and partook of his life. But, one night, being in a certain company of ladies, a gentleman that was there with him began to speak of the paintings of a youth named Bonaventura, which he had seen in Lucca; adding that Giunta Pisano might now look for a rival. When Chiaro heard this, the lamps shook before him and the music beat in his ears. He rose up, alleging a sudden sickness, and went out of that house with his teeth set. And, being again within his room, he wrote up over the door the name of Bonaventura, that it might stop him when he would go out.

He now took to work diligently, not returning to Arezzo, but remaining in Pisa, that no day more might be lost; only living entirely to himself. Sometimes, after nightfall, he would walk abroad in the most solitary places he could find; hardly feeling the ground under him, because of the thoughts of the day which held him in fever.

The lodging Chiaro had chosen was in a house that looked upon gardens fast by the Church of San Petronio. It was here, and at this time, that he painted the Dresden pictures; as also, in all likelihood, the one—inferior in merit, but certainly his—which is now at Munich. For the most part he was calm and regular in his manner of study; though often he would remain at work through the whole of a day, not resting once so long as the light lasted; flushed, and with the hair from his face. Or, at times, when he could not paint, he would sit for hours in thought of all the greatness the world had known from of old; until he was weak with yearning, like one who gazes upon a path of stars.

He continued in this patient endeavour for about three years, at the end of which his name was spoken throughout all Tuscany. As his fame waxed, he began to be employed, besides easel-pictures, upon wall-paintings: but I believe that no traces remain to us of any of these latter. He is said to have painted in

the Duomo; and D'Agincourt mentions having seen some portions of a picture by him which originally had its place above the high altar in the Church of the Certosa; but which, at the time he saw it, being very dilapidated, had been hewn out of the wall, and was preserved in the stores of the convent. Before the period of Dr. Aemmster's researches, however, it had been entirely destroyed.

Chiario was now famous. It was for the race of fame that he had girded up his loins; and he had not paused until fame was reached; yet now, in taking breath, he found that the weight was still at his heart. The years of his labour had fallen from him, and his life was still in its first painful desire.

With all that Chiario had done during these three years, and even before with the studies of his early youth, there had always been a feeling of worship and service. It was the peace-offering that he made to God and to his own soul for the eager selfishness of his aim. There was earth, indeed, upon the hem of his raiment; but *this* was of the heaven, heavenly. He had seasons when he could endure to think of no other feature of his hope than this. Sometimes it had even seemed to him to behold that day when his mistress—his mystical lady (now hardly in her ninth year, but whose smile at meeting had already lighted on his soul)—even she, his own gracious Italian Art—should pass, through the sun that never sets, into the shadow of the tree of life, and be seen of God and found good: and then it had seemed to him that he, with many who, since his coming, had joined the band of whom he was one (for, in his dream, the body he had worn on earth had been dead a hundred years), were permitted to gather round the blessed maiden, and to worship with her through all ages and ages of ages, saying, Holy, holy, holy. This thing he had seen with the eyes of his spirit; and in this thing had trusted, believing that it would surely come to pass.

But now (being at length led to inquire closely into himself), even as, in the pursuit of fame, the unrest abiding after attainment had proved to him that he had misinterpreted the craving of his own spirit—so also, now that he would willingly have fallen back on devotion, he became aware that much of that reverence which he had mistaken for faith had been no more than the worship of beauty. Therefore, after certain days passed in perplexity, Chiario said within himself: "My life and my will are yet before me: I will take another aim to my life."

From that moment Chiaro set a watch on his soul and put his hand to no other works but only to such as had for their end the presentment of some moral greatness that should influence the beholder: and to this end, he multiplied abstractions, and forgot the beauty and passion of the world. So the people ceased to throng about his pictures as heretofore; and, when they were carried through town and town to their destination, they were no longer delayed by the crowds eager to gaze and admire; and no prayers or offerings were brought to them on their path, as to his Madonnas, and his Saints, and his Holy Children, wrought for the sake of the life he saw in the faces that he loved. Only the critical audience remained to him; and these, in default of more worthy matter, would have turned their scrutiny on a puppet or a mantle. Meanwhile, he had no more of fever upon him; but was calm and pale each day in all that he did and in his goings in and out. The works he produced at this time have perished—in all likelihood, not unjustly. It is said (and we may easily believe it), that, though more laboured than his former pictures, they were cold and unemphatic; bearing marked out upon them the measure of that boundary to which they were made to conform.

And the weight was still close at Chiaro's heart: but he held in his breath, never resting (for he was afraid), and would not know it.

Now it happened, within these days, that there fell a great feast in Pisa, for holy matters: and each man left his occupation; and all the guilds and companies of the city were got together for games and rejoicings. And there were scarcely any that stayed in the houses, except ladies who lay or sat along their balconies between open windows which let the breeze beat through the rooms and over the spread tables from end to end. And the golden cloths that their arms lay upon drew all eyes upward to see their beauty; and the day was long; and every hour of the day was bright with the sun.

So Chiaro's model, when he awoke that morning on the hot pavement of the Piazza Nunziata, and saw the hurry of people that passed him, got up and went along with them; and Chiaro waited for him in vain.

For the whole of that morning, the music was in Chiaro's room from the church close at hand; and he could hear the sounds that the crowd made in the streets: hushed only at long intervals while the processions for the feast-day chanted in

going under his windows. Also, more than once, there was a high clamour from the meeting of factious persons: for the ladies of both leagues were looking down; and he who encountered his enemy could not choose but draw upon him. Chiaro waited a long time idle; and then knew that his model was gone elsewhere. When at his work, he was blind and deaf to all else; but he feared sloth: for then his stealthy thoughts would begin to beat round and round him, seeking a point for attack. He now rose, therefore, and went to the window. It was within a short space of noon; and underneath him a throng of people was coming out through the porch of San Petronio.

The two greatest houses of the feud in Pisa had filled the church for that mass. The first to leave had been the Gherghiotti; who, stopping on the threshold, had fallen back in ranks along each side of the archway: so that now, in passing outward, the Marotoli had to walk between two files of men whom they hated, and whose fathers had hated theirs. All the chiefs were there and their whole adherents; and each knew the name of each. Every man of the Marotoli, as he came forth and saw his foes, laid back his hood and gazed about him, to show the badge upon the close cap that held his hair. And of the Gherghiotti there were some who tightened their girdles; and some shrilled and threw up their wrists scornfully, as who flies a falcon; for that was the crest of their house.

On the walls within the entry were a number of tall narrow pictures, presenting a moral allegory of Peace, which Chiaro had painted that year for the church. The Gherghiotti stood with their backs to these frescoes; and among them Golzo Ninuccio, the youngest noble of the faction, called by the people Golaghiotta, for his debased life. This youth had remained for some while talking listlessly to his fellows, though with his sleepy sunken eyes fixed on them who passed: but now, seeing that no man jostled another, he drew the long silver shoe off his foot and struck the dust out of it on the cloak of him who was going by, asking him how far the tides rose at Viderza. And he said so because it was three months since, at that place, the Gherghiotti had beaten the Marotoli to the sands, and held them there while the sea came in; whereby many had been drowned. And, when he had spoken, at once the whole archway was dazzling with the light of confused swords; and they who had left turned back; and they who were

still behind made haste to come forth; and there was so much blood cast up the walls on a sudden, that it ran in long streams down Chiaro's paintings.

Chiaro turned himself from the window; for the light felt dry between his lids, and he could not look. He sat down, and heard the noise of contention driven out of the church-porch and a great way through the streets; and soon there was a deep murmur that heaved and waxed from the other side of the city, where those of both parties were gathering to join in the tumult.

Chiaro sat with his face in his open hands. Once again he had wished to set his foot on a place that looked green and fertile; and once again it seemed to him that the thin rank mask was about to spread away, and that this time the chill of the water must leave leprosy in his flesh. The light still swam in his head, and bewildered him at first; but when he knew his thoughts, they were these:—

"Fame failed me: faith failed me: and now this also—the hope that I nourished in this my generation of men—shall pass from me, and leave my feet and my hands groping. Yet because of this are my feet become slow and my hands thin. I am as one who, through the whole night, holding his way diligently, hath smitten the steel unto the flint, to lead some whom he knew darkling; who hath kept his eyes always on the sparks that himself made, lest they should fail; and who, towards dawn, turning to bid them that he had guided God speed, sees the wet grass untrampled except of his own feet. I am as the last hour of the day, whose chimes are a perfect number; whom the next followeth not, nor light ensueth from him; but in the same darkness is the old order begun afresh. Men say, 'This is not God nor man; he is not as we are, neither above us: let him sit beneath us, for we are many.' Where I write Peace, in that spot is the drawing of swords, and there men's footprints are red. When I would sow, another harvest is ripe. Nay, it is much worse with me than thus much. Am I not as a cloth drawn before the light, that the looker may not be blinded? but which sheweth thereby the grain of its own coarseness, so that the light seems defiled, and men say, 'We will not walk by it.' Wherefore through me they shall be doubly accursed, seeing that through me they reject the light. May one be a devil and not know it?"

As Chiaro was in these thoughts, the fever encroached

slowly on his veins, till he could sit no longer and would have risen; but suddenly he found awe within him, and held his head bowed, without stirring. The warmth of the air was not shaken: but there seemed a pulse in the light, and a living freshness, like rain. The silence was a painful music, that made the blood ache in his temples; and he lifted his face and his deep eyes.

A woman was present in his room, clad to the hands and feet with a green and grey raiment, fashioned to that time. It seemed that the first thoughts he had ever known were given him as at first from her eyes, and he knew her hair to be the golden veil through which he beheld his dreams. Though her hands were joined, her face was not lifted, but set forward; and though the gaze was austere, yet her mouth was supreme in gentleness. And as he looked, Chiaro's spirit appeared abashed of its own intimate presence, and his lips shook with the thrill of tears; it seemed such a bitter while till the spirit might be indeed alone.

She did not move closer towards him, but he felt her to be as much with him as his breath. He was like one who, scaling a great steepness, hears his own voice echoed in some place much higher than he can see, and the name of which is not known to him. As the woman stood, her speech was with Chiaro: not, as it were, from her mouth or in his ears; but distinctly between them.

"I am an image, Chiaro, of thine own soul within thee. See me, and know me as I am. Thou sayest that fame has failed thee, and faith failed thee; but because at least thou hast not laid thy life unto riches, therefore, though thus late, I am suffered to come into thy knowledge. Fame sufficed not, for that thou didst seek fame: seek thine own conscience (not thy mind's conscience, but thine heart's), and all shall approve and suffice. For Fame, in noble soils, is a fruit of the Spring: but not therefore should it be said: 'Lo! my garden that I planted is barren: the crocus is here, but the lily is dead in the dry ground, and shall not lift the earth that covers it: therefore I will fling my garden together, and give it unto the builders.' Take heed rather that thou trouble not the wise secret earth; for in the mould that thou throwest up shall the first tender growth lie to waste; which else had been made strong in its season. Yea, and even if the year shall fall past in all its months, and the soil be indeed, to thee, peevish and incapable,

and though thou indeed gather all thy harvest, and it suffice for others, and thou remain vexed with emptiness; and others drink of thy streams, and the drouth rasp thy throat;—let it be enough that these have found the feast good, and thanked the giver: remembering that, when the winter is striven through, there is another year, whose wind is meek, and whose sun fulfilleth all.”

While he heard, Chiaro went slowly on his knees. It was not to her that spoke, for the speech seemed within him and his own. The air brooded in sunshine, and though the turmoil was great outside, the air within was at peace. But when he looked in her eyes, he wept. And she came to him, and cast her hair over him, and took her hands about his forehead, and spoke again:

“Thou hast said,” she continued, gently, “that faith failed thee. This cannot be. Either thou hadst it not, or thou hast it. But who bade thee strike the point betwixt love and faith? Wouldst thou sift the warm breeze from the sun that quickens it? Who bade thee turn upon God and say: ‘Behold, my offering is of earth, and not worthy: Thy fire comes not upon it, therefore, though I slay not my brother whom Thou acceptest, I will depart before Thou smite me.’ Why shouldst thou rise up and tell God He is not content? Had He, of His warrant, certified so to thee? Be not nice to seek out division; but possess thy love in sufficiency: assuredly this is faith, for the heart must believe first. What He hath set in thy heart to do, that do thou; and even though thou do it without thought of Him, it shall be well done; it is this sacrifice that He asketh of thee, and His flame is upon it for a sign. Think not of Him; but of His love and thy love. For with God is no lust of Godhead: He hath no hand to bow beneath, nor a foot, that thou shouldst kiss it.”

And Chiaro held silence, and wept into her hair which covered his face; and the salt tears that he shed ran through her hair upon his lips; and he tasted the bitterness of shame.

Then the fair woman, that was his soul, spoke again to him, saying:

“And for this thy last purpose, and for those unprofitable truths of thy teaching,—thine heart hath already put them away, and it needs not that I lay my bidding upon thee. How is it that thou, a man, wouldst say coldly to the mind that God hath said to the heart warmly? Thy will was honest and wholesome; but

look well lest this also be folly,—to say, ‘I, in doing this, do strengthen God among men.’ When at any time hath He cried unto thee, saying, ‘My son, lend Me thy shoulder, for I fall’? Deemest thou that the men who enter God’s temple in malice, to the provoking of blood, and neither for His love nor for His wrath will abate their purpose, shall afterwards stand, with thee in the porch midway between Him and themselves, to give ear unto thy thin voice, which merely the fall of their visors can drown, and to see thy hands, stretched feebly, tremble among their swords? Give thou to God no more than He asketh of thee; but to man also, that which is man’s. In all that thou doest, work from thine own heart, simply; for his heart is as thine, when thine is wise and humble; and he shall have understanding of thee. One drop of rain is as another, and the sun’s prism in all: and shalt thou not be as he, whose lives are the breath of One? Only by making thyself his equal can he learn to hold communion with thee, and at last own thee above him. Not till thou lean over the water shalt thou see thine image therein: stand erect, and it shall slope from thy feet and be lost. Know that there is but this means whereby thou mayest serve God with man:—Set thine hand and thy soul to serve man with God.”

And when she that spoke had said these words within Chiaro’s spirit, she left his side quietly, and stood up as he had first seen her: with her fingers laid together, and her eyes steadfast, and with the breadth of her long dress covering her feet on the floor. And, speaking again, she said:—

“Chiaro, servant of God, take now thine Art unto thee, and paint me thus, as I am, to know me: weak, as I am, and in the weeds of this time; only with eyes which seek out labour, and with a faith, not learned, yet jealous of prayer. Do this: so shall thy soul stand before thee always, and perplex thee no more.”

And Chiaro did as she bade him. While he worked, his face grew solemn with knowledge: and before the shadows had turned, his work was done. Having finished, he lay back where he sat, and was asleep immediately: for the growth of that strong sunset was heavy about him, and he felt weak and haggard; like one just come out of a dusk, hollow country, bewildered with echoes, where he had lost himself, and who has not slept for many days and nights. And when she saw him lie back, the beautiful woman came to him, and sat at his head, gazing, and quieted his sleep with her voice.

The tumult of the factions had endured all that day through all Pisa, though Chiaro had not heard it: and the last service of that feast was a mass sung at midnight from the windows of all the churches for the many dead who lay about the city, and who had to be buried before morning, because of the extreme heats.

In the spring of 1847, I was at Florence. Such as were there at the same time with myself—those, at least, to whom Art is something, will certainly recollect how many rooms of the Pitti Gallery were closed through that season, in order that some of the pictures they contained might be examined and repaired without the necessity of removal. The hall, the staircases, and the vast central suite of apartments, were the only accessible portions; and in these such paintings as they could admit from the sealed *penetralia* were profanely huddled together, without respect of dates, schools, or persons.

I fear that, through this interdict, I may have missed seeing many of the best pictures. I do not mean *only* the most talked of: for these, as they were restored, generally found their way somehow into the open rooms, owing to the clamours raised by the students; and I remember how old Ercoli's, the curator's, spectacles used to be mirrored in the reclaimed surface, as he leaned mysteriously over these works with some of the visitors, to scrutinise and elucidate.

One picture that I saw that spring, I shall not easily forget. It was among those, I believe, brought from the other rooms, and had been hung, obviously out of all chronology, immediately beneath that head by Raphael so long known as the *Berrettino*, and now said to be the portrait of Cecco Ciulli.

The picture I speak of is a small one, and represents merely the figure of a woman, clad to the hands and feet with a green and grey raiment, chaste and early in its fashion, but exceedingly simple. She is standing: her hands are held together lightly, and her eyes set earnestly open.

The face and hands in this picture, though wrought with great delicacy, have the appearance of being painted at once, in a single sitting: the drapery is unfinished. As soon as I saw the figure, it drew an awe upon me, like water in shadow. I shall not attempt to describe it more than I have already done; for the most absorbing wonder of it was its literality. You knew that figure, when painted, had been seen; yet it was not a thing

to be seen of men. This language will appear ridiculous to such as have never looked on the work; and it may be even to some among those who have. On examining it closely, I perceived in one corner of the canvas the words *Manus Animam pinxit*, and the date 1239.

I turned to my catalogue, but that was useless, for the pictures were all displaced. I then stepped up to the Cavaliere Ercoli, who was in the room at the moment, and asked him regarding the subject and authorship of the painting. He treated the matter, I thought, somewhat slightly, and said that he could show me the reference in the catalogue, which he had compiled. This, when found, was not of much value, as it merely said: "Schizzo d'autore incerto" adding the inscription.* I could willingly have prolonged my inquiry, in the hope that it might somehow lead to same result; but I had disturbed the curator from certain yards of Guido, and he was not communicative. I went back, therefore, and stood before the picture until it grew dusk.

The next day I was there again; but this time a circle of students was round the spot, all copying the *Berrettino*. I contrived, however, to find a place whence I could see *my* picture, and where I seemed to be in nobody's way. For some minutes I remained undisturbed; and then I heard, in an English voice: "Might I beg of you, sir, to stand a little more to this side, as you interrupt my view."

I felt vexed, for, standing where he asked me, a glare struck on the picture from the windows, and I could not see it. However, the request was reasonably made, and from a countryman; so I complied, and turning away, stood by his easel. I knew it was not worth while; yet I referred in some way to the work underneath the one he was copying. He did not laugh, but he smiled as we do in England. "Very odd, is it not?" said he.

The other students near us were all continental; and seeing an Englishman select an Englishman to speak with, conceived, I suppose, that he could understand no language but his

* I should here say, that in the latest catalogues (owing, as in cases before mentioned, to the zeal and enthusiasm of Dr. Aemmster), this, and several other pictures, have been more competently entered. The work in question is now placed in the Sala Sessagona, a room I did not see—under the number 161. It is described as "Figura mistica di Chiaro dell' Erma", and there is a brief notice of the author appended.

own. They had evidently been noticing the interest which the little picture appeared to excite in me.

One of them, an Italian, said something to another who stood next to him. He spoke with a Genoese accent, and I lost the sense in the villainous dialect. "Che so?" replied the other, lifting his eyebrows towards the figure; "roba mistica: 'st' Inglesi son matti sul misticismo: somiglia alle nebbie di la. Li fa pensare alla patria,

'e intenerisce il core
Lo di ch' han detto ai dolci amici addio.'"

"La notte, vuoi dire," said a third.

There was a general laugh. My compatriot was evidently a novice in the language, and did not take in what was said. I remained silent, being amused.

"Et toi donc?" said he who had quoted Dante, turning to a student, whose birthplace was unmistakable, even had he been addressed in any other language: "que dis-tu de ce genre-là?"

"Moi?" returned the Frenchman, standing back from his easel, and looking at me and at the figure, quite politely, though with an evident reservation: "Je dis, mon cher, que c'est une spécialité dont je me fiche pas mal. Je tiens que quand on ne comprend pas une chose, c'est qu'elle ne signifie rien."

My reader thinks possibly that the French student was right.

WILLIAM MORRIS

Praise of my Lady

My lady seems of ivory
Forehead, straight nose, and cheeks that be
Hollow'd a little mournfully.
Beata mea Domina!

Her forehead, overshadow'd much
By bows of hair, has a wave such
As God was good to make for me.
Beata mea Domina!

Not greatly long my lady's hair,
Nor yet with yellow colour fair,
But thick and crisped wonderfully:
Beata mea Domina!

Heavy to make the pale face sad,
And dark, but dead as though it had
Been forged by God most wonderfully
—*Beata mea Domina!*—

Of some strange metal, thread by thread,
To stand out from my lady's head,
Not moving much to tangle me.
Beata mea Domina!

Beneath her brows the lids fall slow,
The lashes a clear shadow throw
Where I would wish my lips to be.
Beata mea Domina!

Her great eyes, standing far apart,
Draw up some memory from her heart,
And gaze out very mournfully;
—*Beata mea Domina!*

So beautiful and kind they are,
But most times looking out afar,
Waiting for something, not for me.
Beata mea Domina!

I wonder if the lashes long
Are those that do her bright eyes wrong,
For always half tears seem to be
—*Beata mea Domina!*—

Lurking below the underlid,
Darkening the place where they lie hid—
If they should rise and flow for me!
Beata mea Domina!

Her full lips being made to kiss,
Curl'd up and pensive each one is;
This makes me faint to stand and see.
Beata mea Domina!

Her lips are not contented now,
Because the hours pass so slow
Towards a sweet time: (pray for me),
—*Beata mea Domina!*—

Nay, hold thy peace! for who can tell;
But this at least I know full well,
Her lips are parted longingly,
—*Beata mea Domina!*—

So passionate and swift to move,
To pluck at any flying love,
That I grow faint to stand and see.
Beata mea Domina!

Yea! there beneath them is her chin,
So fine and round, it were a sin
To feel no weaker when I see
— *Beata mea Domina!*—

God's dealings; for with so much care
And troublous, faint lines wrought in there,
He finishes her face for me.
Beata mea Domina!

Of her long neck what shall I say?
What think about her body's sway,
Like a knight's pennon or slim tree
— *Beata mea Domina!*—

Set gently waving in the wind;
Or her long hands that I may find
On some day sweet to move o'er me?
Beata mea Domina!

God pity me though, if I miss'd
The telling, how along her wrist
The veins creep, dying languidly
— *Beata mea Domina!*—

Inside her tender palm and thin.
Now give me pardon, dear, wherein
My voice is weak and vexes thee.
Beata mea Domina!—

All men that see her any time,
I charge you straightly in this rhyme,
What, and wherever you may be,
— *Beata mea Domina!*—

To kneel before her; as for me,
I choke and grow quite faint to see
My lady moving graciously.
Beata mea Domina!

DIGBY MACKWORTH-DOLBEN

FROM *Poem*

Sing me the men are this
Who, to the gate that is
A cloven pearl, uprapt,
The big white bars between
With dying eyes have seen
The sea of jasper, lapt
About with crystal sheen.

And all the far pleasance
Where linkèd angels dance,
With scarlet wings that fall
Magnifical, or spread
Most sweetly overhead,
In fashion musical
Of cadenced lutes instead.

Sing me the town they saw,
Withouten fleck or flaw;
Aflame, more fine than glass
Of fair Abbayes the boast,—
More glad than wax of cost
Doth make at Candlemas
The Lifting of the Host.

Where many Knights and Dames,
With new and wondrous names,
One great Laudate psalm
Go singing down the street.
'Tis peace upon their feet,
In hand 'tis pilgrim palm
Of holy Land so sweet.

Where Mother Mary walks
'Mid silver lily stalks,
Star-tirèd, moon-bedight:
Where Cecily is seen,
With Dorothy in green,
And Magdalen all white,
The maidens of the Queen.

JOHN RUSKIN

FROM *Modern Manufacture and Design*

I was thinking of the difference in the effect upon the designer's mind, between the scene which I then came upon, and the scene which would have presented itself to the eyes of any designer of the middle ages, when he left his workshop. Just outside the town I came upon an old English cottage, or mansion, I hardly know which to call it, set close under the hill, and beside the river, perhaps built somewhere in the Charles's time, with mullioned windows and a low arched porch; round which, in the little triangular garden, one can imagine the family as they used to sit in old summer times, the ripple of the river heard faintly through the sweetbriar hedge, and the sheep on the far-off wolds shining in the evening sunlight. There, uninhabited for many and many a year, it had been left in unregarded havoc of ruin; the garden-gate still swung loose to its latch; the garden, blighted utterly into a field of ashes, not even a weed taking root there; the roof torn into shapeless rents; the shutters hanging about the windows in rags of rotten wood; before its gate, the stream which had gladdened it now soaking slowly by, black as ebony, and thick with curdling scum; the bank above it trodden into unctuous, sooty slime; far in front of it, between it and the old hills, the furnaces of the city foaming forth perpetual plague of sulphurous darkness; the volumes of their storm clouds coiling low over a waste of grassless fields, fenced from each other, not by hedges, but by slabs of square stone, like gravestones, riveted together with iron.

That was your scene for the designer's contemplation in his afternoon walk at Rochdale. Now fancy what was the scene which presented itself, in his afternoon walk, to a designer of the Gothic school of Pisa—Nino Pisano, or any of his men.

On each side of a bright river he saw rise a line of brighter palaces, arched and pillared, and inlaid with deep red porphyry, and with serpentine; along the quays before their gates were riding troops of knights, noble in face and form, dazzling in crest and shield; horse and man one labyrinth of quaint colour and gleaming light—the purple, and silver, and scarlet fringes flowing over the strong limbs and clashing mail, like sea-waves over rocks at sunset. Opening on each side from the

river were gardens, courts, and cloisters; long successions of white pillars among wreaths of vine; leaping of fountains through buds of pomegranate and orange: and still along the garden-paths, and under and through the crimson of the pomegranate shadows, moving slowly, groups of the fairest women that Italy ever saw—fairest, because purest and thoughtfulest; trained in all high knowledge, as in all courteous art—in dance, in song, in sweet wit, in lofty learning, in loftier courage, in loftiest love—able alike to cheer, to enchant, or save, the souls of men. Above all this scenery of perfect human life, rose dome and bell-tower, burning with white alabaster and gold; beyond dome and bell-tower the slopes of mighty hills, hoary with olive; far in the north, above a purple sea of peaks of solemn Apennine, the clear, sharp-cloven Carrara mountains sent up their steadfast flames of marble summit into amber sky; the great sea itself, scorching with expanse of light, stretching from their feet to the Gorgonian isles; and over all these, ever present, near or far—seen through the leaves of vine, or imaged with all its march of clouds in the Arno's stream, or set with its depth of blue close against the golden hair and burning cheek of lady and knight, that untroubled and sacred sky, which was to all men, in those days of innocent faith, indeed the unquestioned abode of spirits, as the earth was of men; and which opened straight through its gates of cloud and veils of dew into the awfulness of the eternal world; a heaven in which every cloud that passed was literally the chariot of an angel, and every ray of its Evening and Morning streamed from the throne of God.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Silent Noon

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass,—
 The finger-points look through like rosy blooms;
 Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
 'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.
 All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
 Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge
 Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-hedge.
 'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky:—
 So this wing'd hour is dropt to us from above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
This close-companioned inarticulate hour
 When twofold silence was the song of love.

JOHN RUSKIN

FROM *Christ Church Choir*

I am amused, as I look back, in now perceiving what an æsthetic view I had of all my tutors and companions, how consistently they took to me the aspect of pictures, and how I from the first declined giving any attention to those which were not well painted enough. My ideal of a tutor was founded on what Holbein or Durer had represented in Erasmus or Melanchthon, or, even more solemnly, on Titian's *Magnificoes* or Bonifazio's Bishops. No presences of that kind appeared either in Tom or Peckwater: and even Doctor Pusey (who also never spoke to me) was not in the least a picturesque or tremendous figure, but only a sickly and rather ill put together English clerical gentleman, who never looked one in the face, or appeared aware of the state of the weather.

My own tutor was a dark-eyed, animated, pleasant, but not in the least impressive person, who walked with an unconscious air of assumption, noticeable by us juniors not to his advantage. Kynaston was ludicrously like a fat school-boy. Hussey, grim and brown as I said, somewhat lank, incapable of jest, equally incapable of enthusiasm; for the rest, doing his duty thoroughly and a most estimable member of the college and university,—but to me, a resident calamity far greater than I knew, whose malefic influence I recognise in memory only.

Finally, the Dean himself, though venerable to me, from the first, in his evident honesty, self-respect, and real power of a rough kind, was yet in his general aspect too much like the sign of the Red Pig which I afterward saw set up in pudding raisins, with black currants for eyes, by an imaginative grocer in Chârtres fair; and in the total bodily and ghostly presence of him was to me only a rotundly progressive terror, or sternly enthroned and niched anathema.

There was one tutor, however, out of my sphere, who reached

my ideal, but disappointed my hope, then, as perhaps his own, since; a man sorrowfully under the dominion of the Greek ἀνάγκη—the present Dean. He was, and is, one of the rarest types of nobly-presenced Englishmen, but I fancy it was his adverse star that made him an Englishman at all—the prosaic and practical element in him having prevailed over the sensitive one. He was the only man in Oxford among the masters of my day who knew anything of art; and his keen saying of Turner, that he “had got hold of a false ideal”, would have been infinitely helpful to me at that time, had he explained and enforced it. But I suppose he did not see enough in me to make him take trouble with me, and, what was much more serious, he saw not enough in himself to take trouble, in that field, with himself.

There was a more humane and more living spirit, however, inhabitant of the north-west angle of the Cardinal's Square: and a great many of the mischances which were only harmful to me through my own folly may be justly held, and to the full, counterbalanced by that one piece of good fortune, of which I had the wit to take advantage. Dr. Buckland was a Canon of the Cathedral, and he, with his wife and family, were all sensible and good-natured, with originality enough in the sense of them to give sap and savour to the whole college.

Originality—passing slightly into grotesqueness, and a little diminishing their effective power. The doctor had too much humour ever to follow far enough the dull side of a subject. Frank was too fond of his bear-cub to give attention enough to the training of the cubbish element in himself; and a day scarcely passed without Mit's com-mit-ting herself in some manner disapproved by the statelier college demoiselles. But all were frank, kind, and clever, vital in the highest degree; to me, medicinal and saving.

Dr. Buckland was extremely like Sydney Smith in his staple of character; no rival with him in wit, but like him in humour, common sense, and benevolently cheerful doctrine of Divinity. At his breakfast-table I met the leading scientific men of the day, from Herschel downward, and often intelligent and courteous foreigners, with whom my stutter of French, refined by Adèle into some precision of accent, was sometimes useful. Everyone was at ease and amused at that breakfast-table, the menu and service of it usually in themselves interesting. I have always regretted a day of unlucky engagement on which I

missed a delicate toast of mice; and remembered, with delight, being waited upon one hot summer morning by two graceful and polite little Carolina lizards, who kept off the flies.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

Faustine

Ave, Faustina Imperatrix, morituri te salutant

Lean back, and get some minutes' peace;
Let your head lean
Back to the shoulder with its fleece
Of locks, Faustine.

The shapely silver shoulder stoops,
Weighed over clean
With state of splendid hair that droops
Each side, Faustine.

Let me go over your good gifts
That crown you queen;
A queen whose kingdom ebbs and shifts
Each week, Faustine.

Bright heavy brows well gathered up:
White gloss and sheen;
Carved lips that make my lips a cup
To drink, Faustine,

Wine and rank poison, milk and blood,
Being mixed therein
Since first the devil threw dice with God
For you, Faustine.

Your naked newborn soul, their stake,
Stood blind between;
God said "let him that wins her take
And keep Faustine."

But this time Satan throve, no doubt;
Long since, I ween,
God's part in you was battered out;
Long since, Faustine,

The die rang sideways as it fell,
Rang cracked and thin,
Like a man's laughter heard in hell
Far down, Faustine,

A shadow of laughter like a sigh,
Dead sorrow's kin;
So rang, thrown down, the devil's die
That won Faustine.

A suckling of his breed you were,
One hard to wean;
But God, who lost you, left you fair,
We see, Faustine.

You have the face that suits a woman
For her soul's screen—
The sort of beauty that's called human
In hell, Faustine.

You could do all things but be good
Or chaste of mien;
And that you would not if you could,
We know, Faustine.

Even he who cast seven devils out
Of Magdalene
Could hardly do as much, I doubt,
For you, Faustine.

Did Satan make you to spite God?
Or did God mean
To scourge with scorpions for a rod
Our sins, Faustine?

I know what queen at first you were,
As though I had seen
Red gold and black imperious hair
Twice crown Faustine.

As if your fed sarcophagus
Spared flesh and skin,
You came back face to face with us,
The same Faustine.

She loved the games men played with death,
Where death must win;
As though the slain man's blood and breath
Revived Faustine.

Nets caught the pike, pikes tore the net;
Lithe limbs and lean
From drained-out pores dripped thick red sweat
To soothe Faustine.

She drank the steaming drift and dust
Blown off the scene;
Blood could not ease the bitter lust
That galled Faustine.

All round the foul fat furrows reeked,
Where blood sank in;
The circus splashed and seethed and shrieked
All round Faustine.

But these are gone now: years entomb
The dust and din;
Yea, even the bath's fierce reek and fume
That slew Faustine.

Was life worth living then? and now
Is life worth sin?
Where are the imperial years? and how
Are you, Faustine?

Your soul forgot her joys, forgot
Her times of teen;
Yea, this life likewise will you not
Forget, Faustine?

For in the time we know not of
Did fate begin
Weaving the web of days that wove
Your doom, Faustine.

The threads were wet with wine, and all
Were smooth to spin;
They wove you like a Bacchanal,
The first Faustine.

And Bacchus cast your mates and you
Wild grapes to glean;
Your flower-like lips were dashed with dew
From his, Faustine.

Your drenched loose hands were stretched to hold
The vine's wet green,
Long ere they coined in Roman gold
Your face, Faustine,

Then after change of soaring feather
And winnowing fin,
You woke in weeks of feverish weather,
A new Faustine.

A star upon your birthday burned,
Whose fierce serene
Red pulseless planet never yearned
In heaven, Faustine.

Stray breaths of Sapphic song that blew
Through Mitylene
Shook the fierce quivering blood in you
By night, Faustine.

The shameless nameless love that makes
Hell's iron gin
Shut on you like a trap that breaks
The soul, Faustine.

And when your veins were void and dead,
What ghosts unclean
Swarmed round the straitened barren bed
That hid Faustine?

What sterile growths of sexless root
Or epicene?
What flower of kisses without fruit
Of love, Faustine?

What adders came to shed their coats?
What coiled obscene
Small serpents with soft stretching throats
Caressed Faustine?

But the time came of famished hours,
Maimed loves and mean,
This ghastly thin-faced time of ours,
To spoil Faustine.

You seem a thing that hinges hold,
A love-machine
With clockwork joints of supple gold—
No more, Faustine.

Not godless, for you serve one God,
The Lampsacene,
Who metes the gardens with his rod;
Your lord, Faustine.

If one should love you with real love
(Such things have been,
Things your fair face knows nothing of,
It seems, Faustine);

That clear hair heavily bound back,
 The lights wherein
 Shift from dead blue to burnt-up black;
 Your throat, Faustine.

Strong, heavy, throwing out the face
 And hard bright chin
 And shameful scornful lips that grace
 Their shame, Faustine,

Curled lips, long since half kissed away,
 Still sweet and keen;
 You'd give him—poison shall we say?
 Or what, Faustine?

JOHN RUSKIN

FROM *Fiction—Fair and Foul*

In my young days, Croxsted Lane was a green bye-road traversable for some distance by carts; but rarely so traversed, and, for the most part, little else than a narrow strip of untilled field, separated by blackberry hedges from the better cared-for meadows on each side of it: growing more weeds, therefore, than they, and perhaps in spring a primrose or two—white archangel—daisies plenty, and purple thistles in autumn. A slender rivulet, boasting little of its brightness, for there are no springs at Dulwich, yet fed purely enough by the rain and morning dew, here trickled—there loitered—through the long grass beneath the hedges, and expanded itself, where it might, into moderately clear and deep pools, in which, under their veils of duck-weed, a fresh-water shell or two, sundry curious little skipping shrimps, any quantity of tadpoles in their time, and even sometimes a tittlebat, offered themselves to my boyhood's pleased, and not inaccurate, observation. There, my mother and I used to gather the first buds of the hawthorn; and there, in after years, I used to walk in the summer shadows, as in a place wilder and sweeter than our garden, to think over any passage I wanted to make better than usual in *Modern Painters*.

So, as aforesaid, on the first kindly day of this year, being thoughtful more than usual of those old times, I went to look again at the place.

Often, both in those days and since, I have put myself hard

to it, vainly, to find words wherewith to tell of beautiful things; but beauty has been in the world since the world was made, and human language can make a shift, somehow, to give account of it, whereas the peculiar forces of devastation induced by modern city life have only entered the world lately; and no existing terms of language known to me are enough to describe the forms of filth, and modes of ruin, that varied themselves along the course of Croxsted Lane. The fields on each side of it are now mostly dug up for building, or cut through into gaunt corners and nooks of blind ground by the wild crossings and concurrencies of three railroads. Half a dozen handfuls of new cottages, with Doric doors, are dropped about here and there among the gashed ground: the lane itself, now entirely grassless, is a deep-rutted, heavy-hillocked cart-road, diverging gatelessly into various brickfields or pieces of waste; and bordered on each side by heaps of—Hades only knows what!—mixed dust of every unclean thing that can crumble in drought, and mildew of every unclean thing that can rot or rust in damp: ashes and rags, beer bottles and old shoes, battered pans, smashed crockery, shreds of nameless clothes, door-sweepings, floor-sweepings, kitchen garbage, back-garden sewage, old iron, rotten timber jagged with out-torn nails, cigar-ends, pipe-bowls, cinders, bones, and ordure, indescribable; and, variously kneaded into, sticking to, or fluttering foully here and there over all these, remnants broadcast, of every manner of newspaper, advertisement or big-lettered bill, festering and flaunting out their last publicity in the pits of stinking dust and mortal slime.

The lane ends now where its prettiest windings once began; being cut off by a cross-road leading out of Dulwich to a minor railway station: and on the other side of this road, what was of old the daintiest intricacy of its solitude is changed into a straight, and evenly macadamised carriage drive, between new houses of extreme respectability, with good attached gardens and offices—most of these tenements being larger—all more pretentious, and many, I imagine, held at greatly higher rent than my father's, tenanted for twenty years at Herne Hill. And it became matter of curious meditation to me what must here become of children resembling my poor little dreamy quondam self in temper, and thus brought up at the same distance from London, and in the same or better circumstances of worldly fortune; but with only Croxsted Lane in its present

condition for their country walk. The trimly kept road before their doors, such as one used to see in the fashionable suburbs of Cheltenham or Leamington, presents nothing to their study but gravel, and gas-lamp posts; the modern addition of a vermilion letter-pillar contributing indeed to the splendour, but scarcely to the interest of the scene; and a child of any sense or fancy would hastily contrive escape from such a barren desert of politeness, and betake itself to investigation, such as might be feasible, of the natural history of Croxsted Lane.

But, for its sense or fancy, what food, or stimulus, can it find, in that foul causeway of its youthful pilgrimage? What would have happened to myself, so directed, I cannot clearly imagine. Possibly, I might have got interested in the old iron and wood-shavings; and become an engineer or a carpenter: but for the children of to-day, accustomed from the instant they are out of their cradles, to the sight of this infinite nastiness, prevailing as a fixed condition of the universe, over the face of nature, and accompanying all the operations of industrious man, what is to be the scholastic issue? unless, indeed, the thrill of scientific vanity in the primary analysis of some unheard-of process of corruption—or the reward of microscopic research in the sight of worms with more legs, and acari of more curious generation than ever vivified the more simply smelling plasma of antiquity.

One result of such elementary education is, however, already certain; namely, that the pleasure which we may conceive taken by the children of the coming time, in the analysis of physical corruption, guides, into fields more dangerous and desolate, the expatiation of imaginative literature: and that the reactions of moral disease upon itself, and the conditions of languidly monstrous character developed in an atmosphere of low vitality, have become the most valued material of modern fiction, and the most eagerly discussed texts of modern philosophy.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

A Ballad of Life

I found in dreams a place of wind and flowers,
Full of sweet trees and colour of glad grass,
In midst whereof there was
A lady clothed like summer with sweet hours.

Her beauty, fervent as a fiery moon,
 Made my blood burn and swoon
 Like a flame rained upon.
Sorrow had filled her shaken eyelids' blue,
And her mouth's sad red heavy rose all through
 Seemed sad with glad things gone.

She held a little cithern by the strings,
 Shaped heartwise, strung with subtle-coloured hair
 Of some dead lute-player
That in dead years had done delicious things.
The seven strings were named accordingly;
 The first string charity,
 The second tenderness,
The rest were pleasure, sorrow, sleep, and sin,
And loving-kindness, that is pity's kin
 And is most pitiless.

There were three men with her, each garmented
 With gold and shod with gold upon the feet;
 And with plucked ears of wheat
The first man's hair was wound upon his head:
His face was red, and his mouth curled and sad;
 All his gold garment had
 Pale stains of dust and rust.
A riven hood was pulled across his eyes;
The token of him being upon this wise
 Made for a sign of Lust.

The next was Shame, with hollow heavy face
 Coloured like green wood when flame kindles it.
 He hath such feeble feet
They may not well endure in any place.
His face was full of grey old miseries,
 And all his blood's increase
 Was even increase of pain.
The last was Fear, that is akin to Death;
He is Shame's friend, and always as Shame saith
 Fear answers him again.

My soul said in me: This is marvellous,
 Seeing the air's face is not so delicate
 Nor the sun's grace so great,
If sin and she be kin or amorous.
And seeing where maidens served her on their knees,
 I bade one crave of these
 To know the cause thereof.
Then Fear said: I am Pity that was dead.
And Shame said: I am Sorrow comforted.
 And Lust said: I am Love.

Thereat her hands began a lute-playing
And her sweet mouth a song in a strange tongue;
And all the while she sung
There was no sound but long tears following
Long tears upon men's faces, waxen white
With extreme sad delight.
But those three following men
Became as men raised up among the dead;
Great glad mouths open and fair cheeks made red
With child's blood come again.

Then I said: Now assuredly I see
My lady is perfect, and transfigureth
All sin and sorrow and death,
Making them fair as her own eyelids be,
Or lips wherein my whole soul's life abides;
Or as her sweet white sides
And bosom carved to kiss.
Now therefore, if her pity further me,
Doubtless for her sake all my days shall be
As righteous as she is.

Forth, ballad, and take roses in both arms,
Even till the top rose touch thee in the throat
Where the least thornprick harms;
And girdled in thy golden singing-coat,
Come thou before my lady and say this;
Borgia, thy gold hair's colour burns in me,
Thy mouth makes beat my blood in feverish rhymes;
Therefore so many as these roses be,
Kiss me so many times.
Then it may be, seeing how sweet she is,
That she will stoop herself none otherwise
Than a blown vine-branch doth,
And kiss thee with soft laughter on thine eyes,
Ballad, and on thy mouth.

WALTER PATER

Æsthetic Poetry

The "æsthetic" poetry is neither a mere reproduction of Greek or mediæval poetry, nor only an idealisation of modern life and sentiment. The atmosphere on which its effect depends belongs to no simple form of poetry, no actual form of life. Greek poetry, mediæval or modern poetry, projects, above the realities of its time, a world in which the forms of things are transfigured. Of that transfigured 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 homesickness 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.

The writings of the "romantic school", of which the æsthetic poetry is an afterthought, mark a transition not so much from the pagan to the mediæval 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 classicism 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 preoccupation with things mediæval. The mediæval tendency is in Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, the Hellenic in his *Iphigenie*. At first this mediævalism was superficial, or at least external. Adventure, romance in the frankest sense, grotesque individualism—that is one element in mediæval poetry, and with it alone Scott and Goethe dealt. Beyond them were the two other elements of the mediæval spirit: its mystic religion at its apex in Dante and Saint Louis, and its mystic passion, passing here and there into the great romantic loves of rebellious flesh, of Lancelot and Abélard. That stricter, imaginative mediævalism which re-creates the mind of the Middle Ages, so that the form, the presentment grows outward from within, came later with Victor Hugo in France, with Heine in Germany.

In the *Defence of Guenevere: and Other Poems*, published by Mr. William Morris now many years ago, the first typical specimen of æsthetic poetry, we have a refinement upon this later, profounder mediævalism. 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 the accent falls in strange, unwonted places with the effect of a great cry. In truth these Arthurian legends, in their origin prior to Christianity, 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, monastic religion, at any rate, has its sensuous side, a dangerously sensuous side, has been often seen: it is the experience of Rousseau as well as of the Christian mystics. The Christianity of the Middle Ages made way among a people whose loss was in the life of the senses partly by its æsthetic beauty, a thing so profoundly felt by the Latin hymn-writers, who for one moral or spiritual sentiment have a hundred sensuous images. And so in those imaginative loves, in their highest expression, the Provençal poetry, it is a rival religion with a new rival *cultus* that we see. Coloured through and through with Christian sentiment, they are rebels against it. The rejection of one worship for another is never lost sight of. The jealousy of that other lover, for whom these words and images and refined ways of sentiment were first devised, is the secret here of a borrowed, perhaps factitious colour and heat. It is the mood of the cloister taking a new direction, and winning so a later space of life it never anticipated.

Hereon, as before in the cloister, so now in the *château*, the reign of reverie set in. The devotion of the cloister knew that mood thoroughly, and had sounded all its stops. For the object of this devotion 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. But then, the Church, that new Sybil, had a thousand secrets to make the absent near. 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 unseen 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 *châtelaine*, of 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. Surely, such loves were too fragile and adventurous to last more than for a moment.

That monastic religion of the Middle Age was, in fact, in many of its bearings, like 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 as by Victor Hugo in *Nôtre 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 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 acts as a strange narcotic: a sudden shrill ringing pierces through the numbness: a voice proclaims that the Grail has gone 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.

A passion of which the outlets are sealed, begets a tension of nerve, in which the sensible world comes to one with a reinforced brilliancy 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 mediæval mind had a deep sense; but its sense of them was not objective, no real escape to the world without us. 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 intended to be sung at midnight—songs inviting to sleep, the *serena*, or *serenade*; others at break of day—waking songs, the *aube*, or *aubade*.* 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 interwoven into the structure of the play. Those, in whom what Rousseau calls *les fraveurs nocturnes* are constitutional, 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 hence a strange tenderness and effect. The crown of the English poet's book is one of these appreciations 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
 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.
 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.
 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 spirituality of touch all its own, is in that!

* Faurile's *Histoire de la Poésie Provençale*, tome ii, ch. xviii.

The *Defence of Guenevere* was published in 1858; the *Life and Death of Jason* in 1867; to be followed by *The Earthly Paradise*; and the change of manner wrought in the interval, entire, almost a revolt, is characteristic of the æsthetic poetry. Here there is no delirium or illusion, no experiences of mere soul while the body 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. 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.

And yet it is one of the charming anachronisms of a poet, who, while he handles an ancient subject, never becomes an antiquarian, but animates his subject by keeping it always close

to himself, that between whiles we have a sense of English scenery as from an eye well practised under Wordsworth's influence, as from "the casement half opened on summer-nights", with the song of the brown bird among the willows, 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 "paradise of birds", the fern-owl, the water-hen, the thrush in a hundred sweet variations, the gerfalcon, 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. The sea-touches are not less sharp and firm, surest of effect in places where river and sea, salt and fresh waves, conflict.

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 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 impossible as to become a little child, or enter again into the womb 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 some choice space of our own individual life. We cannot truly conceive 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 toward Greece, aspiring to but never actually reaching its way of conceiving life, is what is possible for art.

The modern poet or artist who treats in this way a classical story comes very near, if not to the Hellenism of Homer, yet to the Hellenism of Chaucer, the Hellenism of the Middle Age, or rather of that exquisite first period of the Renaissance within it. Afterwards the Renaissance takes its side, becomes, perhaps, exaggerated or 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 atmosphere of his cloister to natural light. The fruits of this mood, which, divining more than it understands, infuses into the scenery and figures of Christian history 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, constitute a peculiar vein of interest in the art of the fifteenth century.

And so, before we leave *Jason* and *The Earthly Paradise*, a word must be said about their mediævalism, delicate inconsistencies, which, coming in a poem of Greek subject, 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 of *Jason* 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 Middle Age 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 old church glass-stainer surrounds the mystic bride of the Song of Songs. Medea herself has a hundred touches of the mediæval sorceress, the sorceress of the Streckelberg or the Blocksberg: her mystic changes are Christabel's. It is precisely this effect, this grace of Hellenism relieved against 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—the bell 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 the Third, among the gaily-painted mediæval sails, that we pass to a reserved fragment of Greece, which by some divine good fortune 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 with the sign of the cross, and drinking Rhine-wine in Greece, the two worlds of sentiment are confronted.

One characteristic of the pagan spirit the æsthetic poetry has, which is on its 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. But that complexion of sentiment is at its height in another “æsthetic” poet of whom I have to speak next, Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

WILLIAM MORRIS

The Blue Closet

THE DAMOZELS

Lady Alice, Lady Louise,
Between the wash of the tumbling seas
We are ready to sing, if so ye please;
So lay your long hands on the keys;
Sing, ‘*Laudate pueri.*’

*And ever the great bell overhead
Boom’d in the wind a knell for the dead,
Though no one toll’d it, a knell for the dead.*

LADY LOUISE

Sister, let the measure swell
Not too loud; for you sing not well
If you drown the faint boom of the bell;
He is weary, so am I.

*And ever the chevron overhead
Flapp’d on the banner of the dead;
(Was he asleep, or was he dead?)*

LADY ALICE

Alice the Queen, and Louise the Queen,
 Two damozels wearing purple and green,
 Four lone ladies dwelling here
 From day to day and year to year;
 And there is none to let us go;
 To break the locks of the doors below,
 Or shovel away the heaped-up snow;
 And when we die no man will know
 That we are dead; but they give us leave,
 Once every year on Christmas-eve,
 To sing in the Closet Blue one song;
 And we should be so long, so long,
 If we dared, in singing; for dream on dream,
 They float on in a happy stream;
 Float from the gold strings, float from the keys,
 Float from the open'd lips of Louise;
 But, alas! the sea-salt oozes through
 The chinks of the tiles of the Closet Blue;
And ever the great bell overhead
Booms in the wind a knell for the dead,
The wind plays on it a knell for the dead.

(They sing all together)

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,
 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;

'Yea, they grow grey with time, grow small and dry,
 I am so feeble now, would I might die.'

And in truth the great bell overhead
Left off his pealing for the dead,
Perchance, because the wind was dead.

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,
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.

*Through the floor shot up a lily red,
With a patch of earth from the land of the dead,
For he was strong in the land of the dead.*

What matter that his cheeks were pale,
His kind kiss'd lips all grey?
'O, love Louise, have you waited long?'
'O, my lord Arthur, yea.'

What if his hair that brush'd her cheek
Was stiff with frozen rime?
His eyes were grown quite blue again,
As in the happy time.

'O, love Louise, this is the key
Of the happy golden land.
O, sisters, cross the bridge with me,
My eyes are full of sand.
What matter that I cannot see,
If ye take me by the hand?'

*And ever the great bell overhead,
And the tumbling seas mourn'd for the dead;
For their song ceased, and they were dead.*

Pomona

I am the ancient Apple-Queen,
As once I was so am I now,
For evermore a hope unseen
Betwixt the blossom and the bough.

Ah, where's the river's hidden Gold!
And where the windy grave of Troy?
Yet come I as I came of old,
From out the heart of Summer's joy.

Spell-Bound

How weary is it none can tell,
How dismally the days go by!
I hear the tinkling of the bell,
I see the cross against the sky.

The year wears round to autumn-tide,
Yet comes no reaper to the corn;
The golden land is like a bride
When first she knows herself forlorn—

She sits and weeps with all her hair
Laid downward over tender hands;
For stained silk she hath no care,
No care for broken ivory wands;

The silver cups beside her stand;
The golden stars on the blue roof
Yet glitter, though against her hand
His cold sword presses for a proof

He is not dead, but gone away.
How many hours did she wait
For me, I wonder? Till the day
Had faded wholly, and the gate

Clanged to behind returning knights?
I wonder did she raise her head
And go away, fleeing the lights;
And lay the samite on her bed,

The wedding samite strewn with pearls:
Then sit with hands laid on her knees,
Shuddering at half-heard sound of girls
That chatter outside in the breeze?

I wonder did her poor heart throb
At distant tramp of coming knight?
How often did the choking sob
Raise up her head and lips? The light,

Did it come on her unawares,
And drag her sternly down before
People who loved her not? in prayers
Did she say one name and no more?

And once—all songs they ever sung,
All tales they ever told to me,
This only burden through them rung:
O! golden love that waitest me,

*The days pass on, pass on apace,
Sometimes I have a little rest
In fairest dreams, when on thy face
My lips lie, or thy hands are prest*

*About my forehead, and thy lips
Draw near and nearer to mine own ;
But when the vision from me slips,
In colourless dawn I lie an' I moan,*

*And wander forth with fever'd blood,
That makes me start at little things,
The blackbird screaming from the wood,
The sudden whirr of pheasants' wings.*

*O ! dearest, scarcely seen by me—
But when that wild time had gone by,
And in these arms I folded thee,
Who ever thought those days could die ?*

Yet now I wait, and you wait too,
For what perchance may never come ;
You think I have forgotten you,
That I grew tired and went home.

But what if some day as I stood
Against the wall with strained hands,
And turn'd my face toward the wood,
Away from all the golden lands ;

And saw you come with tired feet,
And pale face thin and wan with care,
And stained raiment no more neat,
The white dust lying on your hair :—

Then I should say, I could not come ;
This land was my wide prison, dear ;
I could not choose but go ; at home
There is a wizard whom I fear :

He bound me round with silken chains
I could not break ; he set me here
Above the golden-waving plains,
Where never reaper cometh near.

And you have brought me my good sword,
Wherewith in happy days of old
I won you well from knight and lord ;
My heart upswells and I grow bold.

But I shall die unless you stand,
— Half lying now, you are so weak,—
Within my arms, unless your hand
Pass to and fro across my cheek.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

The Burden of Nineveh

In our Museum galleries
 To-day I lingered o'er the prize
 Dead Greece vouchsafes to living eyes,—
 Her Art for ever in fresh wise

From hour to hour rejoicing me.
 Sighing I turned at last to win
 Once more the London dirt and din;
 And as I made the swing-door spin
 And issued, they were hoisting in
 A winged beast from Nineveh.

A human face the creature wore,
 And hoots behind and hoofs before,
 And flanks with dark runes fretted o'er.
 'Twas bull, 'twas mitred Minotaur,

A dead disbowelled mystery:
 The mummy of a buried faith
 Stark from the charnel without scathe,
 Its wings stood for the light to bathe,—
 Such fossil cerements as might swathe
 The very corpse of Nineveh.

The print of its first rush-wrapping,
 Wound ere it dried, still ribbed the thing.
 What song did the brown maidens sing,
 From purple mouths alternating,

When that was woven languidly?
 What vows, what rites, what prayers preferr'd,
 What songs has the strange image heard?
 In what blind vigil stood interr'd
 For ages, till an English word
 Broke silence first at Nineveh?

Oh when upon each sculptured court,
 Where even the wind might not resort,—
 O'er which Time passed, of like import
 With the wild Arab boys at sport,—

A living face looked in to see:—
 Oh seemed it not—the spell once broke—
 As though the carven warriors woke,
 As though the shaft the string forsook,
 The cymbals clashed, the chariots shook,
 And there was life in Nineveh?

On London stones our sun anew
 The beast's recovered shadow threw.
 (No shade that plague of darkness knew,
 No light, no shade, while older grew
 By ages the old earth and sea.)

Lo thou! could all thy priests have shown
Such proof to make thy godhead known?
From their dead Past thou liv'st alone;
And still thy shadow is thine own,
Even as of yore in Nineveh.

That day whereof we keep record,
When near thy city-gates the Lord
Sheltered His Jonah with a gourd,
This sun, (I said) here present, pour'd
Even thus this shadow that I see.
This shadow has been shed the same
From sun and moon,—from lamps which came
For prayer,—from fifteen days of flame,
The last, while smouldered to a name
Sardanapalus' Nineveh.

Within thy shadow, haply, once
Sennacherib has knelt, whose sons
Smote him between the altar-stones:
Or pale Semiramis her zones
Of gold, her incense brought to thee,
In love for grace, in war for aid:
Ay, and who else? till 'neath thy shade
Within his trenches newly made
Last year the Christian knelt and pray'd—
Not to thy strength—in Nineveh.

Now, thou poor god, within this hall
Where the blank windows blind the wall
From pedestal to pedestal,
The kind of light shall on thee fall
Which London takes the day to be:
While school-foundations in the act
Of holiday, three files compact,
Shall learn to view thee as a fact
Connected with that zealous tract:
"Rome,—Babylon and Nineveh."

Deemed they of this, those worshippers,
When, in some mythic chain of verse
Which man shall not again rehearse,
The faces of thy ministers
Yearned pale with bitter ecstasy?
Greece, Egypt, Rome,—did any god
Before whose feet men knelt unshod
Deem that in this unblest abode
Another scarce more unknown god
Should house with him, from Nineveh?

Ah! in what quarries lay the stone
 From which this pillared pile has grown,
 Unto man's need how long unknown,
 Since those thy temples, court and cone,
 Rose far in desert history?
 Ah! what is here that does not lie
 All strange to thine awakened eye?
 Ah! what is here can testify
 (Save that dumb presence of the sky)
 Unto thy day and Nineveh?

Why, of those mummies in the room
 Above, there might indeed have come
 One out of Egypt to thy home,
 An alien. Nay, but were not some
 Of these thine own "antiquity"?
 And now,—they and their gods and thou
 All relics here together,—now
 Whose profit? whether bull or cow,
 Isis or Ibis, who or how,
 Whether of Thebes or Nineveh?

The consecrated metals found,
 And ivory tablets, underground,
 Winged seraphim and creatures crown'd,
 When air and daylight filled the mound,
 Fell into dust immediately.
 And even as these, the images
 Of awe and worship,—even as these,—
 So, smitten with the sun's increase,
 Her glory mouldered and did cease
 From immemorial Nineveh.

The day her builders made their halt,
 Those cities of the lake of salt
 Stood firmly 'stablished without fault,
 Made proud with pillars of basalt,
 With sardonyx and porphyry.
 The day that Jonah bore abroad
 To Nineveh the voice of God,
 A brackish lake lay in his road,
 Where erst Pride fixed her sure abode,
 As then in royal Nineveh.

The day when he, Pride's lord and Man's,
 Showed all the kingdoms at a glance
 To Him before whose countenance
 The years recede, the years advance,
 And said, Fall down and worship me:—

'Mid all the pomp beneath that look,
Then stirred there, haply, some rebuke,
Where to the wind the Salt Pools shook,
And in those tracts, of life forsook,
That knew thee not, O Nineveh!

Delicate harlot! On thy throne
Thou with a world beneath thee prone
In state for ages sat'st alone;
And needs were years and lustres flown
Ere strength of man could vanquish thee:
Whom even thy victor foes must bring,
Still royal, among maids that sing
As with doves' voices, taboring
Upon their breasts, unto the King,—
A kingly conquest, Nineveh!

. Here woke my thought. The wind's slow sway
Had waxed; and like the human play
Of scorn that smiling spreads away,
The sunshine shivered off the day:
The callous wind, it seemed to me,
Swept up the shadow from the ground:
And pale as whom the Fates astound,
The god forlorn stood winged and crown'd:
Within I knew the cry lay bound
Of the dumb soul of Nineveh.

And as I turned, my sense half shut
Still saw the crowds of kerb and rut
Go past as marshalled to the strut
Of ranks in gypsum quaintly cut.
It seemed in one same pageantry
They followed forms which had been erst;
To pass, till on my sight should burst
That future of the best or worst
When some may question which was first,
Of London or of Nineveh.

For as that Bull-god once did stand
And watched the burial-clouds of sand,
Till these at last without a hand
Rose o'er his eyes, another land,
And blinded him with destiny:—
So may he stand again; till now,
In ships of unknown sail and prow,
Some tribe of the Australian plough
Bear him afar,—a relic now
Of London, not of Nineveh!

Or it may chance indeed that when
 Man's age is hoary among men,—
 His centuries threescore and ten,—
 His furthest childhood shall seem then
 More clear than later times may be:
 Who, finding in this desert place
 This form, shall hold us for some race
 That walked not in Christ's lowly ways,
 But bowed its pride and vowed its praise
 Unto the God of Nineveh.

The smile rose first,—anon drew nigh
 The thought: Those heavy wings spread high,
 So sure of flight, which do not fly;
 That set gaze never on the sky;
 Those scripted flanks it cannot see;
 Its crown, a brow-contracting load;
 Its planted feet which trust the sod:
 (So grew the image as I trod:)
 O Nineveh, was this thy God,—
 Thine also, mighty Nineveh?

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

Twilight Voices

Now, at the hour when ignorant mortals
 Drowse in the shade of their whirling sphere,
 Heaven and Hell from invisible portals
 Breathing comfort and ghastly fear,
 Voices I hear;
 I hear strange voices, flitting, calling,
 Wavering by on the dusky blast,—
 "Come, let us go, for the night is falling;
 Come, let us go, for the day is past!"

Troops of joys are they, now departed?
 Wingèd hopes that no longer stay?
 Guardian spirits grown weary-hearted?
 Powers that have linger'd their latest day?
 What do they say?
 What do they sing? I hear them calling,
 Whispering, gathering, flying fast,—
 "Come, come, for the night is falling;
 Come, come, for the day is past!"

Sing they to me?—"Thy taper's wasted;
 Mortal, thy sands of life run low;
 Thine hours like a flock of birds have hasted;
 Time is ending;—we go, we go!"
 Sing they so?

Mystical voices, floating, calling;
 Dim farewells—the last, the last?—
 “Come, come away, the night is falling;
 Come, come away, the day is past!”

See, I am ready, Twilight Voices!
 Child of the spirit-world am I;
 How should I fear you? my soul rejoices,
 O speak plainer! O draw nigh!
 Fain would I fly!
 Tell me your message, ye who are calling
 Out of the dimness, vague and vast!—
 Lift me, take me,—the night is falling;
 Quick, let us go,—the day is past!

JOHN RUSKIN

FROM *The Col de la Faucille*

I must here, in advance, tell the general reader that there have been, in sum, three centres of my life's thought: Rouen, Geneva, and Pisa. All that I did at Venice was by-work, because her history had been falsely written before, and not even by any of her own people, understood; and because, in the world of painting, Tintoretto was virtually unseen, Veronese unfelt, Carpaccio not so much as named, when I began to study them; something also was due to my love of gliding about in gondolas. But Rouen, Geneva, and Pisa have been buttresses of all I know, and were mistresses of all I did, from the first moments I entered their gates.

In this journey of 1835 I first saw Rouen and Venice—Pisa not till 1840; nor could I understand the full power of any of those great scenes till much later. But for Abbeville, which is the preface and interpretation of Rouen, I was ready on that 5th of June, and felt that here was entrance for me into immediately healthy labour and joy.

For here I saw that art (of its local kind), religion, and present human life, were yet in perfect harmony. There were no dead six days and dismal seventh in those sculptured churches; there was no beadle to lock me out of them, or pew-shutter to shut me in. I might haunt them, fancying myself a ghost; peep round their pillars, like Rob Roy; kneel in them, and scandalise nobody; draw in them, and disturb none. Outside, the faithful old town gathered itself, and nestled under their buttresses like

a brood beneath the mother's wings; the quiet, uninjurious aristocracy of the newer town opened into silent streets, between self-possessed and hidden dignities of dwelling, each with its courtyard and richly-trellised garden. The commercial square, with the main street of traverse, consisted of uncompetitive shops, such as were needful, of the native wares: cloth and hosiery spun, woven, and knitted within the walls; cheese of neighbouring Neuchatel; fruit of their own gardens, bread from the fields above the green coteaux; meat of their herds, untainted by American tin; smith's work of sufficient scythe and ploughshare, hammered on the open anvil; groceries dainty, the coffee generally roasting odoriferously in the street before the door; for the modistes,—well, perhaps a bonnet or two from Paris, the rest, wholesome dress for peasant and dame of Ponthieu. Above the prosperous, serenely busy and beneficent shop, the old dwelling-house of its ancestral masters; pleasantly carved, proudly roofed, keeping its place, and order, and recognised function, unfailing, unenlarging, for centuries. Round all, the breezy ramparts, with their long waving avenues; through all, in variously circuiting cleanness and sweetness of navigable river and active mill-stream, the green chalk-water of the Somme.

My most intense happinesses have of course been among mountains. But for cheerful, unalloyed, unwearying pleasure, the getting in sight of Abbeville on a fine summer afternoon, jumping out in the courtyard of the Hôtel de l'Europe, and rushing down the street to see St. Wulfram again before the sun was off the towers, are things to cherish the past for, to the end.

Of Rouen, and its Cathedral, my saying remains yet to be said, if days be given me, in *Our Fathers Have Told Us*. The sight of them, and following journey up the Seine to Paris, then to Soissons and Rheims, determined, as aforesaid, the first centre and circle of future life-work. Beyond Rheims, at Bar-le-Duc, I was brought again within the greater radius of the Alps, and my father was kind enough to go down by Plombières to Dijon, that I might approach them by the straightest pass of Jura.

The reader must pardon my relating so much as I think he may care to hear of this journey of 1835, rather as what *used* to happen, than as limitable to that date; for it is extremely difficult for me now to separate the circumstances of any one

journey from those of subsequent days, in which we stayed at the same inns, with variation only from the blue room to the green, saw the same sights, and rejoiced the more in every pleasure—that it was not new.

And this latter part of the road from Paris to Geneva, beautiful without being the least terrific or pathetic, but in the most lovable and cheerful way, became afterward so dear and so domestic to me, that I will not attempt here to check my gossip of it.

We used always to drive out of the yard of La Cloche at Dijon in early morning—seven, after joyful breakfast at half-past six. The small salon on the first floor to the front had a bedroom across the passage at the west end of it, whose windows commanded the cathedral towers over a low roof on the opposite side of the street. This was always mine, and its bed was in an alcove at the back, separated only by a lath-partition from an extremely narrow passage leading from the outer gallery to Anne's room. It was a delight for Anne to which I think she looked forward all across France, to open a little hidden door from this passage, at the back of the alcove exactly above my pillow, and surprise—or wake, me in the morning.

I think I only remember once starting in rain. Usually the morning sun shone through the misty spray and far-thrown diamonds of the fountain in the south-eastern suburb, and threw long poplar shadows across the road to Genlis.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Youth's Antiphony

"I love you, sweet: how can you ever learn
 How much I love you?" "You I love even so,
 And so I learn it." "Sweet, you cannot know
 How fair you are." "If fair enough to earn
 Your love, so much is all my love's concern."
 "My love grows hourly, sweet." "Mine too doth grow,
 Yet love seemed full so many hours ago!"
 Thus lovers speak, till kisses claim their turn.
 Ah! happy they to whom such words as these
 In youth have served for speech the whole day long,
 Hour after hour, remote from the world's throng,
 Work, contest, fame, all life's confederate pleas,—
 What while Love breathed in sighs and silences
 Through two blent souls one rapturous undersong.

The Kiss

What smouldering senses in death's sick delay
 Or seizure of malign vicissitude
 Can rob this body of honour, or denude
 This soul of wedding-raiment word to-day?
 For lo! even now my lady's lips did play
 With these my lips such consonant interlude
 As laurelled Orpheus longed for when he wooed
 The half-drawn hungering face with that last lay.

I was a child beneath her touch,—a man
 When breast to breast we clung, even I and she,—
 A spirit when her spirit looked through me,—
 A god when all our life-breath met to fan
 Our life-blood, till love's emulous ardours ran,
 Fire within fire, desire in deity.

Nuptial Sleep

At length their long kiss severed, with sweet smart:
 And as the last, slow, sudden drops are shed
 From sparkling eaves when all the storm has fled,
 So singly flagged the pulses of each heart.
 Their bosoms sundered, with the opening start
 Of married flowers to either side outspread
 From the knit stem; yet still their mouths, burnt red,
 Fawned on each other where they lay apart.

Sleep sank them lower than the tide of dreams,
 And their dreams watched them sink, and slid away.
 Slowly their souls swam up again, through gleams
 Of watered light and dull drowned waifs of day;
 Till from some wonder of new woods and streams
 He woke, and wondered more: for there she lay.

EDWARD CRACROFT LEFROY

(VARIATIONS ON THEOCRITUS)

The Goatherd in Love

Idyll iii

Good Tityrus, attend these goats awhile,
 And let me seek where Amaryllis hides,
 Crannied, I guess, beneath that rocky pile
 With fern atop and ivy-mantled sides.
 'Tis there most days the merry girl abides,

And flashes from her cave a sudden smile,
Which like a pharos-flame her lover guides
And makes him hope he looks not wholly vile.
If thou canst guard the flock while I am gone,
I will but notice how my lady fares,
Then hasten back and take the crook anon.
The goats are tame—the least of all my cares,
Save one, that tawny thief; keep watch upon
His bearing, lest he butt thee unawares.

The Singing Match

Idyll viii

From upland pastures, where the flocks are wending,
Slow-footed ways through heather-bells and fern,
Comes down a sound with sea-born murmurs blending
Of lips that make sweet melody in turn.
'Tis Daphnis with Menalcas sharp-contending
For the bright flute which both are keen to earn;
While hard at hand a goatherd tarries, bending
Rapt ears of judgement while the singers burn.
Menalcas, first, hymns Love and all the blessing
Which haps to field and fold where Love's feet stray;
He tells of dearth and leanness clear confessing
What ills befall, should Love despised betray;
Ah, poor the man, though land and gold possessing,
In whose demesne no Love consents to stay.

Hylas

Idyll xiii

What pool is this by galingale surrounded,
With parsley and tall iris overgrown?
It is the pool whose wayward nymphs confounded
The quest of Heracles to glut their own
Desire of love. Its depths hath no man sounded
Save the young Mysian argonaut alone;
When round his drooping neck he felt, astounded,
The cruel grasp that sank him like a stone.
Through all the land the Hero wandered, crying
'Hylas!' and 'Hylas!' till the close of day,
And thrice there came a feeble voice replying
From watery caverns where the prisoner lay;
Yet to his ear it seemed but as the sighing
Of zephyrs through the forest far away.

AUSTIN DOBSON

For a Copy of Theocritus

O singer of the field and fold,
 THEOCRITUS! Pan's pipe was thine,—
 Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

For thee the scent of new-turned mould,
 The bee-hives, and the murmuring pine,
 O singer of the field and fold!

Thou sang'st the simple feasts of old,—
 The beechen bowl made glad with wine .
 Thine was the happier Age of Gold!

Thou bad'st the rustic loves be told,—
 Thou bad'st the tuneful reeds combine,
 O singer of the field and fold!

And round thee, ever laughing, rolled
 The blithe and blue Sicilian brine . . .
 Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

Alas for us! our songs are cold;
 Our northern suns too sadly shine:—
 O singer of the field and fold,
 Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

OSCAR WILDE

Theocritus

O Singer of Persephone!
 In the dim meadows desolate,
 Dost thou remember Sicily?

Still through the ivy flits the bee
 Where Amaryllis lies in state;
 O Singer of Persephone!

Simætha calls on Hecate,
 And hears the wild dogs at the gate;
 Dost thou remember Sicily?

Still by the light and laughing sea
 Poor Polypheme bemoans his fate;
 O Singer of Persephone!

And still in boyish rivalry
 Young Daphnis challenges his mate;
 Dost thou remember Sicily?

Slim Lacon keeps a goat for thee;
 For thee the jocund shepherds wait;
 O Singer of Persephone!
 Dost thou remember Sicily?

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

FROM Southward Bound

Pale gods in cere-cloths, ghosts of bye-gone Greece,
 Rule in their marble sepulchres: the halls,
 Through which we pass, with dead divinities
 Are gleaming; and the voice of Hellas calls
 Clear from her grave: nought but the pedestals
 Belong to Christ: the carven shapes above
 Still breathe and smile with life of ancient Love.

You shall see Naples and the orange groves
 Deep-set of cool Sorrento, green and gold
 Mingling their lustre by calm azure coves,
 Or like the fabled dragon fold on fold
 Curled in the trough of cloven hills, or rolled
 Down vales Hesperian, through dim caverned shades
 Of palace porches and lone colonnades:

Capri, the perfect island—boys and girls
 Free as spring-flowers, straight, fair, and musical
 Of movement; in whose eyes and clustering curls
 The youth of Greece still lingers; whose feet fall
 Like kisses on green turf by cypress tall
 And pine-tree shadowed; who, unknowing care,
 Draw love and laughter from the innocent air:

Ravenna in her widowhood—the waste
 Where dreams a withered ocean; where the hand
 Of time has gently played with tombs defaced
 Of priest and emperor; where the temples stand
 Proud in decay, in desolation grand,—
 Solemn and sad like clouds that lingeringly
 Sail, and are loth to fade upon the sky:

Siena, Bride of Solitude, whose eyes
 Are lifted o'er the russet hills to scan
 Immeasurable tracts of limpid skies,
 Arching those silent sullen plains where man
 Fades like a weed mid mouldering marshes wan;
 Where cane and pine and cypress, poison-proof,
 For death and fever spread their stately roof.

There shall you tread the home of humble prayer
Where she who was of love a very flame,
First drew the perfume of Italian air;
Then flowering into womanhood became
Fair spouse of Christ, elect to purge the shame
Of Babylon from Rome, and build once more
God's temple on the sacred Latian shore.

Thence where the Paglia mid wind-withered brakes
Rolls Tiberward upon his waste of sand,
Ascend the solitary rock that slakes
Its thirst with thunder in a barren land;
Beneath those awful arches you shall stand
Where Luca, Michael's morning star, hath set
Signs of the doom no sinner may forget.

You shall see Florence, the flower-citadel
Of freedom, when resurgent Italy
First mid her sister-nations broke the spell
Of sloth and fear that bound humanity,
Raising the spirit of live poetry
From buried Hellas, and once more began
With music to rebuild the shrines of man.

You shall see Venice—glide as though in dreams
Midmost a hollowed opal; for her sky,
Mirrored upon the ocean-pavement, seems
At dawn and eve to build in vacancy
A wondrous bubble-dome of wizardry,
Suspended where the light, all ways alike
Circumfluent, upon her sphere may strike.

About your feet the myrtles will be set,
Grey rosemary and thyme, and tender blue
Of love-pale labyrinthine violet;
Flame-born anemones will glitter through
Dark aisles of roofing pine-trees; and for you
The golden jonquil and starred asphodel
And hyacinth their speechless tales will tell.

The nightingales for you their tremulous song
Shall pour amid the snowy scented bloom
Of wild acacia bowers, and all night long
Through starlight-flooded spheres of purple gloom
Still lemon boughs shall spread their faint perfume,
Soothing your sense with odours sweet as sleep,
While wind-stirred cypresses low music keep.

OSCAR WILDE

FROM *Charmides*

He was a Grecian lad, who coming home
With pulpy figs and wine from Sicily
Stood at his galley's prow, and let the foam
Blow through his crisp brown curls unconsciously,
And holding wind and wave in boy's despite
Peered from his dripping seat across the wet and stormy night,

Till with the dawn he saw a burnished spear
Like a thin thread of gold against the sky,
And hoisted sail, and strained the creaking gear,
And bade the pilot head her lustily
Against the nor'-west gale, and all day long
Held on his way, and marked the rowers' time with measured song,

And when the faint Corinthian hills were red
Dropped anchor in a little sandy bay,
And with fresh boughs of olive crowned his head,
And brushed from cheek and throat the hoary spray,
And washed his limbs with oil, and from the hold
Brought out his linen tunic and his sandals brazen-soled,

And a rich robe stained with the fishes' juice
Which of some swarthy trader he had bought
Upon the sunny quay at Syracuse,
And was with Tyrian broideries inwrought,
And by the questioning merchants made his way
Up through the soft and silver woods, and when the labouring day

Had spun its tangled web of crimson cloud,
Clomb the high hull, and with swift silent feet
Crept to the fane unnoticed by the crowd
Of busy priests, and from some dark retreat
Watched the young swains his frolic playmates bring
The firstling of their little flock, and the shy shepherd fling

The crackling salt upon the flame, or hang
His studded crook against the temple wall
To Her who keeps away the ravenous fang
Of the base wolf from homestead and from stall;
And then the clear-voiced maidens 'gan to sing,
And to the altar each man brought some goodly offering,

A beechen cup brimming with milky foam,
A fair cloth wrought with cunning imagery
Of hounds in chase, a waxen honey-comb
Dripping with oozy gold which scarce the bee
Had ceased from building, a black skin of oil
Meet for the wrestlers, a great boar the fierce and white-tusked spoil

Stolen from Artemis that jealous maid
To please Athena, and the dappled hide
Of a tall stag who in some mountain glade
Had met the shaft; and then the herald cried,
And from the pillared precinct one by one
Went the glad Greeks well pleased that they their simple vows had done.

And the old priest put out the waning fires
Save that one lamp whose restless ruby glowed
For ever in the cell, and the shrill lyres
Came fainter on the wind, as down the road
In joyous dance these country folk did pass,
And with stout hands the warder closed the gates of polished brass.

Long time he lay and hardly dared to breathe,
And heard the cadenced drip of spilt-out wine,
And the rose-petals falling from the wreath
As the night breezes wandered through the shrine,
And seemed to be in some entranced swoon
Till through the open roof above the full and brimming moon

Flooded with sheeny waves the marble floor,
When from his nook upleapt the venturesome lad,
And flinging wide the cedar-carven door
Beheld an awful image saffron-clad
And armed for battle! the gaunt Griffin glared
From the huge helm, and the long lance of wreck and ruin flared

Like a red rod of flame, stony and steeled
The Gorgon's head its leaden eyeballs rolled,
And writhed its snaky horrors through the shield,
And gaped aghast with bloodless lips and cold
In passion impotent, while with blind gaze
The blinking owl between the feet hooted in shrill amaze.

The lonely fisher as he trimmed his lamp
Far out at sea off Sunium, or cast
The net for tunnies, heard a brazen tramp
Of horses smite the waves, and a wild blast
Divide the folded curtains of the night,
And knelt upon the little poop, and prayed in holy fright.

And guilty lovers in their vinery
 Forgot a little while their stolen sweets,
Deeming they heard dread Dian's bitter cry;
 And the grim watchmen on their lofty seats
Ran to their shields in haste precipitate,
Or strained black-bearded throats across the dusky parapet.

For round the temple rolled the clang of arms,
 And the twelve Gods leapt up in marble fear,
And the air quaked with dissonant alarms
 Till huge Poseidon shook his mighty spear,
And on the frieze the prancing horses neighed,
And the low tread of hurrying feet rang from the cavalcade.

Ready for death with parted lips he stood,
 And well content at such a price to see
That calm wide brow, that terrible maidenhood,
 The marvel of that pitiless chastity,
Ah! well content indeed, for never wight
Since Troy's young shepherd prince had seen so wonderful a sight.

Ready for death he stood, but lo! the air
 Grew silent, and the horses ceased to neigh,
And off his brow he tossed the clustering hair,
 And from his limbs he threw the cloak away,
For whom would not such love make desperate,
And nigher came, and touched her throat, and with hands violate

Undid the cuirass, and the crocus gown,
 And bared the breasts of polished ivory,
Till from the waist the peplos falling down
 Left visible the secret mystery
Which to no lover will Athena show,
The grand cool flanks, the crescent thighs, the bossy hills of snow.

Those who have never known a lover's sin
 Let them not read my ditty, it will be
To their dull ears so musicless and thin
 That they will have no joy of it, but ye
To whose wan cheeks now creeps the lingering smile,
Ye who have learned who Eros is,—O listen yet a-while.

A little space he let his greedy eyes
 Rest on the burnished image, till mere sight
Half swooned for surfeit of such luxuries,
 And then his lips in hungering delight
Fed on her lips, and round the towered neck
He flung his arms, nor cared at all his passion's will to check.

Never I ween did lover hold such tryst,
For all night long he murmured honeyed word,
And saw her sweet unravished limbs, and kissed
Her pale and argent body undisturbed,
And paddled with the polished throat, and pressed
His hot and beating heart upon her chill and icy breast.

It was as if Numidian javelins
Pierced through and through his wild and whirling brain,
And his nerves thrilled like throbbing violins
In exquisite pulsation, and the pain
Was such sweet anguish that he never drew
His lips from hers till overhead the lark of warning flew.

They who have never seen the daylight peer
Into a darkened room, and drawn the curtain,
And with dull eyes and wearied from some dear
And worshipped body risen, they for certain
Will never know of what I try to sing,
How long the last kiss was, how fond and late his lingering.

The moon was girdled with a crystal rim,
The sign which shipmen say is ominous
Of wrath in heaven, the wan stars were dim,
And the low lightening east was tremulous
With the faint fluttering wings of flying dawn,
Ere from the silent sombre shrine this lover had withdrawn.

Down the steep rock with hurried feet and fast
Clomb the brave lad, and reached the cave of Pan,
And heard the goat-foot snoring as he passed,
And leapt upon a grassy knoll and ran
Like a young fawn unto an olive wood
Which in a shady valley by the well-built city stood,

And sought a little stream, which well he knew,
For oftentimes with boyish careless shout
The green and crested grebe he would pursue,
Or snare in woven net the silver trout,
And down amid the startled reeds he lay
Panting in breathless sweet affright, and waited for the day.

On the green bank he lay, and let one hand
Dip in the cool dark eddies listlessly,
And soon the breath of morning came and fanned
His hot flushed cheeks, or lifted wantonly
The tangled curls from off his forehead, while
He on the running water gazed with strange and secret smile.

And soon the shepherd in rough woollen cloak
With his long crook undid the wattled cotes,
And from the stack a thin blue wreath of smoke
Curled through the air across the ripening oats,
And on the hill the yellow house-dog bayed
As through the crisp and rustling fern the heavy cattle strayed.

And when the light-foot mower went a-field
Across the meadows laced with threaded dew,
And the sheep bleated on the misty weald,
And from its nest the waking corn-crake flew,
Some woodman saw him lying by the stream
And marvelled much that any lad so beautiful could seem,

Nor deemed him born of mortals, and one said,
"It is young Hylas, that false runaway
Who with a Naiad now would make his bed
Forgetting Herakles," but others, "Nay,
It is Narcissus, his own paramour,
Those are the fond and crimson lips no woman can allure."

And when they nearer came a third one cried,
"It is young Dionysus who has hid
His spear and fawnskin by the river side
Weary of hunting with the Bassarid,
And wise indeed were we away to fly,
They live not long who on the gods immortal come to spy."

So turned they back, and feared to look behind,
And told the timid swain how they had seen
Amid the reeds some woodland God reclined,
And no man dared to cross the open green,
And on that day no olive-tree was slain,
Nor rushes cut, but all deserted was the fair domain.

Save when the neat-herd's lad, his empty pail
Well slung upon his back, with leap and bound
Raced on the other side, and stopped to hail
Hoping that he some comrade new had found,
And got no answer, and then half afraid
Passed on his simple way, or down the still and silent glade.

A little girl ran laughing from the farm
Not thinking of love's secret mysteries,
And when she saw the white and gleaming arm
And all his manlihood, with longing eyes
Whose passion mocked her sweet virginity
Watched him a-while, and then stole back sadly and wearily.

Far off he heard the city's hum and noise,
And now and then the shriller laughter where
The passionate purity of brown-limbed boys
Wrestled or raced in the clear healthful air,
And now and then a little tinkling bell
As the shorn wether led the sheep down to the mossy well.

Through the grey willows danced the fretful gnat,
The grasshopper chirped idly from the tree,
In sleek and oily coat the water-rat
Breasting the little ripples manfully
Made for the wild-duck's nest, from bough to bough
Hopped the shy finch, and the huge tortoise crept across the slough.

On the faint wind floated the silky seeds,
As the bright scythe swept through the waving grass,
The ousel-cock splashed circles in the reeds
And flecked with silver whorls the forest's glass,
Which scarce had caught again its imagery
Ere from its bed the dusky tench leapt at the dragon-fly.

But little care had he for anything
Though up and down the beech the squirrel played,
And from the copse the linnet 'gan to sing
To her brown mate her sweetest serenade,
Ah! little care indeed, for he had seen
The breasts of Pallas and the naked wonder of the Queen.

But when the herdsman called his straggling goats
With whistling pipe across the rocky road,
And the shard-beetle with its trumpet-notes
Boomed through the darkening woods, and seemed to bode
Of coming storm, and the belated crane
Passed homeward like a shadow, and the dull big drops of rain

Fell on the pattering fig-leaves, up he rose,
And from the gloomy forest went his way
Past sombre homestead and wet orchard-close,
And came at last unto a little quay,
And called his mates a-board, and took his seat
On the high poop, and pushed from land, and loosed the dripping sheet,

And steered across the bay, and when nine suns
Passed down the long and laddered way of gold,
And nine pale moons had breathed their orisons
To the chaste stars their confessors, or told
Their dearest secret to the downy moth
That will not fly at noonday, through the foam and surging froth

Came a great owl with yellow sulphurous eyes
And lit upon the ship, whose timbers creaked
As though the lading of three argosies
Were in the hold, and flapped its wings, and shrieked,
And darkness straightway stole across the deep,
Sheathed was Orion's sword, dread Mars himself fled down the steep,

And the moon hid behind a tawny mask
Of drifting cloud, and from the ocean's marge
Rose the red plume, the huge and horned casque,
The seven cubit spear, the brazen targe!
And clad in bright and burnished panoply
Athena strode across the stretch of sick and shivering sea!

To the dull sailors' sight her loosened locks
Seemed like the jagged storm-wrack, and her feet
Only the spume that floats on hidden rocks,
And marking how the rising waters beat
Against the rolling ship, the pilot cried
To the young helmsman at the stern to luff to windward side.

But he, the over-bold adulterer,
A dear profaner of great mysteries,
An ardent amorous idolater,
When he beheld those grand relentless eyes
Laughed loud for joy, and crying out "I come"
Leapt from the lofty poop into the chill and churning foam.

Then fell from the high heaven one bright star,
One dancer left the circling galazy,
And back to Athens on her clattering car
In all the pride of venged divinity
Pale Pallas swept with shrill and steely clank,
And a few gurgling bubbles rose where her boy lover sank.

And the mast shuddered as the gaunt owl flew
With mocking hoots after the wrathful Queen,
And the old pilot bade the trembling crew
Hoist the big sail, and told how he had seen
Close to the stern a dim and giant form,
And like a dripping swallow the stout ship dashed through the storm.

And no man dared to speak of Charmides
Deeming that he some evil thing had wrought,
And when they reached the strait Symplegades
They beached their galley on the shore, and sought
The toll-gate of the city hastily,
And in the market showed their brown and pictured pottery.

GEORGE MEREDITH

Ferdinand and Miranda FROM *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*

He had landed on an island of the still-vexed Bermoothes. The world lay wrecked behind him: Raynham hung in mists, remote, a phantom to the vivid reality of this white hand which had drawn him thither away thousands of leagues in an eye-twinkle. Hark, how Ariel sang overhead! What splendour in the heavens! What marvels of beauty about his enchanted brows! And, O you wonder! Fair Flame! by whose light the glories of being are now first seen. . . . Radiant Miranda! Prince Ferdinand is at your feet.

Or is it Adam, his rib taken from his side in sleep, and thus transformed, to make him behold his Paradise, and lose it? . . .

The youth looked on her with as glowing an eye. It was the First Woman to him.

And she— mankind was all Caliban to her, saving this one princely youth.

So to each other said their changing eyes in the moment they stood together: he pale, and she blushing.

She was indeed sweetly fair, and would have been held fair among rival damsels. On a magic shore, and to a youth educated by a System, strung like an arrow drawn to the head, he, it might be guessed, could fly fast and far with her. The soft rose in her cheeks, the clearness of her eyes, bore witness to the body's virtue; and health and happy blood were in her bearing. Had she stood before Sir Austin among rival damsels, that Scientific Humanist, for the consummation of his System, would have thrown her the handkerchief for his son. The wide summer-hat, nodding over her forehead to her brows, seemed to flow with the flowing heavy curls, and those fire-threaded mellow curls, only half-curls, waves of hair call them, rippling at the ends, went like a sunny red-veined torrent down her back almost to her waist: a glorious vision to the youth, who embraced it as a flower of beauty, and read not a feature. There were curious features of colour in her face for him to have read. Her brows, thick and brownish against a soft skin showing the action of the blood, met in the bend of a bow, extending to the temples long and level: you saw that she was fashioned to peruse the sights of earth, and by the pliability of her brows

that the wonderful creature used her faculty, and was not going to be a statue to the gazer. Under the dark thick brows an arch of lashes shot out, giving a wealth of darkness to the full frank blue eyes, a mystery of meaning—more than brain was ever meant to fathom: richer, henceforth, than all mortal wisdom to Prince Ferdinand. For when nature turns artist, and produces contrasts of colour on a fair face, where is the Sage, or what the Oracle, shall match the depth of its lightest look?

Prince Ferdinand was also fair. In his slim boating-attire his figure looked heroic. His hair, rising from the parting to the right of his forehead, in what his admiring Lady Blandish called his plume, fell away slanting silkily to the temples across the nearly imperceptible upward curve of his brows there—felt more than seen, so slight it was—and gave to his profile a bold beauty, to which his bashful, breathless air was a flattering charm. An arrow drawn to the head, capable of flying fast and far with her! He leaned a little forward, drinking her in with all his eyes, and young Love has a thousand. Then truly the System triumphed, just ere it was to fall; and could Sir Austin have been content to draw the arrow to the head, and let it fly, when it would fly, he might have pointed to his son again, and said to the world, "Match him!" Such keen bliss as the youth had in the sight of her, an innocent youth alone has powers of soul in him to experience.

"O Women!" says *The Pilgrim's Scrip*, in one of its solitary outbursts, "Women, who like, and will have for hero, a rake! how soon are you not to learn that you have taken bankrupts to your bosoms, and that the putrescent gold that attracted you is the slime of the Lake of Sin!"

If these two were Ferdinand and Miranda, Sir Austin was not Prospero, and was not present, or their fates might have been different.

So they stood a moment, changing their eyes, and then Miranda spoke, and they came down to earth, feeling no less in heaven.

She spoke to thank him for his aid. She used quite common simple words; and used them, no doubt, to express a common simple meaning; but to him she was uttering magic, casting spells, and the effect they had on him was manifested in the incoherence of his replies, which were too foolish to be chronicled.

The couple were again mute. Suddenly Miranda, with an exclamation of anguish, and innumerable lights and shadows playing over her lovely face, clapped her hands, crying aloud, "My book! my book!" and ran to the bank.

Prince Ferdinand was at her side. "What have you lost?" he said.

"My book!" she answered, her delicious curls swinging across her shoulders to the stream. Then turning to him, "Oh, no, no! let me entreat you not to," she said; "I do not so very much mind losing it." And in her eagerness to restrain him she unconsciously laid her gentle hand upon his arm, and took the force of motion out of him.

"Indeed, I do not really care for the silly book," she continued, withdrawing her hand quickly, and reddening. "Pray, do not!"

The young gentleman had kicked off his shoes. No sooner was the spell of contact broken than he jumped in. The water was still troubled and discoloured by his introductory adventure, and, though he ducked his head with the spirit of a dabchick, the book was missing. A scrap of paper floating from the bramble just above the water, and looking as if fire had caught its edges and it had flown from one adverse element to the other, was all he could lay hold of; and he returned to land disconsolately, to hear Miranda's murmured mixing of thanks and pretty expostulations.

"Let me try again," he said.

"No, indeed!" she replied, and used the awful threat: "I will run away if you do," which effectually restrained him.

Her eye fell on the fire-stained scrap of paper, and brightened, as she cried, "There, there! you have what I want. It is that. I do not care for the book. No, please! You are not to look at it. Give it me."

Before her playfully imperative injunction was fairly spoken, Richard had glanced at the document and discovered a Griffin between two Wheatsheaves: his crest in silver: and below—O wonderment immense! his own handwriting!

He handed it to her. She took it, and put it in her bosom.

Who would have thought, that, where all else perished, Odes, Idylls, Lines, Stanzas, this one Sonnet to the stars should be miraculously reserved for such a starry fate—passing beatitude!

As they walked silently across the meadow, Richard strove

to remember the hour and the mood of mind in which he had composed the notable production. The stars were invoked, as seeing and foreseeing all, to tell him where then his love reclined, and so forth; Hesper was complacent enough to do so, and described her in a couplet:—

“Through sunset’s amber see me shining fair,
As her blue eyes shine through her golden hair.”

And surely no words could be more prophetic. Here were two blue eyes and golden hair; and by some strange chance, that appeared like the working of a divine finger, she had become the possessor of the prophecy, she that was to fulfil it! The youth was too charged with emotion to speak. Doubtless the damsel had less to think of, or had some trifling burden on her conscience, for she seemed to grow embarrassed. At last she drew up her chin to look at her companion under the nodding brim of her hat (and the action gave her a charmingly freakish air), crying, “But where are you going to? You are wet through. Let me thank you again; and, pray, leave me, and go home and change instantly.”

“Wet?” replied the magnetic muser, with a voice of tender interest; “not more than one foot, I hope. I will leave you while you dry your stockings in the sun.”

At this she could not withhold a shy laugh.

“Not I, but you. You would try to get that silly book for me, and you are dripping wet. Are you not very uncomfortable?”

In all sincerity he assured her he was not.

“And you really do not feel that you are wet?”

He really did not; and it was a fact that he spoke truth.

She pursed her dewberry mouth in the most comical way, and her blue eyes lightened laughter out of the half-closed lids.

“I cannot help it,” she said, her mouth opening, and sounding harmonious bells of laughter in his ears. “Pardon me, won’t you?”

His face took the same soft smiling curves in admiration of her.

“Not to feel that you have been in the water, the very moment after!” she musically interjected, seeing she was excused.

“It’s true,” he said; and his own gravity then touched him to join a duet with her, which made them no longer feel strangers,

and did the work of a month of intimacy. Better than sentiment, laughter opens the breast to love; opens the whole breast to his full quiver, instead of a corner here and there for a solitary arrow. Hail the occasion propitious, O British young! and laugh and treat love as an honest God, and dabble not with the sentimental rouge. These two laughed, and the souls of each cried out to other, "It is I, it is I."

They laughed and forgot the cause of their laughter, and the sun dried his light river clothing, and they strolled towards the blackbird's copse, and stood near a stile in sight of the foam of the weir and the many-coloured rings of eddies streaming forth from it.

Richard's boat, meanwhile, had contrived to shoot the weir, and was swinging, bottom upward, broadside with the current down the rapid backwater.

"Will you let it go?" said the damsel, eyeing it curiously.

"It can't be stopped," he replied, and could have added: "What do I care for it now!"

His old life was whirled away with it, dead, drowned. His new life was with her, alive, divine.

She flapped low the brim of her hat. "You must really not come any farther," she softly said.

"And will you go, and not tell me who you are?" he asked, growing bold as the fears of losing her came across him. "And will you not tell me before you go"—his face burned—"how you come by that—that paper?"

She chose to select the easier question for answer: "You ought to know me; we have been introduced." Sweet was her winning off-hand affability.

"Then who, in heaven's name, are you? Tell me! I never could have forgotten you."

"You have, I think," she said.

"Impossible that we could ever have met, and I forget you!"

She looked up at him.

"Do you remember Belthorpe?"

"Belthorpe! Belthorpe!" quoth Richard, as if he had to touch his brain to recollect there was such a place. "Do you mean old Blaize's farm?"

"Then I am old Blaize's niece." She tripped him a soft curtsy.

The magnetised youth gazed at her. By what magic was it

that this divine sweet creature could be allied with that old churl!

"Then what—what is your name?" said his mouth, while his eyes added, "O wonderful creature! How came you to enrich the earth?"

"Have you forgot the Desboroughs of Dorset, too?" she peered at him from a side-bend of the flapping brim.

"The Desboroughs of Dorset?" A light broke in on him. "And have you grown to this? That little girl I saw there!"

He drew close to her to read the nearest features of the vision. She could no more laugh off the piercing fervour of his eyes. Her volubility fluttered under his deeply wistful look, and now neither voice was high, and they were mutually constrained.

"You see," she murmured, "we are old acquaintances."

Richard, with his eyes still intently fixed on her, returned, "You are very beautiful!"

The words slipped out. Perfect simplicity is unconsciously audacious. Her overpowering beauty struck his heart, and, like an instrument that is touched and answers to the touch, he spoke.

Miss Desborough made an effort to trifle with this terrible directness; but his eyes would not be gainsaid, and checked her lips. She turned away from them, her bosom a little rebellious. Praise so passionately spoken, and by one who has been a damsel's first dream, dreamed of nightly many long nights, and clothed in the virgin silver of her thoughts in bud, praise from him is coin the heart cannot reject, if it would. She quickened her steps.

"I have offended you!" said a mortally wounded voice across her shoulder.

That he should think so were too dreadful.

"Oh no, no! you would never offend me." She gave him her whole sweet face.

"Then why—why do you leave me?"

"Because," she hesitated, "I must go."

"No. You must not go. Why must you go? Do not go."

"Indeed I must," she said, pulling at the obnoxious broad brim of her hat; and, interpreting a pause he made for his assent to her rational resolve, shyly looking at him, she held her hand out, and said, "Good-bye," as if it were a natural thing to say.

The hand was pure white—white and fragrant as the frosted blossom of a May night. It was the hand whose shadow, cast before, he had last night bent his head reverentially above, and kissed—resigning himself thereupon over to execution for payment of the penalty of such daring—by such bliss well rewarded.

He took the hand, and held it, gazing between her eyes.

“Good-bye,” she said again, as frankly as she could, and at the same time slightly compressing her fingers on his in token of adieu. It was a signal for his to close firmly upon hers.

“You will not go?”

“Pray, let me,” she pleaded, her sweet brows suing in wrinkles.

“You will not go?” Mechanically he drew the white hand nearer his thumping heart.

“I must,” she faltered piteously.

“You will not go?”

“Oh yes! yes!”

“Tell me. Do you wish to go?”

The question was a subtle one. A moment or two she did not answer, and then forswore herself, and said, “Yes.”

“Do you—you wish to go?” He looked with quivering eyelids under hers.

A fainter, “Yes” responded.

“You wish—wish to leave me?” His breath went with the words.

“Indeed I must.”

Her hand became a closer prisoner.

All at once an alarming delicious shudder went through her frame. From him to her it coursed, and back from her to him. Forward and back love’s electric messenger rushed from heart to heart, knocking at each, till it surged tumultuously against the bars of its prison, crying out for its mate. They stood trembling in unison, a lovely couple under these fair heavens of the morning.

When he could get his voice it said, “Will you go?”

But she had none to reply with, and could only mutely bend upward her gentle wrist.

“Then, farewell!” he said, and, dropping his lips to the soft fair hand, kissed it, and hung his head, swinging away from her, ready for death.

Strange, that now she was released she should linger by him.

Strange, that his audacity, instead of the executioner, brought blushes and timid tenderness to his side, and the sweet words, "You are not angry with me?"

"With you, O Beloved!" cried his soul. "And you forgive me, fair charity!"

"I think it was rude of me to go without thanking you again," she said, and again proffered her hand.

The sweet heaven-bird shivered out his song above him. The gracious glory of heaven fell upon his soul. He touched her hand, not moving his eyes from her, nor speaking, and she, with a soft word of farewell, passed across the stile, and up the pathway through the dewy shades of the copse, and out of the arch of the light, away from his eyes.

And away with her went the wild enchantment. He looked on barren air. But it was no more the world of yesterday. The marvellous splendours had sown seeds in him, ready to spring up and bloom at her gaze; and in his bosom now the vivid conjuration of her tones, her face, her shape, makes them leap and illumine him like fitful summer lightnings—ghosts of the vanished sun.

There was nothing to tell him that he had been making love and declaring it with extraordinary rapidity; nor did he know it. Soft flushed cheeks! sweet mouth! strange sweet brows! eyes of softest fire! how could his ripe eyes behold you, and not plead to keep you? Nay, how could he let you go? And he seriously asked himself that question.

To-morrow this place will have a memory—the river and the meadow, and the white falling weir: his heart will build a temple here; and the skylark will be its high-priest, and the old blackbird its glossy-gowned chorister, and there will be a sacred repast of dewberries. To-day the grass is grass: his heart is chased by phantoms and finds rest nowhere. Only when the most tender freshness of his flower comes across him does he taste a moment's calm; and no sooner does it come than it gives place to keen pangs of fear that she may not be his for ever.

Erelong he learns that her name is Lucy. Erelong he meets Ralph, and discovers that in a day he has distanced him by a sphere. He and Ralph and the curate of Lobourne join in their walks, and raise classical discussions on ladies' hair, fingering a thousand delicious locks, from those of Cleopatra to the

Borgia's. "Fair! fair! all of them fair!" sighs the melancholy curate, "as are those women formed for our perdition! I think we have in this country what will match the Italian or the Greek." His mind flutters to Mrs. Doria, Richard blushes before the vision of Lucy, and Ralph, whose heroine's hair is a dark luxuriance, dissents, and claims a noble share in the slaughter of men for dark-haired Wonders. They have no mutual confidences, but they are singularly kind to each other, these three children of instinct.

OLIVER MADOX BROWN

Sonnet

No more these passion-worn faces shall men's eyes
 Behold in life. Death leaves no trace behind
 Of their wild hate and wilder love, grown blind
 With desperate longing, more than the foam which lies
 Splashed up awhile where the cold spray descends
 The waves whereto their cold limbs were resigned;
 Yet ever doth the sea-wind's undefined
 Vague wailing shudder with their dying sighs.
 For all men's souls 'twixt sorrow and love are cast,
 As on the earth each lingers his brief space,
 While surely nightfall comes, where each man's face
 In death's obliteration sinks at last
 As a deserted wind-tossed sea's foam-trace—
 Life's chilled boughs emptied by death's autumn-blast.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

Mr. George Meredith's "Modern Love"

To the Editor of: *The Spectator*

Sir,

I cannot resist asking the favour of admission for my protest against the article on Mr. Meredith's last volume of poems in *The Spectator* of May 24th. That I personally have for the writings, whether verse or prose, of Mr. Meredith a most sincere and deep admiration is no doubt a matter of infinitely small moment. I wish only, in default of a better, to appeal seriously on general grounds against this sort of criticism as

applied to one of the leaders of English literature. To any fair attack Mr. Meredith's books of course lie as much open as another man's; indeed, standing where he does, the very eminence of his post makes him perhaps more liable than a man of less well-earned fame to the periodical slings and arrows of publicity. Against such criticism no one would have a right to appeal, whether for his own work or for another's. But the writer of the article in question blinks at stating the fact that he is dealing with no unfledged pretender. Any work of a man who has won his spurs and fought his way to a foremost place among the men of his time, must claim at least a grave consideration and respect. It would hardly be less absurd, in remarking on a poem by Mr. Meredith, to omit all reference to his previous work, and treat the present book as if its author had never tried his hand at such writing before, than to criticise the *Légende des Siècles*, or (coming to a nearer instance) the *Idylls of the King*, without taking into account the relative position of the great English or the greater French poet. On such a tone of criticism as this any one who may chance to see or hear of it has a right to comment.

But even if the case were different, and the author were now at his starting-point, such a review of such a book is surely out of date. Praise or blame should be thoughtful, serious, careful, when applied to a work of such subtle strength, such depth of delicate power, such passionate and various beauty, as the leading poem of Mr. Meredith's volume: in some points, as it seems to me (and in this opinion I know that I have weightier judgements than my own to back me) a poem above the aim and beyond the reach of any but its author. Mr. Meredith is one of the three or four poets now alive whose work, perfect or imperfect, is always as noble in design, as it is often faultless in result. The present critic falls foul of him for dealing with "a deep and painful subject on which he has no conviction to express". There are pulpits enough for all preachers in prose; the business of verse-writing is hardly to express convictions; and if some poetry, not without merit of its kind, has at times dealt in dogmatic morality, it is all the worse and all the weaker for that. As to subject, it is too much to expect that all schools of poetry are to be for ever subordinate to the one just now so much in request with us, whose scope of sight is bounded by the nursery walls; that all Muses are to bow down before her who babbles, with lips yet warm

from their pristine pap, after the dangling delights of a child's coral, and jingles with flaccid fingers one knows not whether a jester's or a baby's bells. We have not too many writers capable of duly handling a subject worth the serious interest of men. As to execution, take almost any sonnet at random out of this series, and let any man qualified to judge for himself of metre, choice of expression, and splendid language, decide on its claims. And, after all, the test will be unfair, except as regards metrical or pictorial merit; every section of this great progressive poem being connected with the other by links of the finest and most studied workmanship. Take for example, that noble sonnet, beginning

"We saw the swallows gathering in the skies,"

a more perfect piece of writing no man alive has ever turned out; witness these three lines, the grandest perhaps of the book:

"And in the largeness of the evening earth,
Our spirit grew as we walked side by side;
The hour became her husband, and my bride;"

but in transcription it must lose the colour and effect given it by its place in the series; the grave and tender beauty, which makes it at once a bridge and a resting-place between the admirable poems of passion it falls among. As specimens of pure power, and depth of imagination at once intricate and vigorous, take the two sonnets on a false passing reunion of wife and husband; the sonnet on the rose; that other beginning:

"I am not of those miserable males
Who snill' at vice, and daring not to snap
Do therefore hope for Heaven."

And, again, that earlier one:

"All other joys of life he strove to warm."

Of the shorter poems which give character to the book I have not space to speak here; and as the critic has omitted noticing the most valuable and important (such as the *Beggar's Soliloquy*, and the *Old Chartist*, equal to Béranger for completeness of effect and exquisite justice of style, but noticeable for a thorough dramatic insight, which Béranger missed

through his personal passions and partialities), there is no present need to go into the matter. I ask you to admit this protest simply out of justice to the book in hand, believing as I do that it expresses the deliberate unbiased opinion of a sufficient number of readers to warrant the insertion of it, and leaving to your consideration rather their claims to a fair hearing than those of the book's author to a revised judgement. A poet of Mr. Meredith's rank can no more be profited by the advocacy of his admirers than injured by the rash or partial attack of his critics.

WILLIAM CALDWELL ROSCOE

Sonnet

The bubble of the silver-springing waves,
 Castalian music, and that flattering sound,
 Low rustling of the loved Apollian leaves,
 With which my youthful hair was to be crowned,
 Grow dimmer in my ears; while Beauty grieves
 Over her votary, less frequent sound;
 And, not untouched by storms, my lifeboat heaves
 Through the splashed ocean-waters, outward bound.
 And as the leaning mariner, his hand
 Clapsed on his ear, strives trembling to reclaim
 Some loved lost echo from the fleeting strand,
 So lean I back to the poetic land;
 And in my heart a sound, a voice, a name
 Hangs, as above the lamp hangs the expiring flame.

Like a Musician

Like a musician that with flying finger
 Startles the voice of some new instrument,
 And, though he know that in one string are blent
 All its extremes of sound, yet still doth linger
 Among the lighter threads, fearing to start
 The deep soul of that one melodious wire,
 Lest it, unanswering, dash his high desire,
 And spoil the hopes of his expectant heart;—
 Thus with my mistress oft conversing, I
 Stir every lighter theme with careless voice,
 Gathering sweet music and celestial joys
 From the harmonious soul o'er which I fly;
 Yet o'er the one deep master-chord I hover,
 And dare not stoop, fearing to tell—I love her.

GEORGE MEREDITH

A Later Alexandrian

An inspiration caught from dubious hues,
 Filled him, and mystic wrynesses he chased;
 For they lead farther than the single-faced,
 Wave subtler promise when desire pursues.
 The moon of cloud discoloured was his Muse,
 His pipe the reed of the old moaning waste.
 Love was to him with anguish fast enlaced,
 And Beauty where she walked blood-shot the dew.
 Men railed at such a singer; women thrilled
 Responsively: he sang not Nature's own
 Divinest, but his lyric had a tone,
 As 't were a forest-echo of her voice:
 What barrenly they yearn for seemed distilled
 From what they dread, who do through tears rejoice.

FRANK T. MARZIALS

Laus Veneris

(Mr. Burne-Jones' Picture)

"O Lady of Love, of old so debonair,
 List to our lauds, for we would sing thy praise
 In descant sweet as of the earlier days."

"The days are late; I weary of praise and prayer."

"Yet are we young, dear lady; is youth not fair
 As when thine advent filled the woods and ways
 With music of love-laughter and love-lays?"

"Your lays are dirges, and your love despair.
 For lo! my god-gift of fresh joy, whereby
 Honour was mine, for all men's hearts were fain,
 Has turned, alas! through time's slow wizardry
 And ill device, to poison and bitter bane,
 That yet seem mine, I horror! and I, and I,
 I that was Lady of Love am Lady of Pain."

The Classic Ideal

Must, then, thy beauty be so soon outworn—
 A canker'd bud doomed to untimely death;
 A hoarfrost landscape fading at a breath
 Into unsightly drops; a pearl-rose morn
 Heralding sleet and dank grey mists forlorn;

A goodly garment, as the Psalmist saith,
 The moth shall fret until it perisheth?
 For so some hold, deeming all beauty born
 Of youth's enchantment of untroubled lines,
 And tints unsmirched by Time's murk hand—ay, hold
 That it must fade as each full feature pines
 With age, and the flush cheek grows wan and cold,
 The eye less bright, and chill with silver shines
 The hair of bronze that had the sheen of gold.

THÉOPHILE JULIUS HENRY MARZIALS

Love, the Minstrel

In the deep shadows round the fountain-space,
 Clear to the moonlight and the slim jet's tip
 Toss'd into silver, and in twinkling chase
 The fireflies swirl'd between, there, hand on hip,
 A lover held his lady face to face,
 Breathing sweet words, letting his fingers slip
 Thro' moonlight tinsel'd hair; and crushing lace,
 Sheet-flashing satin and the water's dip

Was all the sound. Then sudden, far away
 At some low terrace tank they heard Love play
 His very soul out soft, in soothing bars;
 And breathless, list'ning, they forgot Love's time
 Was pulsing out from distant chime to chime;—
 And instant day shook out the violet stars.

COSMO MONKHOUSE

Life and Death

From morn to eve they wrestled—Life and Death.
 At first it seemed to me that they in mirth
 Contended, or as foes of equal worth,
 So firm their feet, so undisturbed their breath;
 But when the sharp red sun cut through its sheath
 Of western clouds, I saw the brown arms' girth
 Tighten, and bear that radiant form to earth;
 And suddenly both fell upon the heath.
 And then the marvel came—for when I fled
 To where those great antagonists down fell,
 I could not find the body that I sought,
 And when and where it went I could not tell;
 One only form was left of those who fought,
 The long dark form of Death, and it was dead.

FREDERICK W. H. MYERS

Stanzas on Shelley

Oh, not like ours that life was born,
No mortal mother Shelley knew,
But kindled by some starry morn
Lit like a snow-flake from the blue;
Saw on some peak the lightnings gleam,
The lingering soft auroras play;
Then foamlike on a leaping stream
Sped downwards to the earthly day.

So keen a wish had winged his flight—
His heart was faint with such desire—
To bear from that supernal light
A Promethean fount of fire:
His quivering thyrsus flashed with flame,
He sang the spell long learnt above;
With ardent eyes one only name
He named; the mountains echoed "Love!"

But ah! for men no healing wrought
That spell, that spirit's angel bloom:
Close, close about him frowned and fought
Their words of anger, looks of gloom:
Gloomed overhead the iron reign
Of stifling custom, hates that kill;
From Earth's dark places sighed in vain
Her old immedicable ill.

"And yet methinks one soul might know
The bliss unknown, the tale untold!
One heart might melt in mine, and so
For twain at least the age be gold!"
He called;—and ah! what mortal maid
Had heard unmoved that seraph tongue?
What Daphne lingered in her shade
When that unstained Apollo sung?

But oft in vain shall love be given
When mighty spirits mourn alone;
Too rarely, rarely falls from heaven
A woman-heart to match their own:
He saw his Vision smile in sleep,
And close she seemed, and floated far;
Life-long across life's darkling deep
He chased that image of a star.

Yet, with an Orphic whisper blent,
 A Spirit in the west-wind sighs;
 Gaze from the conscious firmament
 Some God's unfathomable eyes:
 He saw, he felt them: "Thou be mine,
 As I am thine, thou primal whole!
 Ye elements, my life enshrine,
 Enfold, entomb me, soul in soul!"

He called; they heard him; high in air
 The impetuous Winds came whirling free;
 Dashed on his brow, swept through his hair
 Untamed caresses of the Sea;
 The Fire up-leapt in ardent birth
 To her thin substance his to win;
 That heart of hearts the dædal Earth,
 Her own unfolding, drew therein.

AMY LEVY

To Vernon Lee

On Bellosguardo, when the year was young,
 We wandered, seeking for the daffodil
 And dark anemone, whose purples fill
 The peasant's plot, between the corn-shoots sprung.

Over the grey, low wall the olive flung
 Her deeper greyness; far off, hill on hill
 Sloped to the sky, which, pearly-pale and still,
 Above the large and luminous landscape hung.

A snowy blackthorn flowered beyond my reach;
 You broke a branch and gave it to me there;
 I found for you a scarlet blossom rare.

Thereby ran on of Art and Life our speech;
 And of the gifts the gods have given to each—
 Hope unto you, and unto me Despair.

VERNON LEE

The Hills of the Setting Sun

It became evident to my mind in those recent days (now so woefully distant!) that the Euganean Hills were a country of spells, of magic.

I had for years guessed something of the kind, every time I had watched them across the Lagoon at Venice. Watched

them; for they come and go like a vision, rarely appearing before evening; and their clustered cones, resting on the waters, strike mystery and longing into the heart, like the pale rose of afterglow against which they stand sharp in their blueness, like the haze of sunset gold in which they have curdled and grown visible.

This mythological fact had become more and more patent of late. And the eve, almost, of leaving Venice, I was trying to explain to certain friends that these Euganeans I was going to had been at all times a little country of legend and of wonder. We had rowed in the late afternoon to the island of the Armenian convent; and above the crinkled bays of its kitchen garden these hills arose, as we walked up and down, very clear, blue, insulated, and mysterious. It is near the Euganean Hills, I was telling my friends, that Phæton falls with the Sun's chariot in the delta of Eridanus, where his sisters turn to poplars on the banks. The feathers of Icarus, when the wax melts, are scattered over the Venetian seaboard. The oracles of Geryon, that mysterious King of the West, decree that a treasure and a marvellous ring should be cast into the well of Abano, where the hot springs still smoke in the little valley. The wizard Peter is born at this same Abano, as if to assert, two thousand years later, the truth of those old tales of sorcery. The wonder-poet Petrarch retires to those hills to meditate and die; and later Shelley comes, the mysterious Adonais ravished by the storm-gods. The Euganeans are volcanoes which burst, perhaps within mankind's memory, from under the sea. To the earlier Greeks, navigating the dangerous Adriatic, the sun sets visibly among the sea-girt cones: hence Phæton, Icarus, and Geryon, who, if you remember, was in some manner connected with the Hesperides. . . .

My friends walked up and down between the bay hedges and cabbage rows of the Armenian island, and paid but little attention to my antique folklore. But when I got up into the Euganeans, and during all the days I spent there, the magic nature of those hills became, for me, more and more an article of private belief and a reason of secret superstition.

To begin with, there was something especial in the pleasure of the mainland after the lagoon, of the changing seasons after that unchanging world of water and sky. The pleasure in the russet and the orange and the pale gold and the green made marvellous with sulphur veinings, and the sparkle of the wet

grass sprinkled with cinammon leaves, after those changeless splendours, knowing no summer nor autumn, of mere sky and water and marble and brick of Venice. There was a sense of the world's great age, and of its youth too, in the unaccustomed rustle of falling leaves, the twitter of gathering birds, the slow, soft movement of the white calves browsing by the ponds, the big bullocks ploughing: things which had always been, thousands of years before Venice ever was, life of the fields and woods, of the husbandmen and the rustic gods, idyllic, eternal.

The afternoon next my arrival, we walked—my young hosts and the children—up the second highest of the Euganean chain, the Monte della Madonna; a poor seventeen hundred feet in reality, but, on that wooded cone sheer above the sea and plain, seeming so very high. At the top we walked into a cloud: a white fog veiling all except the few reddening vines, and the white walls of a hermitage: a pathetic little church of pilgrims, weather-worn even inside, and with a vague look of a ship, suggestive of the storms which churn around it in winter. But at a lower point in returning, the clouds broke, and we had a sudden view, not over but *into* the whole miniature chain. Into this little world of crater-shaped mountains and sharp russet and yellow valleys, villages white below; roads twisting like the tail of Mantegna's dragon, exactly as they do, for the rest, in Mantegna's backgrounds; castled crags like that of Pendice, the long fir-fringed crest of Rua, and far off, against the beginning of the plain, a town hanging on a rock, Monselice.

This walk was unreasonably enchanting: the pleasure of the little wood of very old chestnuts, of the leaves and fallen fruit in the moss underfoot, and the dear familiar mystery of the great solemn trunks, a broken-off tower in their twilight. The delight of arduous walking between the steep scrub of hornbeam and oak: the smell of the woods, sweet, summer-dried, autumn-drenched: the amusingness of the pink limestone (like Verona marble) crumbling underfoot, and the basalt gravel rolling. . . . It was all, as I say, unreasonably enchanting. And so was everything that happened or that came before my eyes during that week. Why? There seems no reasonable reason, save the one already hinted at, that this had once been the Orchard of the Hesperides.

Or are there perhaps in time, as well as in space, enclosed places of the spirit, little regions of tender memories and peaceful hopes, set with wonder-trees bearing deathless

blossom and fruit? A tiny *now*, safe embosomed in happy yesterdays and to-morrows, which (like the plains looked at from the hills, or the hills from the sea) are of the mirage blue of dreams. All of us, surely, have known such days of causeless and pervading joy; have, by some spells impossible to learn, found ourselves admitted within those vanishing, longed-for isles, those closed valleys, where the gold-dust of sunset lies tangibly on all things, and our own thoughts all wear an aureole.

When this happens, experienced or superstitious folk feel just a little fear. The Greeks, we know, with their Nemesis lurking everywhere, have always fabled shipwreck, disaster (as Phæton's and Icarus's), in connexion with that world of the setting sun. The dark sea engulfs beyond; and there is the loadstone mountain, making planks start. However that may be, I tasted unreasonable happiness during those autumn days of Euganean magic. I liked to think of the chain of hills bubbling up, all flame and steam, out of the River Oceanus to mark its most western shores: blue cones which now rise, filling the heart with longing upon the shining waters in the mellow sunset. I liked to call them, to myself, *the Hills of the Setting Sun*. And, after all, the Sun most certainly *did* set there (was even *upset* hard by on one occasion through Phæton's bad coachmanship), until the Three Hesperides, disgusted by the thefts of Herakles and the intrusiveness of Odysseus, induced the God of Day to move his tent to the Atlantic waves, near which those rather exclusive ladies, Ægle and Arethusa and Hesperia, having carefully shipped their precious orangery and their faithful dragon, laid out the second garden they are reported to have possessed.

It was for other reasons, and with nothing golden to replant save dreams, that I, too, took my leave of the Euganeans, returning to Venice in ill-omened autumn flood and storm.

And yesterday, in the sad journey south, my dear Hills of the Setting Sun, as I passed by in the train, seemed very distant and unfamiliar in their disembodied autumn blue; certainly no place I ever walked or drove in. The yellow plain of faded vines wrapped itself in vapours, with faint precocious sunset flushings, lasting till dark. By twilight we were crossing the Po, brimful, the black bridge of boats spanning it. A little lurid red still lingered in the clouds and in the turbid water: the blood of Phæton, maybe, or Icarus's scattered feathers.

ARRAN and ISLA LEIGH*

Birth-Song of Pégasos

Did thy life leap out from the burning blue fire of heaven—
 From "the glimmering blaze of the lighted sea"?†
 With travail of thee were the white clouds riven?
 Did the waves dispart that thou might'st be free?
 Art thou child of the air when the Orient thrilled her?
 Did Death, kissing Hébê, beget thee his dream?
 Storm of Semelê's heart, and the storm-wrath that stilled her,
 Through thee stream.

Unfathered of heaven, frail, fearful, and lonely,
 Thou art mothered but by a maiden's sigh,
 By the maiden Athênê left loveless, left only
 To crave, and to crave, till she craved to die.
 Till the sword took the strange snaked head, with its tangled
 Bright coils, and the still eyes' freezing stare,
 And the blood welled free at last from the strangled
 Heart's despair.

Flowed free, flowed fast. Should no child inherit
 Her bitter wrongs? From the gory ground
 Immaculate, puissant, the blood of her spirit,
 Of her terrible thrallèd soul unbound,
 Thou roset, a creature of glorious fashion,
 The clear sculptured form of her shattered desire,
 Thy plumes, like her dreams, iridescent with passion,
 Opal fire.

Thou art free; through the æther the sea-eagle fareth,
 But swoops with desire to the crag-cradled nest;
 The lands of the sunset receive thee; none shareth
 With thee the sweet violet-sown vales of the west.
 To love-sunless sojourn thy mother was fated,
 A bitterer want for thy heart-woe is come,
 Who wanderest the o'erwhelming heavens unmated,
 Loveless, dumb.

Thou knowest the track when the day is dying,
 Past the burning cliffs to the sky's pale sea,
 Whose wondrous Æolian waters are lying
 A rippleless song of deep ecstasy.

* Believed to be an early work of "Michael Field"—Katherine Harris Bradley (1846–1914) and Edith Emma Cooper (1862–1913).

† This expression occurs in one of Mr. Ruskin's works. I cannot now recall which; but I desire especially to acknowledge my indebtedness to the *Queen of the Air*, the extent of which those alone who are students of the book can rightly measure.

Thou watchest the night gloom those glowing ranges,
 Dim that fair far sea; but no tale is told;
 Nor yet of the moonrise—its breathlike changes
 Gold for gold.

Thou hast trembled in crash of cerulean ruin,
 Tracked the lightning's fang through the thunder-scars
 Of the storm-broken cloud; thou hast burst the dew in
 The fine sheeted vapour, hast brushed the stars.
 To thee the lone hill-crest its heart uncloses;
 Thou skirtest the land where the snow is born,
 And leap'st from thy couch, 'mid the ruffled roses
 Of the morn.

Yet wildly thou wanderest, a desolate creature,
 The lust of thy spirit no sun-fire stays;
 Thou art child of her anguish whose death-fixing feature
 Corpsed the love-warm look with its hungering gaze.
 Till one shall o'ermaster thee, mate with thee, quicken,
 Thy nature will writhe in its toils; thine the wrong
 Of the wood-warbling amorous bird that tongue-stricken
 Swells with song.

Didst thou seek one to love thee, oh, soon wert thou mated;
 The nightingale's passion, the plaint of the dove,
 Are heard for re-echo; to loneliness fated
 They only, they ever, who seek one to love.
 Dream deep in the star-softened cloud, none will rouse thee;
 Plunge thy fearless flanks in the wind's wide bed,
 On the chaos-bound cliffs of Infinity browse thee,
 Heaven-bred!

Yet ne'er shalt thou rest from thy terrible yearning;
 Though quenchless the craving, not idle the quest.
 Thirst's bitterest ravage we learn from the burning
 Wild lips to the wineless wine-cup prest.
 The secret within thee thou shalt not unravel,
 Nor thine eyes weep tears, nor sobs suck thy breath;
 Desire pressed by dumbness to uttermost travail,
 Brings forth Death.

MARGARET L. WOODS

L'Envoi

Like the wreath the poet sent
 To the lady of old time,
 Roses that were discontent
 With their brief unhonoured prime,

Crown he hoped she might endow
With the beauty of her brow;
Even so for you I blent,
Send to you my wreath of rhyme.

These alas! be blooms less bright,
Faded buds that never blew,
Darkling thoughts that seek the light—
Let them find it finding you.
Bid these petals pale unfold
On your heart their hearts of gold,
Sweetness for your sole delight,
Love for odour, tears for dew.

The Song of the Lute-Player

Still as a star came to my breast
A joy unbidden,
Not to be known, not to be guessed,
So fair, so hidden;
And now within 'tis like the starry night,
The unimagined pure ethereal height,
Trembling in loneliness at its own light.

Heaven of my joy, fair though thou art,
A light for ever,
Yet there's a grief hid in my heart
Like the great river.
At times a little while it seems to sleep,
And then a voice cries to it from the deep,
And all its floods over my spirit sweep.

Hast thou a joy? Though but a flower,
O maiden, bring it.
Though but a dream of morning hour,
Yet will I sing it.
And as a bird that calls its mate my strain
— Listen, the lute begins like falling rain—
Shall call the Spring and Spring returns again.

Hast thou a fear hid in thy heart,
A sorrow sleeping?
Light though it be, soon to depart,
I'll sing it weeping.
The ruined shrines shall answer as I sing,
In hollow tombs of many an ancient king
Forgotten woes shall waken murmuring.

Then in my song, maiden, I'll weave
The world's emotion,
Passion of souls that laugh and grieve,
And Earth and Ocean.

The silver spheres shall hush awhile their quire,
Saying, "Return, lost star of our desire,
Lend us again thy music and thy fire."

Only my joy, only my pain
May not be spoken.
These would I tell, earthward again
The song drops broken.
Sleeping I dream my joy, my sorrow sing.
I wake—the lonely night is listening
To one long sigh, breathed from a shattered string.

A Ballade of the Night

Far from the earth the deep-descended day
Lies dim in hidden sanctuaries of sleep.
The winged winds couched on the threshold keep
Uneasy watch, and still expectant stay
The voice that bids their rushing host delay
No more to rise, and with tempestuous power
Rend wide the veil of heaven. Long watching they
Sigh in the silence of the midnight hour.

Hark! where the forests slow in slumber sway
Below the blue wild ridges, steep on steep,
Thronging the sky—how shuddering as they leap
The impetuous waters go their fated way,
And mourn in mountain chasms, and as they stray
By many a magic town and marble tower,
As those that still unreconciled obey,
Sigh in the silence of the midnight hour.

Listen—the quiet darkness doth array
The toiling earth, and there is time to weep—
A deeper sound is mingled with the sweep
Of streams and winds that whisper far away.
Oh listen! where the populous cities lay
Low in the lap of sleep their ancient dower,
The changeless spirit of our changeful clay
Sighs in the silence of the midnight hour.

Sigh, watcher for a dawn remote and gray,
Mourn, journeyer to an undesired deep,
Eternal sower, thou that shalt not reap,
Immortal, whom the plagues of God devour,
Mourn—'tis the hour when thou wert wont to pray.
Sigh in the silence of the midnight hour.

Song

Sleep we must, but when to slumber?
 Every hour's too fair to lose it,
 Morn of gold and eve of umber,
 Silver night—ah, who would choose it?
 Honey's hid in every flow'r,
 Joy in every sweet, sweet hour.

Sleep we shall, but first be weary,
 Dance with hours of morning gladness,
 Pillage noon nor chide the dreary
 Hours that weave delightful madness;
 Round the earth, that's with us racing,
 Sun and moon and meteors chasing,
 Worn with journeys, white with dust,
 Then we'll sleep—for sleep we must.

A. MARY F. ROBINSON

A Ballade of Forgotten Tunes

To V. L.

Forgotten seers of lost repute
 That haunt the banks of Acheron,
 Where have you dropped the broken lute
 You played in Troy or Calydon?
 O ye that sang in Babylon
 By foreign willows cold and grey,
 Fall'n are the harps ye hanged thereon,
Dead are the tunes of yesterday!

De Coucy, is your music mute,
 The quaint old plain-chant woe-begone
 That served so many a lover's suit?
 Oh, dead as Adam or Guedron!
 Then, sweet De Caurroy, try upon
 Your virginals a virelay;
 Or play, Orlando, one pavonne—
Dead are the tunes of yesterday!

But ye whose praises none refute,
 Who have the immortal laurel won;
 Trill me your quavering close acute,
 Astorga, dear unhappy Don!
 One air, Galuppi! Sarti one
 So many fingers used to play!—
 Dead as the ladies of Villon,
Dead are the tunes of yesterday!

ENVOI

Vernon, in vain you stoop to con
 The slender, faded notes to-day—
 The Soul that dwelt in them is gone:
Dead are the tunes of yesterday!

Tuscan Olives

(Seven Rispetti)

i.

The colour of the olives who shall say?
 In winter on the yellow earth they're blue,
 A wind can change the green to white or grey,
 But they are olives still in every hue;

But they are olives always, green or white,
 As love is love in torment or delight;
 But they are olives, ruffled or at rest,
 As love is always love in tears or jest.

We walked along the terraced olive-yard,
 And talked together till we lost the way;
 We met a peasant, bent with age and hard,
 Bruising the grape-skins in a vase of clay;

Bruising the grape-skins for the second wine
 We did not drink, and left him, Love of mine;
 Bruising the grapes already bruised enough.
 He had his meagre wine, and we our love.

iii.

We climbed one morning to the sunny height
 Where chestnuts grow no more and olives grow;
 Far-off the circling mountains cinder-white,
 The yellow river and the gorge below.

"Turn round," you said, O flower of Paradise;
 I did not turn, I looked upon your eyes.
 "Turn round," you said, "turn round and see the view!"
 I did not turn, my Love, I looked at you.

iv.

How hot it was! Across the white-hot wall
 Pale olives stretch towards the blazing street;
 You broke a branch, you never spoke at all,
 But gave it me to fan with in the heat;

You gave it me without a sign or word,
 And yet, my dear, I think you knew I heard.
 You gave it me without a word or sign:
 Under the olives first I called you mine.

v.

At Lucca, for the autumn festival,
 The streets are tulip-gay; but you and I
 Forgot them, seeing over church and wall
 Guinigi's tower soar i' the black-blue sky;

A stem of delicate rose against the blue
 And on the top two lonely olives grew,
 Crowning the tower, far from the hills, alone;
 As on our risen love our lives are grown.

vi.

Who would have thought we should stand again together,
 Here, with the convent a frown of towers above us;
 Here, mid the sere-wooded hills and wintry weather;
 Here, where the olives bend down and seem to love us;

Here, where the fruit-laden olives half remember
 All that began in their shadow last November;
 Here, where we knew we must part, must part and sever;
 Here, where we know we shall love for aye and ever.

vii.

Reach up and pluck a branch, and give it me,
 That I may hang it in my Northern room,
 That I may find it there, and wake and see
 —Not you! not you!—dead leaves and wintry gloom.

O senseless olives, wherefore should I take
 Your leaves to balm a heart that can but ache?
 Why should I take you hence, that can but show
 How much is left behind? I do not know.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

FROM *A Venetian Medley*

I.—FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND FAMILIARITY

It is easy to feel and to say something obvious about Venice. The influence of this sea-city is unique, immediate, and unmistakable. But to express the sober truth of those impressions which remain when the first astonishment of the

Venetian revelation has subsided, when the spirit of the place has been harmonised through familiarity with our habitual mood, is difficult.

Venice inspires at first an almost Corybantic rapture. From our earliest visits, if these have been measured by days rather than weeks, we carry away with us the memory of sunsets emblazoned in gold and crimson upon cloud and water; of violet domes and bell-towers etched against the orange of a western sky; of moonlight silvering breeze-rippled breadths of liquid blue; of distant islands shimmering in sun-litten haze; of music and black gliding boats; of labyrinthine darkness made for mysteries of love and crime; of statue-fretted palace fronts; of brazen clangour and a moving crowd; of pictures by earth's proudest painters, cased in gold on walls of council chambers where Venice sat enthroned a queen, where nobles swept the floors with robes of Tyrian brocade. These reminiscences will be attended by an ever-present sense of loneliness and silence in the world around; the sadness of a limitless horizon, the solemnity of an unbroken arch of heaven, the calm and greyness of evening on the lagoons, the pathos of a marble city crumbling to its grave in mud and brine.

These first impressions of Venice are true. Indeed they are inevitable. They abide, and form a glowing background for all subsequent pictures, toned more austere, and painted in more lasting hues of truth upon the brain. Those have never felt Venice at all who have not known this primal rapture, or who perhaps expected more of colour, more of melodrama, from a scene which nature and the art of man have made the richest in these qualities. Yet the mood engendered by this first experience is not destined to be permanent. It contains an element of unrest and unreality which vanishes upon familiarity. From the blare of that triumphal bourdon of brass instruments emerge the delicate voices of violin and clarinette. To the contrasted passions of our earliest love succeed a multitude of sweet and fanciful emotions. It is my present purpose to recapture some of the impressions made by Venice in more tranquil moods. Memory might be compared to a kaleidoscope. Far away from Venice I raise the wonder-working tube, allow the glittering fragments to settle as they please, and with words attempt to render something of the patterns I behold.

II.—A LODGING IN SAN VIO

I have escaped from the hotels with their bustle of tourists and crowded *tables-d'hôte*. My garden stretches down to the Grand Canal, closed at the end with a pavilion, where I lounge and smoke and watch the cornice of the Prefettura fretted with gold in sunset light. My sitting-room and bedroom face the southern sun. There is a canal below, crowded with gondolas, and across its bridge the good folk of San Vio come and go the whole day long—men in blue shirts with enormous hats, and jackets slung on their left shoulder; women in kerchiefs of orange and crimson. Barelegged boys sit upon the parapet, dangling their feet above the rising tide. A hawker passes, balancing a basket full of live and crawling crabs. Barges filled with Brenta water or Mirano wine take up their station at the neighbouring steps, and then ensues a mighty splashing and hurrying to and fro of men with tubs upon their heads. The brawny fellows in the wine-barge are red from brows to breast with drippings of the vat. And now there is a bustle in the quarter. A *barca* has arrived from S. Erasmo, the island of the market-gardens. It is piled with gourds and pumpkins, cabbages and tomatoes, pomegranates and pears—a pyramid of gold and green and scarlet. Brown men lift the fruit aloft, and women bending from the pathway bargain for it. A clatter of chaffering tongues, a ring of coppers, a babel of hoarse sea-voices, proclaim the sharpness of the struggle. When the quarter has been served, the boat sheers off diminished in its burden. Boys and girls are left seasoning their polenta with a slice of *zucca*, while the mothers of a score of families go pattering up yonder courtyard with the material for their husbands' supper in their handkerchiefs. Across the canal, or more correctly the *Rio*, opens a wide grass-grown court. It is lined on the right hand by a row of poor dwellings, swarming with gondoliers' children. A garden wall runs along the other side, over which I can see pomegranate trees in fruit and pergolas of vines. Far beyond are more low houses, and then the sky, swept with sea-breezes, and the masts of an ocean-going ship against the dome and turrets of Palladio's Redentore.

This is my home. By day it is as lively as a scene in *Masaniello*. By night, after nine o'clock, the whole stir of the quarter has subsided. Far away I hear the bell of some church

tell the hours. But no noise disturbs my rest, unless perhaps a belated gondolier moors his boat beneath the window. My one maid, Catina, sings at her work the whole day through. My gondolier, Francesco, acts as valet. He wakes me in the morning, opens the shutters, brings sea-water for my bath, and takes his orders for the day. 'Will it do for Chioggia, Francesco?' 'Sissignore. The Signorino has set off in his *sandolo* already with Antonio. The Signora is to go with us in the gondola.' 'Then get three more men, Francesco, and see that all of them can sing.'

III.—TO CHIOGGIA WITH OAR AND SAIL

The *sandolo* is a boat shaped like the gondola, but smaller and lighter, without benches, and without the high steel prow or *ferro* which distinguishes the gondola. The gunwale is only just raised above the water, over which the little craft skims with a rapid bounding motion, affording an agreeable variation from the stately swanlike movement of the gondola. In one of these boats—called by him the *Fisolo* or Seamew—my friend Eustace had started with Antonio, intending to row the whole way to Chioggia, or, if the breeze favoured, to hoist a sail and help himself along. After breakfast, when the crew for my gondola had been assembled, Francesco and I followed with the Signora. It was one of those perfect mornings which occur as a respite from broken weather when the air is windless and the light falls soft through haze on the horizon. As we broke into the lagoon behind the Redentore, the islands in front of us, S. Spirito, Poveglia, Malamocco, seemed as though they were just lifted from the sea-line. The Euganeans, far away to westward, were bathed in mist, and almost blent with the blue sky. Our four rowers put their backs into their work; and soon we reached the port of Malamocco, where a breeze from the Adriatic caught us sideways for a while. This is the largest of the breaches in the Lidi, or raised sand-reefs, which protect Venice from the sea; it affords an entrance to vessels of draught like the steamers of the Peninsular and Oriental Company. We crossed the dancing wavelets of the port; but when we passed under the lee of Pelestrina, the breeze failed, and the lagoon was once again a sheet of undulating glass. At S. Pietro on this island a halt was made to give the oarsmen wine, and here we

saw the women at their cottage doorways making lace. The old lace industry of Venice has recently been revived. From Burano and Pelestrina cargoes of hand-made imitations of the ancient fabrics are sent at intervals to Jesurun's magazine at S. Marco. He is the chief *impresario* of the trade, employing hundreds of hands, and speculating for a handsome profit in the foreign market on the price he gives his workwomen.

Now we are well lost in the lagoons—Venice no longer visible behind; the Alps and Euganeans shrouded in a noon-day haze; the lowlands at the mouth of Brenta marked by clumps of trees ephemerally faint in silver silhouette against the filmy, shimmering horizon. Form and colour have disappeared in light-irradiated vapour of an opal hue. And yet instinctively we know that we are not at sea; the different quality of the water, the piles emerging here and there above the surface, the suggestion of coast-lines scarcely felt in this infinity of lustre, all remind us that our voyage is confined to the charmed limits of an inland lake. At length the jutting headland of Pelestrina was reached. We broke across the Porto di Chioggia, and saw Chioggia itself ahead—a huddled mass of houses low upon the water. One by one, as we rowed steadily, the fishing-boats passed by, emerging from their harbour for a twelve hours' cruise upon the open sea. In a long line they came, with variegated sails of orange, red, and saffron, curiously chequered at the corners, and cantled with devices in contrasted tints. A little land-breeze carried them forward. The lagoon reflected their deep colours till they reached the port. Then, slightly swerving eastward on their course, but still in single file, they took the sea and scattered, like beautiful bright-plumaged birds, who from a streamlet float into a lake, and find their way at large according as each wills.

The Signorino and Antonio, though want of wind obliged them to row the whole way from Venice, had reached Chioggia an hour before, and stood waiting to receive us on the quay. It is a quaint town this Chioggia, which has always lived a separate life from that of Venice. Language and race and customs have held the two populations apart from those distant years when Genoa and the Republic of S. Mark fought their duel to the death out in the Chioggian harbours, down to these days, when your Venetian gondolier will tell you that the Chioggoto loves his pipe more than his *domna* or his wife. The main canal is lined with substantial palaces, attesting to old

wealth and comfort. But from Chioggia, even more than from Venice, the tide of modern luxury and traffic has retreated. The place is left to fishing folk and builders of the fishing craft, whose wharves still form the liveliest quarter. Wandering about its wide deserted courts and *calli*, we feel the spirit of the decadent Venetian nobility. Passages from Goldoni's and Casanova's *Memoirs* occur to our memory. It seems easy to realise what they wrote about the dishevelled gaiety and lawless license of Chioggia in the days of powder, sword-knot, and *soprani*. Baffo walks beside us in hypocritical composure of bag-wig and senatorial dignity, whispering unmentionable sonnets in his dialect of *Xe* and *Ga*. Somehow or another that last dotage of S. Mark's decrepitude is more recoverable by our fancy than the heroism of Pisani in the fourteenth century.

From his prison in blockaded Venice the great admiral was sent forth on a forlorn hope, and blocked victorious Doria here with boats on which the nobles of the Golden Book had spent their fortunes. Pietro Doria boasted that with his own hands he would bridle the bronze horses of S. Mark. But now he found himself between the navy of Carlo Zeno in the Adriatic and the flotilla led by Vittore Pisani across the lagoon. It was in vain that the Republic of S. George strained every nerve to send him succour from the Ligurian sea; in vain that the lords of Padua kept opening communications with him from the mainland. From the 1st of January 1380 till the 21st of June the Venetians pressed the blockade ever closer, grappling their foemen in a grip that if relaxed one moment would have hurled him at their throats. The long and breathless struggle ended in the capitulation at Chioggia of what remained of Doria's forty-eight galleys and fourteen thousand men.

These great days are far away and hazy. The brief sentences of medieval annalists bring them less near to us than the *chroniques scandaleuses* of good-for-nothing scoundrels, whose vulgar adventures might be revived at the present hour with scarce a change of setting. Such is the force of *intimité* in literature. And yet Baffo and Casanova are as much of the past as Doria and Pisani. It is only perhaps that the survival of decadence in all we see around us, forms a fitting framework for our recollections of their vividly described corruption.

Not far from the landing-place a balustraded bridge of ample breadth and large bravura manner spans the main canal. Like everything at Chioggia, it is dirty and has fallen from its

first estate. Yet neither time nor injury can obliterate style or wholly degrade marble. Hard by the bridge there are two rival inns. At one of these we ordered a sea-dinner—crabs, cuttle-fishes, soles, and turbot—which we ate at a table in the open air. Nothing divided us from the street except a row of Japanese privet-bushes in hooped tubs. Our banquet soon assumed a somewhat unpleasant similitude to that of Dives; for the Chioggoti, in all stages of decrepitude and squalor, crowded round to beg for scraps— indescribable old women, enveloped in their own petticoats thrown over their heads; girls hooded with sombre black mantles; old men wrinkled beyond recognition by their nearest relatives; jabbering, half-naked boys; slow, slouching fishermen with clay pipes in their mouths and philosophical acceptance on their sober foreheads.

That afternoon the gondola and *sandolo* were lashed together side by side. Two sails were raised, and in this lazy fashion we stole homewards, faster or slower according as the breeze freshened or slackened, landing now and then on islands, sauntering along the sea-walls which bulwark Venice from the Adriatic, and singing— those at least of us who had the power to sing. Four of our Venetians had trained voices and memories of inexhaustible music. Over the level water, with the ripple splashing at our keel, their songs went abroad, and mingled with the failing day. The barcaroles and serenades peculiar to Venice were, of course, in harmony with the occasion. But some transcripts from classical operas were even more attractive, through the dignity with which these men invested them. By the peculiarity of their treatment the *recitativo* of the stage assumed a solemn movement, marked in rhythm, which removed it from the commonplace into antiquity, and made me understand how cultivated music may pass back by natural, unconscious transition into the realm of popular melody.

The sun sank, not splendidly, but quietly in banks of clouds above the Alps. Stars came out, uncertainly at first, and then in strength, reflected on the sea. The men of the Dogana watch-boat challenged us and let us pass. Madonna's lamp was twinkling from her shrine upon the harbour-pile. The city grew before us. Stealing into Venice in that calm—stealing silently and shadowlike, with scarce a ruffle of the water, the masses of the town emerging out of darkness into twilight, till San Giorgio's gun boomed with a flash athwart our stern, and

the gas-lamps of the Piazzetta swam into sight; all this was like a long enchanted chapter of romance. And now the music of our men had sunk to one faint whistling from Eustace of tunes in harmony with whispers at the prow.

Then came the steps of the Palazzo Venier and the deep-scented darkness of the garden. As we passed through to supper, I plucked a spray of yellow Banksia rose, and put it in my buttonhole. The dew was on its burnished leaves, and evening had drawn forth its perfume.

IV.—MORNING RAMBLES

A story is told of Poussin, the French painter, that when he was asked why he would not stay in Venice, he replied, 'If I stay here, I shall become a colourist!' A somewhat similar tale is reported of a fashionable English decorator. While on a visit to friends in Venice, he avoided every building which contains a Tintoretto, averring that the sight of Tintoretto's pictures would injure his carefully trained taste. It is probable that neither anecdote is strictly true. Yet there is a certain epigrammatic point in both; and I have often speculated whether even Venice could have so warped the genius of Poussin as to shed one ray of splendour on his canvases, or whether even Tintoretto could have so sublimed the prophet of Queen Anne as to make him add dramatic passion to a London drawing-room. Anyhow, it is exceedingly difficult to escape from colour in the air of Venice, or from Tintoretto in her buildings. Long, delightful mornings may be spent in the enjoyment of the one and the pursuit of the other by folk who have no classical or pseudo-medieval theories to oppress them.

Tintoretto's house, though changed, can still be visited. It formed part of the *Fondamenta dei Mori*, so called from having been the quarter assigned to Moorish traders in Venice. A spirited carving of a turbaned Moor leading a camel charged with merchandise, remains above the water-line of a neighbouring building; and all about the crumbling walls sprout flowering weeds—samphire and snapdragon and the spiked campanula, which shoots a spire of sea-blue stars from chinks of Istrian stone.

The house stands opposite the Church of Santa Maria dell'Orto, where Tintoretto was buried, and where four of his chief

masterpieces are to be seen. This church, swept and garnished, is a triumph of modern Italian restoration. They have contrived to make it as commonplace as human ingenuity could manage. Yet no malice of ignorant industry can obscure the treasures it contains—the pictures of Cima, Gian Bellini, Palma, and the four Tintoretos, which form its crowning glory. Here the master may be studied in four of his chief moods: as the painter of tragic passion and movement, in the huge “Last Judgment”, as the painter of impossibilities, in the “Vision of Moses upon Sinai”; as the painter of purity and tranquil pathos, in the “Miracle of S. Agnes”; as the painter of Biblical history brought home to daily life, in the “Presentation of the Virgin”. Without leaving the Madonna dell’ Orto, a student can explore his genius in all its depth and breadth; comprehend the enthusiasm he excites in those who seek, as the essentials of art, imaginative boldness and sincerity; understand what is meant by adversaries who maintain that, after all, Tintoretto was but an inspired Gustave Doré. Between that quiet canvas of the “Presentation”, so modest in its cool greys and subdued gold, and the tumult of flying, ruining, ascending figures in the “Judgment”, what an interval there is! How strangely the white lamb-like maiden, kneeling beside her lamb in the picture of “S. Agnes”, contrasts with the dusky gorgeousness of the Hebrew women despoiling themselves of jewels for the golden calf! Comparing these several manifestations of creative power, we feel ourselves in the grasp of a painter who was essentially a poet, one for whom his art was the medium for expressing before all things thought and passion. Each picture is executed in the manner suited to its tone of feeling, the key of its conception.

Elsewhere than in the Madonna dell’ Orto there are more distinguished single examples of Tintoretto’s realising faculty. The “Last Supper” in San Giorgio, for instance, and the “Adoration of the Shepherds” in the Scuola di San Rocco, illustrate his unique power of presenting sacred history in a novel, romantic framework of familiar things. The commonplace circumstances of ordinary life have been employed to portray in the one case a lyric of mysterious splendour; in the other, an idyll of infinite sweetness. Divinity shines through the rafters of that upper chamber, where round a low large table the Apostles are assembled in a group translated from the social customs of the painter’s days. Divinity is shed upon the straw-

spread manger, where Christ lies sleeping in the loft, with shepherds crowding through the room beneath.

A studied contrast between the simplicity and repose of the central figure and the tumult of passions in the multitude around, may be observed in the "Miracle of S. Agnes". It is this which gives dramatic vigour to the composition. But the same effect is carried to its highest fulfilment, with even a loftier beauty, in the episode of Christ before the judgment-seat of Pilate, at San Rocco. Of all Tintoretto's religious pictures, that is the most profoundly felt, the most majestic. No other artist succeeded as he has here succeeded in presenting to us God incarnate. For this Christ is not merely the just man, innocent, silent before his accusers. The stationary, white-draped figure, raised high above the agitated crowd, with tranquil forehead slightly bent, facing his perplexed and fussy judge, is more than man. We cannot say perhaps precisely why he is divine. But Tintoretto has made us feel that he is. In other words, his treatment of the high theme chosen by him has been adequate.

We must seek the Scuola di San Rocco for examples of Tintoretto's liveliest imagination. Without ceasing to be Italian in his attention to harmony and grace, he far exceeded the masters of his nation in the power of suggesting what is weird, mysterious, upon the borderland of the grotesque. And of this quality there are three remarkable instances in the Scuola. No one but Tintoretto could have evoked the fiend in his "Temptation of Christ". It is an indescribable hermaphroditic genius, the genius of carnal fascination, with outspread downy rose-plumed wings, and flaming bracelets on the full but sinewy arms, who kneels and lifts aloft great stones, smiling entreatingly to the sad, grey Christ seated beneath a rugged pent-house of the desert. No one again but Tintoretto could have dashed the hot lights of that fiery sunset in such quivering flakes upon the golden flesh of Eve, half hidden among laurels, as she stretches forth the fruit of the Fall to shrinking Adam. No one but Tintoretto, till we come to Blake, could have imagined yonder Jonah, summoned by the beck of God from the whale's belly. The monstrous fish rolls over in the ocean, blowing portentous vapour from his trump-shaped nostril. The prophet's beard descends upon his naked breast in hoary ringlets to the girdle. He has forgotten the past peril of the deep, although the whale's jaws yawn around him.

Between him and the outstretched finger of Jehovah calling him again to life, there runs a spark of unseen spiritual electricity.

To comprehend Tintoretto's touch upon the pastoral idyll we must turn our steps to San Giorgio again, and pace those meadows by the running river in company with his Manna-Gatherers. Or we may seek the Accademia, and notice how he here has varied the "Temptation of Adam by Eve", choosing a less tragic motive of seduction than the one so powerfully rendered at San Rocco. Or in the Ducal Palace we may take our station, hour by hour, before the "Marriage of Bacchus and Ariadne". It is well to leave the very highest achievements of art untouched by criticism, undescribed. And in this picture we have the most perfect of all modern attempts to realise an antique myth—more perfect than Raphael's "Galatea", or Titian's "Meeting of Bacchus with Ariadne", or Botticelli's "Birth of Venus from the Sea". It may suffice to marvel at the slight effect which melodies so powerful and so direct as these produce upon the ordinary public. Sitting, as is my wont, one Sunday morning, opposite the "Bacchus", four Germans with a cicerone sauntered by. The subject was explained to them. They waited an appreciable space of time. Then the youngest opened his lips and spake: "Bacchus war der Wein-Gott." And they all moved heavily away. *Bos locutus est.* "Bacchus was the wine-god!" This, apparently, is what a picture tells to one man. To another it presents divine harmonies, perceptible indeed in nature, but here by the painter-poet for the first time brought together and cadenced in a work of art. For another it is perhaps the hieroglyph of pent-up passions and desired impossibilities. For yet another it may only mean the unapproachable inimitable triumph of consummate craft.

Tintoretto, to be rightly understood, must be sought all over Venice: in the church as well as the Scuola di San Rocco; in the "Temptation of S. Anthony" at S. Trovaso no less than in the "Temptations of Eve and Christ"; in the decorative pomp of the Sala del Senato, and in the Paradisal vision of the Sala del Gran Consiglio. Yet, after all, there is one of his most characteristic moods, to appreciate which fully we return to the Madonna dell' Orto. I have called him "the painter of impossibilities". At rare moments he rendered them possible by sheer imaginative force. If we wish to realise this phase of his creative power, and to measure our own subordination to his genius in its most hazardous enterprise, we must spend much

time in the choir of this church. Lovers of art who mistrust this play of the audacious fancy—aiming at sublimity in super-sensual regions, sometimes attaining to it by stupendous effort or authentic revelation, not seldom sinking to the verge of bathos, and demanding the assistance of interpretative sympathy in the spectator—such men will not take the point of view required of them by Tintoretto in his boldest flights, in the “Worship of the Golden Calf” and in the “Destruction of the World by Water”. It is for them to ponder well the flying archangel with the scales of judgment in his hand, and the seraph-charioted Jehovah enveloping Moses upon Sinai in lightnings.

The gondola has had a long rest. Were Francesco but a little more impatient, he might be wondering what had become of the padrone. I bid him turn, and we are soon gliding into the Sacca della Misericordia. This is a protected float, where the wood which comes from Cadore and the hills of the Ampezzo is stored in spring. Yonder square white house, standing out to sea, fronting Murano and the Alps, they call the Casa degli Spiriti. No one cares to inhabit it: for here, in old days, it was the wont of the Venetians to lay their dead for a night's rest before their final journey to the graveyard of S. Michele. So many generations of dead folk had made that house their inn, that it is now no fitting home for living men. San Michele is the island close before Murano, where the Lombardi built one of their most romantically graceful churches of pale Istrian stone, and where the Campo Santo has for centuries received the dead into its oozy clay. The cemetery is at present undergoing restoration. Its state of squalor and abandonment to cynical disorder makes one feel how fitting for Italians would be the custom of cremation. An island in the lagoons devoted to funeral pyres is a solemn and ennobling conception. This graveyard, with its ruinous walls, its mangy riot of unwholesome weeds, its corpses festering in slime beneath neglected slabs in hollow chambers, and the mephitic wash of poisoned waters that surround it, inspires the horror of disgust.

The morning has not lost its freshness. Antelao and Tofana, guarding the vale above Cortina, show faint streaks of snow upon their amethyst. Little clouds hang in the still autumn sky. There are men dredging for shrimps and crabs through shoals uncovered by the ebb. Nothing can be lovelier, more resting to eyes tired with pictures than this tranquil, sunny expanse of the

lagoon. As we round the point of the Bersaglio, new landscapes of island and Alp and low-lying mainland move into sight at every slow stroke of the oar. A luggage-train comes lumbering along the railway bridge, puffing white smoke into the placid blue. Then we strike down Cannaregio, and I muse upon processions of kings and generals and noble strangers, entering Venice by this water-path from Mestre, before the Austrians built their causeway for the trains. Some of the rare scraps of fresco upon house fronts, still to be seen in Venice, are left in Cannaregio. They are chiaroscuro allegories in a bold bravura manner of the sixteenth century. From these and from a few rosy fragments on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, the Fabbriche Nuove, and precious fading figures in a certain courtyard near San Stefano, we form some notion how Venice looked when all her palaces were painted. Pictures by Gentile Bellini, Mansueti, and Carpaccio help the fancy in this work of restoration. And here and there, in back canals, we come across coloured sections of old buildings, capped by true Venetian chimneys, which for a moment seem to realise our dream.

A morning with Tintoretto might well be followed by a morning with Carpaccio or Bellini. But space is wanting in these pages. Nor would it suit the manner of this medley to hunt the Lombardi through palaces and churches, pointing out their singularities of violet and yellow panellings in marble, the dignity of their wide-opened arches, or the delicacy of their shallow chiselled traceries in cream-white Istrian stone. It is enough to indicate the goal of many a pleasant pilgrimage: warrior angels of Vivarini and Basaiti hidden in a dark chapel of the Frari; Fra Francesco's fantastic orchard of fruits and flowers in distant S. Francesco della Vigna; the golden Gian Bellini in S. Zaccaria; Palma's majestic S. Barbara in S. Maria Formosa; San Giobbe's wealth of sculptured frieze and floral scroll; the Ponte di Paradiso, with its Gothic arch; the painted plates in the Museo Civico; and palace after palace, loved for some quaint piece of tracery, some moulding full of mediæval symbolism, some fierce impossible Renaissance freak of fancy.

VI.—ON THE LAGOONS

The mornings are spent in study, sometimes among pictures, sometimes in the Marcian Library, or again in those vast

convent chambers of the Frari, where the archives of Venice load innumerable shelves. The afternoons invite us to a further flight upon the water. Both *sandolo* and gondola await our choice, and we may sail or row, according as the wind and inclination tempt us.

Yonder lies San Lazzaro, with the neat red buildings of the Armenian convent. The last oleander blossoms shine rosy pink above its walls against the pure blue sky as we glide into the little harbour. Boats piled with coal-black grapes block the landing-place, for the Padri are gathering their vintage from the Lido, and their presses run with new wine. Eustace and I have not come to revive memories of Byron-- that curious patron saint of the Armenian colony-- or to inspect the printing-press, which issues books of little value for our studies. It is enough to pace the terrace, and linger half an hour beneath the low broad arches of the alleys pleached with vines, through which the domes and towers of Venice rise more beautifully by distance.

Malamocco lies considerably farther, and needs a full hour of stout rowing to reach it. Alighting there, we cross the narrow strip of land, and find ourselves upon the huge sea-wall-- block piled on block-- of Istrian stone in tiers and ranks, with cunning breathing-places for the waves to wreck their fury on and foam their force away in fretful waste. The very existence of Venice may be said to depend sometimes on these *murazzi*, which were finished at an immense cost by the Republic in the days of its decadence. The enormous monoliths which compose them had to be brought across the Adriatic in sailing vessels. Of all the Lidi, that of Malamocco is the weakest; and here, if anywhere, the sea might effect an entrance into the lagoon. Our gondoliers told us of some places where the *murazzi* were broken in a gale, or *scioccale*, not very long ago. Lying awake in Venice, when the wind blows hard, one hears the sea thundering upon its sandy barrier, and blesses God for the *murazzi*. On such a night it happened once to me to dream a dream of Venice overwhelmed by water. I saw the billows roll across the smooth lagoon like a gigantic Eager. The Ducal Palace crumbled, and San Marco's domes went down. The Campanile rocked and shivered like a reed. And all along the Grand Canal the palaces swayed helpless, tottering to their fall, while boats piled high with men and women strove to stem the tide, and save themselves from those impending ruins. It was a

mad dream, born of the sea's roar and Tintoretto's painting. But this afternoon no such visions are suggested. The sea sleeps, and in the moist autumn air we break tall branches of the seeded yellowing samphire from hollows of the rocks, and bear them homeward in a wayward bouquet mixed with cobs of Indian corn.

Fusina is another point for these excursions. It lies at the mouth of the Canal di Brenta, where the mainland ends in marsh and meadows, intersected by broad renes. In spring the ditches bloom with fleurs-de-lys; in autumn they take sober colouring from lilac daisies and the delicate sea-lavender. Scores of tiny plants are turning scarlet on the brown moist earth; and when the sun goes down behind the Euganean hills, his crimson canopy of cloud, reflected on these shallows, muddy shoals, and wilderness of matted weeds, converts the common earth into a fairyland of fabulous dyes. Purple, violet, and rose are spread around us. In front stretches the lagoon, tinted with a pale light from the east, and beyond this pallid mirror shines Venice—a long low broken line, touched with the softest roseate flush. Ere we reach the Giudecca on our homeward way, sunset has faded. The western skies have clad themselves in green, barred with dark fire-rimmed clouds. The Euganean hills stand like stupendous pyramids, Egyptian, solemn, against a lemon space on the horizon. The far reaches of the lagoons, the Alps, and islands assume those tones of glowing lilac which are the supreme beauty of Venetian evening. Then, at last, we see the first lamps glitter on the Zattere. The quiet of the night has come.

Words cannot be formed to express the endless varieties of Venetian sunset. The most magnificent follow after wet stormy days, when the west breaks suddenly into a labyrinth of fire, when chasms of clear turquoise heavens emerge, and horns of flame are flashed to the zenith, and unexpected splendours scale the fretted clouds, step over step, stealing along the purple caverns till the whole dome throbs. Or, again, after a fair day, a change of weather approaches, and high, infinitely high, the skies are woven over with a web of half-transparent cirrus-clouds. These in the afterglow blush crimson, and through their rifts the depth of heaven is of a hard and gemlike blue, and all the water turns to rose beneath them. I remember one such evening on the way back from Torcello. We were well out at sea between Mazzorbo and Murano. The ruddy arches

overhead were reflected without interruption in the waveless ruddy lake below. Our black boat was the only dark spot in this sphere of splendour. We seemed to hang suspended; and such as this, I fancied, must be the feeling of an insect caught in the heart of a fiery-petalled rose. Yet not these melodramatic sunsets alone are beautiful. Even more exquisite, perhaps, are the lagoons, painted in monochrome of greys, with just one touch of pink upon a western cloud, scattered in ripples here and there on the waves below, reminding us that day has passed and evening come. And beautiful again are the calm settings of fair weather, when sea and sky alike are cheerful, and the topmost blades of the lagoon grass, peeping from the shallows, glance like emeralds upon the surface. There is no deep stirring of the spirit in a symphony of light and colour; but purity, peace, and freshness make their way into our hearts.

VIII.—A VENETIAN RESTAURANT

At the end of a long glorious day, unhappy is that mortal whom the Hermes of a cosmopolitan hotel, white-chokered and white-waistcoated, marshals to the Hades of the *table-d'hôte*. The world has often been compared to an inn; but on my way down to this common meal I have, not unfrequently, felt fain to reverse the simile. From their separate stations, at the appointed hour, the guests like ghosts flit to a gloomy gas-lit chamber. They are of various speech and race, preoccupied with divers interests and cares. Necessity and the waiter drive them all to a sepulchral syssition, whereof the cook too frequently deserves that old Greek comic epithet—*ἄδου μάγειρος*—cook of the Inferno. And just as we are told that in Charon's boat we shall not be allowed to pick our society, so here we must accept what fellowship the fates provide. An English spinster retailing paradoxes culled to-day from Ruskin's handbooks; an American citizen describing his jaunt in a gondola from the railway station; a German shopkeeper descanting in one breath on Baur's Bock and the beauties of the Marcusplatz; an intelligent æsthete bent on working into clearness his own views of Carpaccio's genius: all these in turn, or all together, must be suffered gladly through well-nigh two long hours. Uncomforted in soul we rise from the expensive banquet; and how often rise from it unfed!

Far other be the doom of my own friends—of pious bards and genial companions, lovers of natural and lovely things! Nor for these do I desire a seat at Florian's marble tables, or a perch in Quadri's window, though the former supply dainty food, and the latter command a bird's-eye view of the Piazza. Rather would I lead them to a certain humble tavern on the Zattere. It is a quaint, low-built, unpretending little place, near a bridge, with a garden hard by which sends a cataract of honeysuckles sunward over a too-jealous wall. In front lies a Mediterranean steamer, which all day long has been discharging cargo. Gazing westward up Giudecca, masts and funnel bar the sunset and the Paduan hills; and from a little front room of the *trattoria* the view is so marine that one keeps fancying oneself in some ship's cabin. Sea captains sit and smoke beside their glass of grog in the pavilion and the *caff  *. But we do not seek their company at dinner-time. Our way lies under yonder arch, and up the narrow alley into a paved court. Here are oleanders in pots, and plants of Japanese spindle-wood in tubs; and from the walls beneath the window hang cages of all sorts of birds—a talking parrot, a whistling black-bird, goldfinches, canaries, linnets. Athos, the fat dog, who goes to market daily in a barchetta with his master, sniffs around. 'Where are Porthos and Aramis, my friend?' Athos does not take the joke; he only wags his stump of tail and pokes his nose into my hand. What a Tartufe's nose it is! Its bridge displays the full parade of leather-bound brass-nailed muzzle. But beneath, this muzzle is a patent sham. The frame does not even pretend to close on Athos's jaw, and the wise dog wears it like a decoration. A little farther we meet that ancient grey cat, who has no discoverable name, but is famous for the sprightliness and grace with which she bears her eighteen years. Not far from the cat one is sure to find Carlo—the bird-like, bright-faced, close-cropped Venetian urchin, whose duty it is to trot backwards and forwards between the cellar and the dining-tables. At the end of the court we walk into the kitchen, where the black-capped little *padrone* and the gigantic white-capped *chef* are in close consultation. Here we have the privilege of inspecting the larder—fish of various sorts, meat, vegetables, several kinds of birds, pigeons, tordi, beccafichi, geese, wild ducks, chickens, woodcock, etc., according to the season. We select our dinner, and retire to eat it either in the court among the birds beneath the vines, or in the low dark room which

occupies one side of it. Artists of many nationalities and divers ages frequent this house; and the talk arising from the several little tables, turns upon points of interest and beauty in the life and landscape of Venice. There can be no difference of opinion about the excellence of the *cuisine*, or about the reasonable charges of this *trattoria*. A soup of lentils, followed by boiled turbot or fried soles, beef-steak or mutton cutlets, tordi or beccafichi, with a salad, the whole enlivened with good red wine or Florio's Sicilian Marsala from the cask, costs about four francs. Gas is unknown in the establishment. There is no noise, no bustle, no brutality of waiters, no *ahurissement* of tourists. And when dinner is done, we can sit awhile over our cigarette and coffee, talking until the night invites us to a stroll along the Zattere or a *giro* in the gondola.

IX.—NIGHT IN VENICE

Night in Venice! Night is nowhere else so wonderful, unless it be in winter among the high Alps. But the nights of Venice and the nights of the mountains are too different in kind to be compared.

There is the ever-recurring miracle of the full moon rising, before day is dead, behind San Giorgio, spreading a path of gold on the lagoon which black boats traverse with the glow-worm lamp upon their prow: ascending the cloudless sky and silvering the domes of the Salute; pouring vitreous sheen upon the red lights of the Piazzetta; flooding the Grand Canal, and lifting the Rialto higher in ethereal whiteness; piercing but penetrating not the murky labyrinth of *rio* linked with *rio*, through which we wind in light and shadow, to reach once more the level glories and the luminous expanse of heaven beyond the Misericordia.

This is the melodrama of Venetian moonlight; and if a single impression of the night has to be retained from one visit to Venice, those are fortunate who chance upon a full moon of fair weather. Yet I know not whether some quieter and soberer effects are not more thrilling. To-night, for example, the waning moon will rise late through veils of *sciocco*. Over the bridges of San Cristoforo and San Gregorio, through the deserted Calle di Mezzo, my friend and I walk in darkness, pass the marble basements of the Salute, and push our way along

its Riva to the point of the Dogana. We are out at sea alone, between the Canalozzo and the Giudecca. A moist wind ruffles the water and cools our forehead. It is so dark that we can only see San Giorgio by the light reflected on it from the Piazzetta. The same light climbs the Campanile of S. Mark, and shows the golden angel in a mystery of gloom. The only noise that reaches us is a confused hum from the Piazza. Sitting and musing there, the blackness of the water whispers in our ears a tale of death. And now we hear a splash of oars, and gliding through the darkness comes a single boat. One man leaps upon the landing-place without a word and disappears. There is another wrapped in a military cloak asleep. I see his face beneath me, pale and quiet. The *barcaruolo* turns the point in silence. From the darkness they came; into the darkness they have gone. It is only an ordinary incident of coastguard service. But the spirit of the night has made a poem of it.

Even tempestuous and rainy weather, though melancholy enough, is never sordid here. There is no noise from carriage traffic in Venice, and the sea wind preserves the purity and transparency of the atmosphere. It had been raining all day, but at evening came a partial clearing. I went down to the Molo, where the large reach of the lagoon was all moon-silvered, and San Giorgio Maggiore dark against the bluish sky, and Santa Maria della Salute domed with moon-irradiated pearl, and the wet slabs of the Riva shimmering in moonlight, the whole misty sky, with its clouds and stellar spaces, drenched in moonlight, nothing but moonlight sensible except the tawny flare of gas-lamps and the orange lights of gondolas afloat upon the waters. On such a night the very spirit of Venice is abroad. We feel why she is called Bride of the Sea.

Take yet another night. There had been a representation of Verdi's "Forza del Destino" at the Teatro Malibran. After midnight we walked homeward through the Merceria, crossed the Piazza, and dived into the narrow *calle* which leads to the *traghetto* of the Salute. It was a warm moist starless night, and there seemed no air to breathe in those narrow alleys. The gondolier was half asleep. Eustace called him as we jumped into his boat, and rang our *soldi* on the gunwale. Then he arose and turned the *ferro* round, and stood across towards the Salute. Silently, insensibly, from the oppression of confinement in the airless streets to the liberty and immensity of the water and the night we passed. It was but two minutes ere we touched the

shore and said good-night, and went our way and left the ferryman. But in that brief passage he had opened our souls to everlasting things—the freshness, and the darkness, and the kindness of the brooding, all-enfolding night above the sea.

JOHN LEICESTER WARREN, LORD DE TABLEY

Circe

This the house of Circe, queen of charms—
A kind of beacon-cauldron poised on high,
Hooped round with ember-clasping iron bars,
Sways in her palace porch, and smoulderingly
Drips out in blots of fire and ruddy stars;
But out behind that trembling furnace air,
The lands are ripe and fair,
Hush are the hills and quiet to the eye.
The river's reach goes by
With lamb and holy tower and squares of corn,
And shelving interspace
Of holly bush and thorn
And hamlets happy in an Alpine morn,
And deep-bowered lanes with grace
Of woodbine newly born.
But inward o'er the hearth a torch-head stands
Inverted, slow green flames of fulvous hue,
Echoed in wave-like shadows over her.
A censer's swing-chain set in her fair hands
Dances up wreathes of intertwined blue
In clouds of fragrant frankincense and myrrh.
A giant tulip head and two pale leaves
Grew in the midmost of her chamber there,
A flaunting bloom, naked and undivine,
Rigid and bare,
Gaunt as a tawny bond-girl born to shame,
With freckled cheeks and splotched side serpentine,
A gipsy among flowers,
Unmeet for bed or bowers,
Virginal where pure-handed damsels sleep:
Let it not breathe a common air with them,
Lest when the night is deep,
And all things have their quiet in the moon,
Some birth of poison from its leaning stem
Waft in between their slumber-parted lips,
And they cry out or swoon,
Deeming some vampire sips,
Where riper Love may come for nectar boon!

And near this tulip, reared across a loom,
 Hung a fair web of tapestry half done,
 Crowding with folds and fancies half the room:
 Men eyed as gods and damsels still as stone,
 Pressing their brows alone,
 In amethystine robes,
 Or reaching at the polished orchard globes,
 Or rubbing parted love-lips on their rind,
 While the wind
 Sows with sere apple leaves their breast and hair,
 And all the margin there
 Was arabesqued and bordered intricate
 With hairy spider things,
 That catch and clamber,
 And salamander in his dripping cave
 Satanic ebon-amber;
 Blind worm, and asp, and eft of cumbrous gait,
 And toads who love rank grasses near a grave,
 And the great goblin moth, who bears
 Between his wings the ruined eyes of death;
 And the enamelled sails
 Of butterflies, who watch the morning's breath.
 And many an emerald lizard with quick ears
 Asleep in rocky dales.
 And for an outer fringe embroidered small,
 A ring of many locusts, horny-coated,
 A round of chirping tree-frogs merry-throated,
 And sly, fat fishes sailing, watching all.

THE HON. RODEN NOEL

FROM *The Triumph of Bacchus*

The air faints with aroma of sweet flowers,
 Marrying many-tendrilled labyrinths
 Dew-diamonded, a harmony of hues;
 And some are flushed like delicate fair flesh
 Of smooth, soft texture; delicate love-organs
 Impetalled hide, depend their fairy forms;
 Ruffled corolla, pitcher, salver, cell,
 Dim haunts of humming-bird, or velvet moth;
 Doves pulsate with white wings, and make soft sound.
 Such was the floral roof; flowers overran
 In lovely riot ample, mounting pillars,
 Emergent from full bowers of greenery,
 Water and marble, lily, water-lily,
 Columns of alabaster, and soft stone,
 That hath the moon's name, alternating far.
 Innumerable, feebly luminous.

A mellow chime dividing the lulled hours
Embroiders them with fairy tone fourfold;
And we were soothed with ever-raining sound
Of fountains flying in the warm, low light
Of pendent lamp, wrought silver, gold, and gem,
Rich with adventure of immortal gods.
Fair acolyte waved censer, whence the curled
Perfume-cloud made the languid air one blue,
And linen-robèd priest on marble altar
Made offering of fruit to Queen Astarte.

Behind half-open broidery of bloom
The eye won often glimpse of an alcove
In floral bower, ceiled over with dim gold;
There velvet pile lay on the floor inlaid
From looms of India, or Ispahan,
With lace from Valenciennes, with silk or satin
For coverlid; they, with the downy pillow,
Have tint of purple plums, or apricot,
Of waning woods autumnal,
Salvia, moth-fan, plume of orient bird.
And here the storied walls luxuriant
Are mellow-limned; for lo! Pompeianwise,
All the young world feigned of a wanton joy,
Or Erôs, Io, Hebe, Ganymede,
And all the poets tell of Aphrodite,
Or her who lulled Ulysses in her isle,
The idle lake, the garden of Armida,
And more, what grave historian hath told
Of Rosamund, Antinous, Cleopatra.
Here forms of youthful loveliness recline,
I know not whether only tinted marble,
Or breathing amorous warm flesh and blood.

Now from a grove of laurel and oleander,
Plum, fragrant fig, vine, myrtle, fern, pomegranate,
Recalling Daphne, or Byblos, where the Queen
Hath cave and fane anear, the falling water,
And where she wooed, won, tended her Adonis,
A masque of Beauty shone; young Dionysus
He seemed, the leader of the company,
Who lolled in a Chryselephantine car
Upon a pillow's damson velvet pile;
An undulating form voluptuous,
All one warm waved and breathing ivory,
Aglow with male and female loveliness,
The yellow panther fur worn negligent
Fondling one shoulder; stealthy-footed these
That hale the chariot, one a lithe, large tiger,
Blackbarred, and fulvous, eyed with furnace-flame,
A tawny lion one, his mane a jungle.
The face was fair and beardless like a maid's,
The soft waved hair vine-filleted; he held

Aloft with one white arm's rare symmetry
 A crystal brimmed with blood of grape that hath
 Heart like a lucid carbuncle; some fallen
 Over his form envermeiled more the rose
 Of ample bosom, and love-moulded flank;
 The fir-coned thyrsus lying along the shoulder,
 And listless fingered by a delicate hand,
 The languid eyes dim-dewy with desire.

Some foam-fair, and some amber of deep tone
 The company to rear of him, yet nigh,
 Fawn-youths and maidens robed in woven wind
 Of that fine alien fabric, hiding only
 As lucid wave hides, or a vernal haze;
 But some were rough and red, and rudely hewn,
 Goat-shagged, satyric; all high-held the vine,
 (Or quaffed it reeling), and the fir-cone rod;
 The fairer filleted with violet,
 Anemone, or rose, Adonis-flower,
 The rude with vine, or ivy; syrinx, flute,
 Sweetly they breathed into; anon they pause,
 Till Dionysus, from his car descending,
 Tipsily leaned on one who may have been
 That swart and swollen comrade, old Silenus,
 Fain to enfold the yielding and flushed form,
 Even as when the god wooed Ariadne;
 So one may see them on a vase, or gem.

MICHAEL FIELD*

The Death of Procris

Piero di Cosimo

The National Gallery

Ah, foolish Procris!—short and brown
 She lies upon the leafy, littoral plain;
 Her scarlet cloak, her veil have both slipped down
 And rest

Across her loins; the naked feet are bound
 With sandals of dull gold, their thongs being wide
 And interlaced; the body's swelling side
 Crushes the arm; each sterile breast
 Is grey; upon the throat there is a stain
 Of blood and on the hand along the ground.

* Pseudonym of Katherine Harris Bradley (1846–1914) and Edith Emma Cooper (1862–1913).

She gave no mortal cry,
But voiceless and consumed by drouth,
Far from the town she might not gain,
Beside a river-mouth
She dragged herself to die.

Her auburn tresses part or coil
Below a wimple of most sombre blue;
They fleck the green of the luxuriant soil
Or drift

Thinly athwart the outline of her ear.
Time has been passing since she last drew breath;
She has the humble, clay-cold look of death
Within the open world; no rift
Has come between the eyelids, of a hue
Monotonous—a paleness drear.

Her brows attest no thought;
Her lips, that quick destruction stains,
Shall never kiss her husband, never sue
For pardon: she remains
A quarry none has sought.

And thus she lies half-veiled, half-bare,
Deep in the midst of nature that abides
Inapprehensive she is lying there,
So wan;

The flowers, the silver estuary afar—
These daisies, plantains, all the white and red
Field-blossoms through the leaves and grasses spread;
The water with its pelican,
Its flight of sails and its blue countrysides—
Unto themselves they are:

The dogs sport on the sand,
The herons curve above the reeds
Or one by one descend the air,
While lifelessly she bleeds
From throat and dabbled hand.

Russet and large against the sky,
Two figures at her head and feet are seen;
One is a solemn hound, one utterly
A faun,

A creature of wild fashion, with black fell
On which a fleshy, furred ear loops out;
Under his chin the boorish bristles sprout
Distinct; an onyx-banded horn
Springs from each temple; slender legs between
The herbage peep and well-

Fleeced thighs; his left hand grips
Her shoulder and the right along
Her forehead moves: his mellow eye
Is indecisive; strong,
Coarse pity swells his lips.

The tall dog's vigil and the gaze
Of the wild man, by eagerness bent low,
Have each a like expression of amaze
 And deep,
Respectful yearning: these two watchers pass
Out of themselves, though only to attain
Incomprehensible, half-wakened pain.
They cannot think nor weep
Above this perished jealousy and woe,
This prostrate, human mass;
 But with vague souls they sit
And gaze, while tide and bloom and bird
Live on in their familiar ways,
 By mortal grief unstirred
And never sad with it.

Yet autumn comes, there is the light
Born of October's lateness in the sky
And on the sea-side; leaves have taken flight
 From yon,
Slim seedling-birch on the rivage, the flock
Of herons has the quiet of solitude,
That comes when chills on sunny air intrude;
The little ships must soon be gone,
And soon the pale and ruddy flowers shall die,
Save the untransient plants that block
 Their green out, ebon-clear,
Against the distance, while they drop,
On hound and satyr settled nigh,
 Red tassels that shall stop
Till windy snows appear.

LIONEL JOHNSON

Walter Pater

Gracious God rest him, he who toiled so well
Secrets of grace to tell
Graciously; as the awed rejoicing priest
 Officiates at the feast,
Knowing, how deep within the liturgies
 Lie hid the mysteries.
Half of a passionately pensive soul
He showed us, not the whole:
Who loved him best, they best, they only, knew
 The deeps, they might not view;

That, which was private between God and him;
To others, justly dim.
Calm Oxford autumns and preluding springs!
To me your memory brings
Delight upon delight, but chiefest one,
The thought of Oxford's son,
Who gave me of his welcome and his praise,
When white were still my days;
Ere death had left life darkling, nor had sent
Lament upon lament;
Ere sorrow told me, how I loved my lost,
And bade me base love's cost.
Scholarship's constant saint, he kept her light
In him divinely white:
With cloistral jealousy of ardour strove
To guard her sacred grove,
Inviolable by unworldly feet, not paced
In desecrating haste.
Oh, sweet grove smiling of that wisdom, brought
From arduous ways of thought;
Oh, golden patience of that travailing soul,
So hungered for the goal,
And vowed to keep, through subtly vigilant pain,
From pastime on the plain;
Enamoured of the difficult mountain air
Up beauty's Hill of Prayer!
Stern is the faith of art, right stern, and he
Loved her severity.
Momentous things he prized, gradual and fair,
Births of a passionate air:
Some austere setting of an ancient sun,
Its midday glories done,
Over a silent melancholy sea
In sad serenity:
Some delicate dawning of a new desire,
Distilling fragrant fire
On hearts of men prophetically fain
To feel earth young again:
Some strange rich passage of the dreaming earth,
Fulfilled with warmth and worth.
Ended his service: yet, albeit farewell
Tolls the faint vespèr bell,
Patient beneath his Oxford trees and towers
He still is gently ours:
Hierarch of the spirit, pure and strong,
Worthy Uranian song.
Gracious God keep him: and God grant to me
By miracle to see
That unforgettably most gracious friend,
In the never-ending end.

AUSTIN DOBSON

The Prodigals

"Princes!—and you, most valorous,
 Nobles and Barons of all degrees!
 Hearken awhile to the prayer of us,—
 Beggars that come from the over-seas!
 Nothing we ask or of gold or fees;
 Harry us not with the hounds we pray;
 Lo,—for the surcote's hem we seize,—
 Give us—ah! give us—but Yesterday!"

"Dames most delicate, amorous!
 Damosels blithe as the belted bees!
 Hearken awhile to the prayer of us,—
 Beggars that come from the over-seas!
 Nothing we ask of the things that please;
 Weary are we, and worn, and gray;
 Lo,—for we clutch and we clasp your knees,—
 Give us—ah! give us—but Yesterday!"

"Damosels—Dames, be piteous!"
 (But the dames rode fast by the roadway trees.)
 "Hear us, O Knights magnanimous!"
 (But the knights pricked on in their panoplies.)
 Nothing they gat or of hope or ease,
 But only to beat on the breast and say:—
 "Life we drank to the dregs and lees;
 Give us—ah! give us—but Yesterday!"

ENVOI

Youth, take heed to the prayer of these!
 Many there be by the dusty way,—
 Many that cry to the rocks and seas
 "Give us—ah! give us—but Yesterday!"

EDMUND GOSSE

Théodore de Banville: Ballade

"For the funeral of the last of the joyous poets."

One ballade more before we say good-night,
 O dying Muse, one mournful ballade more!
 Then let the new men fall to their delight,
 The Impressionist, the Decadent, a score
 Of other fresh fanatics, who adore

Quaint demons, and disdain thy golden shrine;
 Ah! faded goddess, thou wert held divine
 When we were young! But now each laurelled head
 Has fallen, and fallen the ancient glorious line;
 The last is gone, since Banville too is dead.

Peace, peace a moment, dolorous Ibsenite!
 Pale Tolstoist, moaning from the Euxine shore!
 Psychology, to dreamland take thy flight!
 And, fell Heredity, forbear to pour
 Drop after drop thy dose of hellebore,
 For we look back to-night to ruddier wine
 And gayer singing than these moans of thine!
 Our skies were azure once, our roses red,
 Our poets once were crowned with eglantine;
 The last is gone, since Banville too is dead.

With flutes and lyres and many a lovely rite
 Through the mad woodland of our youth they bore
 Verse, like pure ichor in a chrysolite,
 Secret yet splendid, and the world forswore,
 For one brief space, the mocking mask it wore
 Then failed, then fell those children of the vine,—
 Sons of the sun,—and sank in slow decline;
 Pulse after pulse their radiant lives were shed;
 To silence we their vocal names consign;
 The last is gone, since Banville too is dead.

ENVOI

Prince-jeweller, whose facet-rhymes combine
 All hues that glow, all rays that shift and shine,
 Farewell! thy song is sung, thy splendour fled.
 No bards to Aganippe's wave incline;
 The last is gone, since Banville too is dead.

The Pipe-Player

Cool, and palm-shaded from the torrid heat,
 The young brown tenor puts his singing by,
 And sets the twin pipe to his lips to try
 Some air of bulrush-glooms where lovers meet;
 O swart musician, time and fame are fleet,
 Brief all delight, and youth's feet fain to fly!
 Pipe on in peace! To-morrow must we die?
 What matter, if our life to-day be sweet!
 Soon, soon, the silver paper-reeds that sigh
 Along the Sacred River will repeat
 The echo of the dark-stoled bearers' feet,
 Who carry you, with wailing, where must lie
 Your swathed and withered body, by and by,
 In perfumed darkness with the grains of wheat.

On Certain Critics

There are who bid us chant this modern age,
With all its shifting hopes and crowded cares,
School-boards and land-laws, votes and state-affairs,
And, one by one, the puny wars we wage;
They charge us with our lyric flutes assuage
The hunger that the lean-ribbed peasant bears,
Or wreath our laurel round the last grey hairs
Of the old pauper in his workhouse-cage,—
Not wisely; for the round world spins so fast,
Leaps in the air, staggers, and shoots, and halts,—
We know not what is false or what is true;
But in the firm perspectives of the past
We see the picture duly, and its faults
Are softly moulded by a filmy blue.

Old Mortality

White violet garlands, Syrian myrrh,
Deep roseate cups of Chian wine,
Sounds that your deepest being stir,
Sleek limbs that shine,—

Ah! take them, Youth, for youth's fair sake;—
Yet, not forgetting human hap:
The wreath may fade, the nard-box break,
The lyre-string snap.

Ease, bliss, and beauty, which beget
A sensual faith in things that be,
Are like a blossoming garden set
Down by the sea.

They flourish, till some night-wind blows
The swelling tide across the land,
And buries tulip, pink, and rose
In salt and sand.

Since, tho' the slow receding tide
Withdraw its froth and crawling things,
Yet, where that wandering wave hath sighed,
No fresh bloom springs.

ANDREW LANG

Martial in Town

Last night, within the stifling train,
Lit by the foggy lamp o'erhead,
Sick of the sad Last News, I read
Verse of that joyous child of Spain,

Who dwelt when Rome was waxing cold,
 Within the Roman din and smoke;
 And like my heart to me they spoke:
 These accents of his heart of old:—

*Brother, had we but time to live,
 And fleet the careless hours together,
 With all that leisure has to give
 Of perfect life and peaceful weather,*

*The Rich Man's halls, the anxious faces,
 The weary Forum, courts, and cases
 Should know us not; but quiet nooks,
 But summer shade by field and well,
 But country rides, and talk of books,
 At home, with these, we fain would dwell!*

*Now neither lives, but day by day
 Sees the suns wasting in the west,
 And feels their flight, and doth delay
 To lead the life he loveth best.*

So from thy city prison broke,
 Martial, thy wail for life misspent,
 And so, through London's noise and smoke
 My heart replies to the lament.

For dear as Tagus with his gold,
 And swifter Salo, were to thee,
 So dear to me the woods that fold,
 The streams that circle Fernielea!

Villanelle

To Lucia

Apollo left the golden Muse
 And shepherded a mortal's sheep,
 Theocritus of Syracuse!

To mock the giant swain that woo's
 The sea-nymph in the sunny deep,
 Apollo left the golden Muse.

Afield he drove his lambs and ewes,
 Where Milon and where Battus reap,
 Theocritus of Syracuse!

To watch thy tunny-fishers cruise
 Below the dim Sicilian steep
 Apollo left the golden Muse.

Ye twain did loiter in the dews,
Ye slept the swain's unfever'd sleep,
Theocritus of Syracuse!

That Time might half with *his* confuse
Thy songs,—like his, that laugh and leap,—
Theocritus of Syracuse,
Apollo left the golden Muse!

Ballade of the Midnight Forest

After Théodore de Banville

Still sing the mocking fairies, as of old,
Beneath the shade of thorn and holly-tree;
The west wind breathes upon them, pure and cold,
And wolves still dread Diana roaming free
In secret woodland with her company.
'Tis thought the peasants' hovels know her rite
When now the wolds are bathed in silver light,
And first the moonrise breaks the dusky grey,
Then down the dells, with blown soft hair and bright,
And through the dim wood Dian threads her way.

With water-weeds twined in their locks of gold
The strange cold forest-fairies dance in glee,
Sylphs over-timorous and over-bold
Haunt the dark hollows where the dwarf may be,
The wild red dwarf, the nixies' enemy;
Then 'mid their mirth, and laughter, and affright,
The sudden Goddess enters, tall and white,
With one long sigh for summers pass'd away;
The swift feet tear the ivy nets outright
And through the dim woods Dian threads her way.

She gleans her silvan trophies; down the wold
She hears the sobbing of the stags that flee
Mixed with the music of the hunting roll'd,
But her delight is all in archery,
And naught of ruth and pity wotteth she
More than her hounds that follow on the flight;
The goddess draws a golden bow of might
And thick she rains the gentle shafts that slay.
She tosses loose her locks upon the night,
And through the dim wood Dian threads her way.

ENVOI

Prince, let us leave the din, the dust, the spite,
 The gloom and glare of towns, the plague, the blight:
 Amid the forest leaves and fountain spray
 There is the mystic home of our delight,
 And through the dim wood Dian threads her way.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

The Gods Are Dead

The gods are dead? Perhaps they are! Who knows?
 Living at least in Lempriere undeleted,
 The wise, the fair, the awful, the jocose,
 Are one and all, I like to think, retreated
 In some still land of lilacs and the rose.

Once high they sat, and high o'er earthly shows
 With sacrificial dance and song were greeted.
 Once . . . long ago; but now the story goes,
 The gods are dead.

It must be true. The world a world of prose,
 Full-crammed with facts, in science swathed and sheeted,
 Nods in a stertorous after-dinner doze.
 Plangent and sad, in every wind that blows
 Who will may hear the sorry words repeated—
 The gods are dead.

When You Are Old

When you are old, and I am passed away—
 Passed, and your face, your golden face, is grey—
 I think, whate'er the end, this dream of mine,
 Comforting you, a friendly star will shine
 Down the dim slope where still you stumble and stray.

So may it be; that so dead Yesterday,
 No sad-eyed ghost, but generous and gay,
 May serve your memories like almighty wine,
 When you are old.

Dear Heart, it shall be so. Under the sway
 Of death the past's enormous disarray
 Lies hushed and dark. Yet though there come no sign,
 Live on well! pleased! Immortal and divine,
 Love shall still tend you, as God's angels may,
 When you are old.

Ballade of a Toyokuni Colour-Print

To W. A.

Was I a Samurai renowned,
Two-sworded, fierce, immense of bow?
A histrion angular and profound?
A priest? a porter?—Child, although
I have forgotten clean, I know
That in the shade of Fujisan,
What time the cherry-orchards blow,
I loved you once in old Japan.

As here you loiter, flowing-gowned
And hugely sashed, with pins a-row
Your quaint head as with flamelets crowned,
Demure, inviting—even so,
When merry maids in Miyako
To feel the sweet o' the year began,
And green gardens to overflow,
I loved you once in old Japan.

Clear shine the hills; the rice-fields round
Two cranes are circling; sleepy and slow,
A blue canal the lake's blue bound
Breaks at the bamboo bridge; and lo!
Touched with the sundown's spirit and glow,
I see you turn, with flirtd fan,
Against the plum-tree's bloomy snow . . .
I loved you once in old Japan!

ENVOI

Dear, 'twas a dozen lives ago;
But that I was a lucky man
The Toyokuni here will show:
I loved you—once—in old Japan.

Ballade (Double Refrain) of Midsummer Days and Nights

To W. H.

With a ripple of leaves and a tinkle of streams
The full world rolls in a rhythm of praise,
And the winds are one with the clouds and beams—
Midsummer days! Midsummer days!
The dusk grows vast; in a purple haze,
While the West from a rapture of sunset rights,
Faint stars their exquisite lamps upraise—
Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!

The wood's green heart is a nest of dreams,
 The lush grass thickens and springs and sways,
 The rathe wheat rustles, the landscape gleams—
 Midsummer days! Midsummer days!
 In the stilly fields, in the stilly ways,
 All secret shadows and mystic lights,
 Late lovers murmur and linger and gaze—
 Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!

There's a music of bells from the trampling teams,
 Wild skylarks hover, the gorses blaze,
 The rich, ripe rose as with incense steams—
 Midsummer days! Midsummer days!
 A soul from the honeysuckle strays,
 And the nightingale as from prophet heights
 Sings to the Earth of her million Mays—
 Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!

ENVOI

And it's O, for my dear and the charm that stays—
 Midsummer days! Midsummer days!
 It's O, for my Love and the dark that plights—
 Midsummer nights! O midsummer nights!

Rondel

The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
 And all the words of Death are grave and sweet,
 From camp to church, the fireside and the street,
 She signs to come, and strife and song have been.

A summer night descending, cool and green
 And dark, on daytime's dust and stress and heat,
 The ways of Death are soothing and serene,
 And all the words of Death are grave and sweet.

O glad and sorrowful, with triumphant mien
 And hopeful faces look upon and greet
 This last of all your lovers, and to meet
 Her kiss, the Comforter's, your spirit lean . . .
 The ways of Death are soothing and serene.

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

The Pathos of the Rose in Poetry

Some five years ago there appeared a little volume, named *Ros Rosarum ex Horto Poetarum*, and bearing upon its title-page the well-known initials of E.V.B., under which the Hon.

Mrs. Richard Cavendish Boyle has given several works of combined literary and artistic merit to the world. This volume is an anthology culled from the poetry of all languages and ages upon the theme of the rose. To make such a collection at once complete would have been almost impossible; and a book not quite complete, like Mrs. Boyle's *Ros Rosarum*, has the advantage of suggestiveness and stimulation to the fancy of the reader, which an exhaustive anthology of rose-literature would have failed to convey.

Studying its pages with close attention, I observed that Mrs. Boyle had omitted two important passages in Latin poetry which may be regarded as the twin fountain-heads of a large amount of verses written upon roses in the modern world. On turning to Catullus and Ausonius and comparing the passages in question with some stanzas by Poliziano, Ariosto, Tasso, Guarini, Spenser, Herrick, Waller, Ronsard, and other modern poets, I was so much struck with the examples of literary derivation they afforded, that I composed the following essay, which I now present as an attempt to study the forms of hybridism in poetry.

The first of the two passages in question occurs in the second Epithalamium of Catullus:

Ut flos in sæptis secretus nascitur hortis,
 Ignotus pecori, nullo contusus aratro,
 Quem mulcent auræ, firmat sol, educat imber;
 Multi illum pueri, multæ optavere puellæ:
 Idem quom tenui carptus defloruit ungui,
 Nulli illum pueri, nullæ optavere puellæ:
 Sic virgo dum intacta manet, dum cara suis est:
 Quom castum amisit polluto corpore florem,
 Nec pueris jocunda manet, nec cara puellis.

It will be noticed that Catullus does not specialise the rose. He speaks indifferently of a flower. But when we examine the imitations of these lines by modern poets, we shall see how their instinct appropriated to the rose the honours of the suggestion. I may also point out that the poet dwells only on the fact that a flower, up-growing on its native stalk, nourished into bloom by the powers of nature, is desirable to all who gaze upon it; but when it has been plucked, the cut flower raises no desire: and so, Catullus says, it is with maidens also.

For English readers I will roughly paraphrase these untranslatable hexameters:

The flower that, closed by garden walls, doth blow,
 Which no plough wounds, and no rude cattle know,
 But breezes fan, sun fosters, showers shoot higher,
 It many lads and many maids desire;
 The same, when cropped by cruel hand it fades,
 No lads at all desire it, nor no maids:
 E'en so the girl, so long her youth doth last
 Untouched, on her kind friends affection cast;
 But when she stoops to folly, sheds her bloom,
 For lads, for maids, hath flown her chaste perfume.

The second of the two classic passages to which I have referred is an Idyll by Ausonius. This poet, who lived from A.D. 309 to 392, was half pagan and half Christian. His genius floated in the atmosphere of the decaying Roman Empire, between influences of the past and future. But what his religious creed was does not greatly signify. As a writer, he expressed, at the latest close of antique culture, something of the spirit which appears in mediæval, and which pervades modern literature, the spirit of sympathy with nature, and the sense of pathos in ephemeral things. It was Ausonius, then, who wrote the following Idyll on the Rose:

Ver erat et blando mordentia frigora sensu
 Spirabat croceo mane revecta dies.
 Strictior Eoos præcesserat aura jugales,
 Æstiferum suadens anticipare diem.
 Errabam riguis per quadrua compita in hortis,
 Maturo cupiens me vegetare die.
 Vidi concretas per gramina flexa pruinas
 Pendere, aut olerum stare cacuminibus;
 Caulibus et patulis teretes colludere guttas,
 Et cœlestis aquæ pondere tunc gravidas.
 Vidi Pæstano candere rosaria cultu,
 Exoriente novo roscida Lucifero.
 Rara pruinosis canebat gemma frutetis,
 Ad primi radios interitura die.
 Ambigeres, raperetve rosis Aurora ruborem,
 An daret, et flores tingeret orta dies.
 Ros unus, color unus, et unum mane duorum,
 Sideris et floris nam domina una Venus.
 Forsan et unus odor: sed celsior ille per auras
 Diffiatur, spirat proximus ille magis.
 Communis Paphie dea sideris et dea floris
 Præcipit unius muricis esse habitum.
 Momentum intererat, quo se nascentia florum
 Germina comparibus dividerent spatiis.
 Hæc viret angusto foliorum tecta galero
 Hæc tenui folio purpura rubra notat.

Hæc aperit primi fastigia celsa obelisci,
 Mucronem absolvens purpurei capitis.
 Vertice collectos illa exsinuabat amictus,
 Jam meditans foliis se numerare suis:
 Nec mora, ridentis calathi patefecit honorem,
 Prodens inclusi semina densa croci.
 Hæc modo, quæ toto rutilaverat igne comarum
 Pallida collapsis deseritur foliis.
 Mirabar celerum fugitiva ætate rapinam,
 Et, dum nascuntur, consenuisse rosas.
 Ecce, et defluxit rutili coma punica floris,
 Dum loquor, et tellus tecta rubore micat.
 Tot species tantosque ortus variosque novatus
 Una dies aperit, conficit una dies.
 Conquerimur Natura, brevis quod gratia florum est?
 Ostentata oculis illico dona rapis.
 Quam longa una dies, ætas tam longa rosarum,
 Quas pubescentes juncta senecta premit.
 Quam modo nascentem rutilis conspexit Eous,
 Hanc rediens sero vespere vidit anum.
 Sed bene, quod paucis licet interitura diebus,
 Succedens ævum prorogat ipsa suum.
 Collige, virgo, rosas, dum flos novus et nova pubes,
 Et memor esto ævum sic properare tuum.

In the course of our analysis we shall see what parts of this Idyll were selected for imitation by modern poets, and what parts they omitted. The beautiful imaginative lines (12-22) in which the morning star and the rose are brought beneath the common guardianship of Venus, have, so far as I know, not been seized upon; although one thought contained in them, that possibly the star may be no less fragrant than the flower, is very modern in its fancy. But first it will be well to call attention to the fact that, while Catullus used the flower of his metaphor only as a symbol of virginity, Ausonius enters into communion with the rose herself as a living creature. For him the flower is no mere emblem. The reflections upon human life which it suggests are only brought forward at the conclusion of his poem, which, in its main structure, is a studied picture of external objects lovingly observed. Another point should be noticed. His sympathy with the short bloom-time of the rose makes him draw from nature pathos which he afterwards applies to man. Hitherto, in classic literature, the rose had been a symbol of love and gladness, celebrated as the ornament of Aphrodite, the pledge of passion, and the chief decoration of life's banquet. In all the authors who praised the rose, from Sappho to the false Anacreon and Philostratus, I remember

none who dwelt with insistence on its brevity of beauty. Writing even of dead roses, the anonymous poet of the Anacreontics thinks of their perfume.

χαρίεν ῥόδων δὲ γῆρας
νεότητος ἔοχην ὁσμήν.

It remained for Ausonius, in the crepuscular interspace between the sunset of the antique and the night which came before the sunrise of the modern age, to develop thus elaborately the motive of fragility in rose life and in human loveliness. For English readers I have made a translation of his Idyll, which may enable them "as in a glass darkly" to perceive its subdued lustre.

'Twas spring, and dawn returning breathed new-born
From saffron skies the bracing chill of morn.
Before day's orient chargers went a breeze,
That whispered: Rise, the sweets of morning seize!
In watered gardens where the cross-paths ran,
Freshness and health I sought ere noon began:
I watched from bending grasses how the rime
In clusters hung, or gemmed the beads of thyme;
How the round heads, on herb and leaf outspread,
Rolled with the weight of dews from heaven's height shed;
Saw the rose-gardens in their Pæstan bloom
Hoar 'neath the dawn-star rising through the gloom.
On every bush those separate splendours gleam,
Doomed to be quenched by day's first arrowy beam.
Here might one doubt: doth morn from roses steal
Their redness, or the rose with dawn anneal?
One hue, one dew, one morn makes both serene;
Of star and flower one Venus reigns the queen.
Perchance one scent have they; the star's o'erhead
Far, far exhales, the flower's at hand is shed.
Goddess of star, goddess of rose no less,
The Paphian flings o'er both her crimson dress.
Now had the moment passed wherein the brood
Of clustering buds seemed one twin sisterhood.
This flower, enlaced with leaves, shows naught but green;
That shoots a roseate streak from forth the screen:
One opes her pyramid and purple spire,
Emerging into plenitude of fire:
Another thrusts her verdant veil aside,
Counting her petals one by one with pride:
Expands her radiant cup of gorgeous hue,
And brings dense hidden veins of gold to view:
She who had burned erewhile, a flower of flame,
Now pales and droops her fainting head with shame:—

So that I mused how swift time steals all worth,
 How roses age and wither with their birth;
 Yea, while I speak, the flower with crimson crowned
 Hath fallen and shed her glories on the ground.
 So many births, forms, fates with changes fraught,
 One day begins and one day brings to naught!
 Grieve we that flowers should have so short a grace,
 That Nature shows and steals her gifts apace?
 Long as the day, so long the red rose lasts;
 Eld following close on youth her beauty blasts:
 That flower which Phosphor newly-born had known,
 Hesper returning finds a wrinkled crone:
 Yet well if, though some brief days past she die,
 Her life be lengthened through posterity!
 Pluck roses, girl, when flower, when youth is new,
 Mindful the while that thus time flies for you.

These, then, are the two Latin sources which I wish to bring before the students of rose-literature in modern poetry. One of them is a passage from a marriage song by Catullus, the other an Idyll by Ausonius. I have next to show how, after the revival of letters, they were severally or in combination used by European poets. In this part of my task I shall not seek after exhaustiveness, but shall content myself with such specimens as occur readily to the memory.

I said that the Greek and Latin poets of a good period rarely used the rose as a symbol of human fragility. This requires some modification. The myths connected with flowers—hyacinth, narcissus, anemone—are themselves suggestive of sadness; but in these a god's beloved has become a plant which blooms each year with the recurring season. Therefore, this contemplation of the flower derives its sentiment rather from the promise of continuity and immortality in nature, than from the pathos of temporal decay. The rose, it may be parenthetically observed, in one version of the death of Adonis, was said to have sprung from his blood, the anemone from Aphrodite's tears.*

δάκρυα δ' ἅ Πάφίη, τόσσ' ἐκχέει, ὅσπαν Ἀδωνίς
 αἷμα γέει. τὰ δὲ πάντα ποτὶ γῆυνι γίνεται ἄνθη.
 αἷμα ῥόδον τίχτει, τὰ δὲ δάκρυα τὰν ἀνεμώναν.

Tears the Paphian shed, drop by drop for the drops of Adonis'
 Blood, and on earth each drop, as it fell, grew into a blossom;
 Roses sprang from the blood, and the tears gave birth to the wind-
 flower.

* Bion's *Lament for Adonis*, 64-66. The lines are probably a late interpolation.

Those beautiful similes, again, in which Homer and Virgil likened a young man stricken by death upon the battlefield to a poppy, or hyacinth, or olive broken from its stem, were symbols, not of the short prime of beauty, but of its sudden and unseasonable extinction; nor was the rose, so far as I remember, employed even in this way. That was reserved for a modern poet, Ariosto, who compared the mouth of dying Zerbino to a waning rose.*

Languidetta come rosa,
Rosa non colta in sua stagione, sì ch' ella
Impallidisca in su la siepe ombrosa.

Languid like a rose,
A rose not plucked in her due season, so
That she must fade upon the dim hedgerows.

Yet two passages may be noticed in which poets of a good age compared the rose in her brief season to the fleeting loveliness of youth.†

καὶ τὸ ῥόδον καλὸν ἐστὶ καὶ ὁ χρόνος αὐτὸ μαραίνει,
καὶ τὸ ἰὸν καλὸν ἐστὶν ἐν εἵαρι καὶ ταχὺ γήρᾳ,
καὶ κάλλος καλὸν ἐστὶ τὸ παιδικόν, ἀλλ' ὀλίγον ζῆ.

Fair is the rose, but time consumes her flower;
Fair the spring violet, but soon it fades;
And fair is boyish beauty, but short-lived.

Ovid, perhaps with these lines in his memory, wrote as follows:‡

Nec violæ semper, nec hiantia lilia florent;
Et viget amissa spina relicta rosa.
Et tibi jam cani venient, formose, capilli;
Jam venient rugæ quæ tibi corpus arent.

Not always violets nor lilies bloom;
The sharp thorn bristles in the rose's room.
And thus for thee, fair boy, shall gray hairs grow,
While envious time delves wrinkles on thy brow.

* *Orl. Fur*, xxiv. 80.

† Theocritus, *Idyll*, xxiii, 29. This *Idyll* is probably not by Theocritus, but by an imitator.

‡ *Ars Amandi*, ii, 1, 5.

I might also quote an epigram of Rufinus to Rhodocleia, in which he bids her bind blossoms on her brow, reminding her the while that:

ἀνθεῖς καὶ λήγεις καὶ σύ καὶ ὁ στέφανος.

For time fades thee as he fades the roses;
Nor they nor thou may revive again.

Such, before the date of Ausonius, were the slender contributions of classic poets to the pathos of rose-literature.

With the revival of letters in the fifteenth century, the passages from Catullus and Ausonius which I have chosen as the themes for my discourse fell like seeds on fertile soil in Italy, and bore abundant flowers of poetry, which spread their perfume, afterwards, through Europe. The melancholy which survived from mediævalism at that epoch, and the vivid interest in nature which characterised the Renaissance, combined to draw the attention of scholar-poets to the Idyll of Ausonius. This Idyll, or elegy, as it might better be called, reappears, but slightly altered, and with some distinctive additions, in the *Corinto* of Lorenzo de' Medici:

L' altra mattina in un mio piccolo orto
Andavo: e 'l sol sorgente con suoi rai
Uscia, non già ch'io lo vedessi scorto.
Sonvi piantati dentro alcuni rosai;
A quai rivolsi le mie vaghe ciglie
Per quel che visto non avevo mai.
Eranvi rose candide e vermiglie:
Alcuna a foglia al sol si spiega;
Stretta prima, poi par s' apra scompiglie;
Altra più giovinetta si dislega
Appena dalla bocca: eravi ancora
Chi le sue chiuse foglie all' aer niega;
Altra cadendo a piè il terreno inflora.
Così le vidi nascere e morire
E passar lor vaghezza in men d' un' ora.
Quando languenti e pallide vide ire
Le foglie a terra, allor mi venne a mente
Che vana cosa è il giovenil fiorire
Ogni arbore ha i suoi fiori: e immantinente
Poi le tenere frondi al sol si piegano
Quando rinnovellar l' aere si sente.
I piccol frutti ancor informi allegano;
Ch' a poco a poco talor tanto ingrossano,

Che pel gran peso i forti rami piegano,
 Nè senza gran periglio portar possano
 Il proprio peso; appena regger sogliono
 Crescendo, ad or ad ora se l' addosso.
 Vien poi l' autunno, e maturi si cogliono
 I dolci pomi: e passato il bel tempo,
 Di fior di frutti e fronde al fin si spogliono.
 Cogli la rosa, o ninfa, or ch' è il bel tempo.

I will give my own English version of this piece:

Into a little close of mine I went
 One morning, when the sun with his fresh light
 Was rising all refulgent and unshent.
 Rose-trees are planted there in order bright,
 Whereto I turned charmed eyes, and long did stay,
 Taking my fill of that new-found delight.
 Red and white roses bloomed upon the spray;
 One opened, leaf by leaf, to greet the morn,
 Shyly at first, then in sweet disarray;
 Another, yet a youngling, newly born,
 Scarce struggled from the bud, and there were some
 Whose petals closed them from the air forlorn;
 Another fell, and showered the grass with bloom;
 Thus I beheld the roses dawn and die,
 And one short hour their loveliness consume.
 But while I watched these languid petals lie
 Colourless on cold earth, I could but think
 How vain a thing is youthful bravery.
 Trees have their time to bloom on winter's brink;
 Then the rathe blossoms wither in an hour,
 When the brief days of spring toward summer sink;
 The fruit, as yet unformed, is tart and sour;
 Little by little it grows large, and weighs
 The strong boughs down with slow persistent power;
 Nor without peril can the branches raise
 Their burden; now they stagger 'neath the weight
 Still growing, and are bent above the ways;
 Soon autumn comes, and the ripe, ruddy freight
 Is gathered: the glad season will not stay;
 Flowers, fruit, and leaves are now all desolate.
 Pluck the rose, therefore, maiden, while 'tis May!

Here we have the *Collige, virgo, rosas*, "Gather ye roses while ye may," translated from the autumn of antique to the April of modern poetry, and that note is echoed through all the love-literature of the Renaissance. Lorenzo, be it observed, has followed his model, not only in the close, but also in the opening of the passage. Side by side with this Florentine transcript from Ausonius I will now place Poliziano's looser,

but more poetical handling of the same theme, subjoining my version of his ballata.

I' mi trovai, fanciulle, un bel mattino
 Di mezzo maggio in un verde giardino.
 Eran d' interno violette e gigli
 Fra l' erba verde, e vaghi fior novelli,
 Azurri gialli candidi e vermigli:
 Ond' io porsi la mano a cor di quelli
 Per adornar e' mie' biondi capelli
 E cinger di grillanda el vago crino.
 I' mi trovai, etc.

Ma poi ch' i' ebbi pien di fiori un lembo,
 Vidi le rose e non pur d'un colore:
 Io corsi allor per empier tutto el grembo,
 Perch' era sì soave il loro odore
 Che tutto mi senti' destar el core
 Di dolce voglia e d'un piacer divino.
 I' mi trovai, etc.

I' posi mente: quelle rose allora,
 Mai non vi potrete dir quant' eran belle:
 Quale scoppiava della boccia ancora;
 Qual' erano un po' passe e qual novelle.
 Amor mi disse allor:—Va' cò' di quelle
 Che più vedi fiorite in sullo spino.
 I' mi trovai, etc.

Quando la rosa ogni suo' foglia spande,
 Quando è più bella, quando è più gradita;
 Allora è buona a mettere in ghirlande,
 Prima che sua bellezza sia fuggita:
 Sicchè, fanciulle, mentre è più fiorita,
 Coglian la bella rosa del giardino.
 I' mi trovai, etc.

I went a-roaming, maidens, one bright day,
 In a green garden in mid month of May.

Violets and lilies grew on every side
 Mid the green grass, and young flowers wonderful,
 Golden, and white, and red, and azure-eyed;
 Toward which I stretched my hands, eager to pull
 Plenty to make my fair curls beautiful,
 To crown my rippling curls with garlands gay.

I went a-roaming, maidens, one bright day,
 In a green garden in mid month of May.

But when my lap was full of flowers I spied
Roses at last, roses of every hue;
Therefore I ran to pluck their ruddy pride,
Because their perfume was so sweet and true
That all my soul went forth with pleasure new,
With yearning and desire too soft to say.

I went a-roaming, maidens, one bright day,
In a green garden in mid month of May.

I gazed and gazed. Hard task it were to tell
How lovely were the roses in that hour:
One was but peeping from her verdant shell,
And some were faded, some were scarce in flower.
Then Love said: Go, pluck from the blooming bower
Those that thou seest ripe upon the spray.

I went a-roaming, maidens, one bright day,
In a green garden in mid month of May.

For when the full rose quits her tender sheath,
When she is sweetest and most fair to see,
Then is the time to place her in thy wreath,
Before her beauty and her freshness flee.
Gather ye therefore roses with great glee,
Sweet girls, or e'er their perfume pass away.

I went a-roaming, maidens, one bright day,
In a green garden in mid month of May.

Much might be written about the different styles in which Lorenzo de'Medici and Poliziano severally treated the theme suggested to them by Ausonius. Lorenzo is minute in detail, sober in reflection; Poliziano employs slighter touches with an airier grace and freer flight of fancy. The one produces a careful study from nature by the light of his classical model; the other sings a new song, soaring high above the beaten track of imitation. The description of the rose-garden, of the roses in their several degrees of expansion, and the concluding moral, have been all etherealised in the ballata. But space forbids me to enter into further critical particulars.

Before quitting Poliziano, I will collect a few passages from his poems which seem to be derived from the same source of Latin inspiration. In his *Giostra* (lib. i., st. 78) he thus describes the rose:

Ma vie più liete più ridente e bella
 Ardisce aprire il seno al sol la rosa :
 Questa di verde gemma s' incappella :
 Quella si mostra allo sportel vezzosa ;
 L' altra che 'n dolce foco ardea pur ora
 Languida cade e il bel pratello infiora.

This pretty little picture may be said to represent the three ages of the rose. Though I cannot do justice to the original, these verses may be accepted as a bad copy of a graceful miniature:

Trembles the virgin violet in air,
 With downcast eyes that seem love's sight to shun ;
 But far more glad, more smiling, and more fair,
 The rose expands her bosom to the sun ;
 This bud in verdant wreaths her head doth bear ;
 That opes her half-blown petals one by one ;
 And she who erewhile flames of love displayed,
 Drooping declines, and strews with bloom the glade.

In the *Orfeo* he paraphrased the admonition of the last lines of the *Idyll* thus:

Digli, zampogna mia, come via fugge
 Cogli anni insieme la bellezza snella ;
 E digli come il tempo ne distrugge,
 Nè l' èta persa mai si rinnovella ;
 Digli che sappi usar suo' forma bella,
 Chè sempre mai non saran rose e viole.

Or, as follows in English:

Nay, tell her, pipe of mine, how swift doth flee
 Beauty together with our years amain ;
 Tell her how time destroys all rarity,
 Nor youth once lost can be renewed again ;
 Tell her to use the gifts that yet remain ;
 Roses and violets blossom not alway.

To this refrain of *Collige, virgo, rosas* he is for ever returning:

Deh, non insuperbir per tuo' bellezza,
 Dama ; ch' un breve tempo te la fura.
 Canuta tornera la bionda treza
 Che del bel viso adorna la figura.
 Mentre che il fiore e nella sua vaghezza,
 Coglilo ; che bellezza poco dura.
 Fresca e la rosa da mattina, e a sera
 Ell' ha perduto suo' bellezza altera.

Nay, be not overproud of thy great grace,
 Lady! for brief time is thy thief and mine.
 White will he turn those golden curls that lace
 Thy forehead and thy cheeks so marble-fine.
 Lo! while the flower still flourisheth apace,
 Pluck it; for beauty but awhile doth shine.
 Fair is the rose at dawn; but long ere night
 Her freshness fades, her pride hath vanished quite.

Thus Florentine poets used the rose as a reminder to girls that they should enjoy their youth in season. The graver simile of Catullus was not to their purpose. It first makes its entrance into Italian poetry in these stanzas of Ariosto, which are closely copied from the Latin:*

La verginella è simile alla rosa,
 Ch' in bel giardin su la nativa spina
 Mentre sola e sicura si riposa,
 Nè gregge nè pastor se le avvicina;
 L' aura soave e l' alba rugiadosa,
 L' acqua, la terra, al suo favor s' inchina:
 Giovani vaghi e dame innamorate
 Amano averne e seni e tempie orante.

Ma non sì tosto dal materno stelo
 Rimossa viene, dal suo ceppo verde,
 Che quanto avea dagli uomini e dal cielo
 Favor, grazia, e bellezza, tutto perde.
 La vergine che' l fior, di che piu zelo
 Che de' begli occhi e della vita aver dè,
 Lascia altrui còrre, il pregio ch' avea innante
 Perde nel cor di tutti gli altri amanti.

The translation made by Rose of the *Orlando Furioso* shall here be quoted:

The virgin has her image in the rose
 Sheltered in garden on its native stock,
 Which there in solitude and safe repose
 Blooms, unapproached by shepherd or by flock.
 For this earth teems, and freshening water flows,
 And breeze and dewy dawn their sweets unlock;
 With such the wistful youth his bosom dresses,
 With such the enamoured damsel braids her tresses.

But wanton hands no sooner this displace
 From the maternal stem, where it had grown,
 Than all was withered; whatsoever grace
 It found with man or heaven; bloom, beauty gone.

* *Orl Fur*, i. 42, 43.

The damsel who should hold in higher place
 Than light or life, the flower which is her own,
 Suffering the spoiler's hand to crop the prize,
 Forfeits her worth in every other's eyes.

Thus far I have traced the separate workings of the two themes in Lorenzo de' Medici's, Poliziano's, and Ariosto's poetry. Tasso, while expanding in the main the motive of Ausonius, borrows one touch from Catullus in the following famous passage of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*:*

Deh! mira, egli canto, spuntar la rosa
 Dal verde suo modesta e verginella,
 Che mezzo aperta ancora e mezzo ascosa
 Quanto si mostra men tanto e più bella.
 Ecco poi nudo il sen già baldanzosa
 Despiega; ecco poi lingue e non par quella;
 Quella non par, che desiata avanti.
 Fu da mille donzelle e mille amanti.

Così trapassa al trapassar d' un giorno
 Della vita mortale il fiore e il verde:
 Nè perchè faccia indietro april ritorno,
 Si rinfiora ella mai nè si rinverde.
 Gogliam la rosa in sul mattino adorno
 Di questa di, che tosto il sereno perde;
 Cogliam d' amor la rosa; amiamo or quando
 Esser si puote riamato amando.

A translation made by Thomas Bayley from these stanzas shall be given, instead of any other, because it has been chosen by Mrs. Boyle in her book:†

Mark ye (he sings) in modest maiden guise
 The red rose peeping from her leafy nest;
 Half opening, now half closed, the jewel lies,
 More bright her beauty seems the more repress.

But lo! with bosom bared, the vaunting flower
 Now droops, now dies, alas! how changed the while,
 From that sweet rose that wooed, in happier hour,
 The young man's homage and the maiden's smile.

Thus, in the passing of a day, the flower,
 The freshness of man's little life is o'er,
 Though April skies return with sun and shower,
 The flower may bloom not, life return no more.

* Canto xvi. 15.

† *Ros Rosarum*, p. 68.

Cull, then, the rose, for night is coming; haste
 While o'er its leaves the matin dew is poured;
 Cull, then, the rose of love while yet thou mayest
 Living be loved—adoring be adored.

Notwithstanding many pretty and ingenious turns, this version is obviously imperfect through not following the metre of the original. And Mrs. Boyle might have done well to use the two stanzas in which Fairfax availed himself of Spenser's splendid paraphrase. Those who are curious in subtle points of translation should consult a letter which appeared not long ago in the *Academy* upon the various renderings of Tasso's song. The writer of that letter put together with much skill one version, combining the best portions of all.

Before leaving Italy for the north, let us see how Guarini handled the rose bequeathed to him from Catullus and Ausonius by Lorenzo de' Medici, Poliziano, Ariosto, and Tasso. Amarilli, the heroine of the *Pastor Fido*, has been betrothed, for high reasons of state, to Silvio, a young hunter, who has no mind for marriage; and her father is naturally anxious lest a long engagement in these circumstances should prove the ruin of her happiness. He uses this beautiful, but somewhat too artificial, expansion of the Catullian theme, combined with Ariosto's simile of Zerbino's death, for the expressions of his uneasiness:

Come in vago giardin rosa gentile
 Che nelle verdi sue tenere spoglie
 Pure dianzi era rinchiusa,
 E sotto l' ombra del notturno velo
 Incolta e sconosciuta
 Stava, posando in sul materno stelo;
 Al subito apparir del primo raggio,
 Che spunti in Oriente,
 Si desta e si risente,
 E scopre al sol, che la vagheggia e mira,
 Il suo vermiglio ed odorato seno,
 Dov' ape susurrando
 Nei mattutini albori
 Vola, suggendo i rugiadosi umori;
 Ma s' allor non si coglie,
 Sicchè del mezzodi senta le fiamme,
 Cade al cader del sole
 Si scolorita in sulla siepe ombrosa,
 Ch' appena si può dir: questa fu rosa.

Così la verginella,
 Mentre cura materna
 La custodisce e chiude,
 Chiude anch' ella il suo petto
 All amoroso affetto;
 Ma se lascivo sguardo
 Di cupido amator vien che la miri,
 E n' oda ella i sospiri,
 Gli apre subito il core,
 E nel tenero sen riceve amore:
 E se vergogna il celsa,
 O temenza l' affrena,
 La misera, tacendo,
 Per soverchio desio tutto si strugge.
 Così manca belta se 'l foco dura,
 E perdendo stagion perde ventura.

In the following translation I have attempted to render the effect of those partly-rhymed and carefully-rhythmed lyrics, which Italian poets used in their dramatic work, and which Milton adopted from them in his choruses of *Samson Agonistes*:

As on fair garden lawns a gentle rose,
 Who, lapped in tender sheaths of budding green,
 Erewhile was shut from view,
 And 'neath the shadow of night's sheltering hem,
 Uncultured and unknown,
 Abode in peace on the maternal stem,
 With the first sudden beams that spring
 O'er the dim East and day reveal,
 Starts into life, begins to feel,
 And opens to the sun's admiring gaze
 Her crimson bosom laden with perfume,
 Where the deep humming bee,
 Bathed in cool light of morn,
 Goes sucking honey-dews of darkness born;
 But, if none pluck her then,
 If she but feel the fiery shafts of noon,
 Falls with the falling of the sun,
 So all discoloured on the dim hedgerows
 That one can scarcely say: "This was a rose!"
 E'en thus the girl,
 What time a mother's care
 Wards her frail flower and guards,
 Guards also her own breast
 From love and love's unrest;
 But if the wanton gaze
 Of amorous lover chance on her to turn,
 If she but hear his sighs that yearn,
 She opens out her heart
 And to her tender bosom takes love in;

Then should shame hide her smart,
 Or fear her will restrain,
 The child in speechless pain
 Through too much longing must decline and part.
 Thus beauty fades, if the fire burneth long;
 And time's delay doth work her grievous wrong.

The extreme subtlety and rhetorical minuteness with which this image is wrought somewhat impair its pictorial power. But we must remember that this effect was calculated for an audience sensitive to the cadences of rhythmical declamation in the age which had invented modern music. For them "the linked sweetness long drawn out" of Guarini's verbal melody had a peculiar charm. In order to show how poets can employ similar natural suggestions to point opposite lessons, let us set Guarini's "all discoloured" rose beside Shakespeare's

Pale primroses,
 That die unmarried ere they can behold
 Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
 Most incident to maids.

Finally, notice how Shakespeare puts the central thought of Guarini, when he chooses, into a single phrase:

She never told her love,
 But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
 Feed on her damask cheek.

Here the word damask brings the rose before us, as a little earlier in *Twelfth-Night* the Duke gives the old analogy between the rose and woman's beauty in a couplet:

For women are as roses, whose fair flower,
 Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour.

It is now time to trace the influence of the Catullian and Ausonian motives over English and French poetry. Spenser's magnificent paraphrase from Tasso follows the original closely, but omits, whether intentionally or not, to dwell upon the line derived through Ariosto from Catullus.*

The whiles some one did chaunt this lovely lay:
 Ah! see, whoso fair thing dost fain to see,
 In springing flower the image of the day.

* *Faery Queen*, ii, xii, 74, 75.

Ah! see the Virgin Rose, how sweetly she
 Doth first peep forth with bashful modesty,
 That fairer seems the less ye see her may.
 Lo, see soon after how more bold and free
 Her bared bosom she doth broad display;
 Lo, see soon after how she fades and falls away.

So passeth, in the passing of a day,
 Of mortal life the leaf, the bud, the flower;
 No more doth flourish after first decay,
 That erst was sought to deck both bed and bower
 Of many a lady and many a paramour.
 Gather therefore the rose whilst yet in prime,
 For soon comes age that will her pride deflower:
 Gather the rose of love whilst yet is time,
 Whilst loving thou mayst loved be with equal crime.

It so happens that none of the pieces which I have hitherto presented in this essay, with the exception of Tasso's stanzas and Bayley's version of them, occur in Mrs. Boyle's book. This does not prove the poverty of her anthology, but the extraordinary richness of rose-literature. In tracing the influence of Ausonius and Catullus upon modern poetry, I shall, from this point forward, be able to refer to the pages of *Ros Rosarum*. Ronsard's sonnet, "Comme on voit sur la branche", is interesting, as a somewhat faithful study from Catullus; but the maiden rose from whom he wrote it, had been cropped by death, not by dishonour.* His more celebrated lyric, "Mignonne, allons voir si la rose", which has been so elegantly translated by Mr. Andrew Lang, refines upon the motive of Ausonius.† Here, in the French "Cueillez, cueillez votre jeunesse", we recognise the Latin *Collige, virgo, rosas*. In another sonnet Ronsard renders the leading theme of the same idyll thus:‡

Un soleil voit naître et mourir la Rose.

When we turn to English poetry, we find in Samuel Daniel's sonnet, "Look, Delia", a pretty close rendering of Tasso's stanzas.§ William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, applied the metaphor of the rose to the waning of human life, without any

* *Ros Rosarum*, p. 78.

† *Ibid*, p. 79.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 80.

§ *Ibid*, p. 119.

particular reference to youthful beauty.* But the dominant note sounds again in Herrick's incomparable "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may", and in Waller's graceful "Go, lovely Rose".† For a final touch I will transcribe a little fragment of Herrick's. It occurs in a poem which was borrowed straight from the lines of Theocritus quoted above (p. 186):‡

This to your coyness I will tell;
And having spoke it once, farewell.
The lily will not long endure,
Nor the snow continue pure:
The rose, the violet, one day
Sees both these lady flowers decay,
And you must fade as well as they.

If I am right in reading "sees" in the last line but one, then even here, too, we have a reminiscence of the Ausonian idyll.

From the analysis which I have partly made and partly suggested in the foregoing pages, it will be seen how much modern poetry owes to now almost neglected sources in antique literature, and with what varied gracefulness of new life the singers of the past four centuries invested themes which they derived from scholarship. Other students, who have traversed different fields of European poetry, will probably be able to complete the pedigree which I have endeavoured to establish in its main outlines from Ausonius to Waller.

ROSAMUND MARRIOTT WATSON

Beyond

Divided! yes, best so, though narrow the gulf that parts her way and mine;
Easily overstepped, but once crossed, it would widen behind us,
Widen and yawn at the back-turned feet—mine Love, or thine?
Come, let us count the cost (what matter? the chance is over),
And I lie in the still blue weather, and watch the shimmering sea,
The cicala shrills in mine ear, I can count the seeds on the grasses
That sway 'tween my eyes and the sky, and the south wind sighs to me.
Verily better so, with half the world's width between us,
Idle indeed to dream of the past, or the might have been;
Yet I, lying here in the sun, steeped in the spell of the lotus,
Conceive the renounced fruition, shadow forth actors and scene:

* Ibid, p. 138.

† Ibid, pp. 4, 150.

‡ Ibid, p. 148. It is from *The Cruel Maid*.

Chill ghosts of honour and love, with faces that may not be veiled,
Wide, stricken eyes, whose shamed glances may not be turned;
Corruption of all that was purest, death of that which was highest,
Only the dull grey ashes where once the red fire burned.
Weary decadence! the present heart-hunger is better,
Untouched the fruit still swings on the bending bough
Mellow and fair of hue. If within it be dust and ashes,
Yet I will not dream that it is not, for I never shall taste it now.
Never, ah no, of a surety. The tender light of illusion
Shines unsullied for aye, through the dusk of my life's dim room,
Only a glimmer; nay, but say, only a beacon,
Pallid, but steady and pure, as the sacred lamp in a tomb.

FROM *The Heart of a Garden*

Vestured and veiled with twilight,
Lulled in the winter's ease,
Dim, happy, and silent,
My garden dreams by its trees.

Urn of the sprayless fountain,
Glimmering nymph and faun,
Gleam through the dark-plumed cedar,
Fade on the dusky lawn.

Here is no stir of summer,
Here is no pulse of Spring;
Never a bud to burgeon,
Never a bird to sing.

Dreams—and the kingdom of quiet!
Only the dead leaves lie
Over the fallen roses
Under the shrouded sky.

Folded and fenced with silence,
Mindless of moil and mart,
It is twilight here in my garden,
And twilight here in my heart.

FROM *The Heart of a Garden*

Along the lawns the tulip lamps are lit,
Amber, and amaranth, and ivory,
Porphyry, silver, and chalcedony—
Filled with the sunlight and the joy of it.

The tulip lamps are lit—the Spring's own gold
Glowing burning bright in each illumined cup,
Wrought in those secret mines of dusky mould
Where Winter's hidden hoard was garnered up.

The flame will fade, the goblets break and fall,
Strewing the dim earth with their beauty's wrack;
All will be spent and past their festival
Ere the first vagrant swallow shall come back.

Old Books, Fresh Flowers
(Translated from the French of Joseph Boulmier)

Alone, at home, I dwell, content and free:
The soft May sun comes with his greeting fair;
And, like a lute, my heart thrills tremblingly,
By the Spring's fingers touched to some sweet air.
Blessed be Thou, my God, who from my face
Tak'st the pale cast of thought that weary lowers!
My chamber walls—my narrow window-space
Hold all most dear to me—old books, fresh flowers.

Those trusty friends, that faithful company—
My books—say, 'Long his slumbers, and we wait!'
But my flowers murmur as they look on me,
'Nay, never chide him, for he watched so late!'
Brethren and sisters, these of mine! my room
Shines fair as with the light of Eden's bowers;
The Louvre is not worth my walls abloom
With all most dear to me—old books, fresh flowers.

Beside your shelves I know not weariness,
My silent-speaking books! so kind and wise;
And fairer seems your yellowed parchment dress
Than gay morocco, to my loving eyes.
Dear blossoms, of the humble hermit's choice,
In sweetest communing what joys are ours!
To you I listen, and with you rejoice;
For all I love is here—old books, fresh flowers.

Men are unlovely, but their works are fair—
Ay, men are evil, but their books are good:
The clay hath perished, and the soul laid bare
Shines from their books in heavenly solitude.
Light on each slender stem pure blossoms rest,
Like angel envoys of the Heavenly powers;
Of all earth's maidens these are first and best,
And all I love is here—old books, fresh flowers.

A double harvest crowns my granary:
From all light loves and joys my soul takes flight;
My books are blossoms, and their bee am I,
And God's own volumes are my blossoms bright.
These and no other bosom-friends are mine;
With them I pass my best, my calmest hours;
These only lead me to the light Divine,
And all I love is here: old books, fresh flowers.

My books are tombs where wit and wisdom sleep,
 Stored full with treasure of the long ago;
 My tender buds, that dews of springtide steep,
 Like shining mirrors of the future show.
 The present is so sad! . . . this dark to-day
 Like skies with thunder charged above us lowers:
 Ah! of the past—the future—speak away,
 Tell me of naught but these . . . old books, fresh flowers.

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON

To Alfred Tennyson

(On his publishing, in his seventy-first year, the most richly-various volume of English verse that has appeared in his own century.)

Beyond the peaks of Káf a rivulet springs
 Whose magic waters to a flood expand,
 Distilling, for all drinkers on each hand,
 The immortal sweets enveiled in mortal things.
 From honeyed flowers,—from balm of zephyr-wings,—
 From fiery blood of gems,* through all the land,
 The river draws;—then, in one rainbow-band,
 Ten leagues of nectar o'er the ocean flings.

Steeped in the riches of a poet's years,
 Stained in all colours of Man's destiny,
 So, Tennyson, thy widening river nears
 The misty main, and, taking now the sea,
 Makes rich and warm with human smiles and tears
 The ashen billows of Eternity.

On the Mountains

1

Natura Benigna

What power is this? What witchery wins my feet
 To peaks so sheer they scorn the cloaking snow,
 All silent as the emerald gulfs below,
 Down whose ice-walls the wings of twilight beat?
 What thrill of earth and heaven—most wild, most sweet—
 What answering pulse the guardian senses glow,
 Comes leaping from the ruddy eastern glow
 Where, far away, the skies and mountains meet?

* According to a Mohammedan tradition, the mountains of Káf are entirely composed of gems, whose reflected splendours colour the sky.

Mother, 'tis I once more: I know thee well,
 Yet thy voice comes, an ever-new surprise!
 O Mother and Queen, beneath the olden spell
 Of silence, gazing from thy hills and skies!
 Dumb Mother, struggling with the Years to tell
 The secret at thy heart through helpless eyes!

Natura Maligna

The Lady of the Hills with crimes untold
 Followed my feet, with azure eyes of prey;
 By glacier-brink she stood,—by cataract-spray,—
 When mists were dire, or avalanche-echoes rolled.
 At night she glimmered in the death-wind cold,
 And if a footprint shone at break of day,
 My flesh would quail, but straight my soul would say:
 'Tis hers whose hand God's mightier hand doth hold.

I trod her snow-bridge, for the moon was bright,
 Her icicle-arch across the sheer crevasse,
 When lo, she stood! God bade her let me pass;
 Then fell the bridge; and, in the fallow light
 Adown the chasm, I saw her, cruel-white,
 And all my wondrous days as in a glass.

FREDERICK W. H. MYERS

Rossetti and the Religion of Beauty

Among those picturesque aspects of life which the advance of civilisation is tending to reduce to smoothness and uniformity we may include that hubbub and conflict which in rougher days used to salute the appearance of any markedly new influence in science, literature, or art. Prejudice—not long since so formidable and ubiquitous a gaint—now shows sometimes little more vitality than Bunyan's Pope or Pagan; and the men who stone one of our modern prophets do it hurriedly, feeling that they may be interrupted at any moment by having to make arrangements for his interment in Westminster Abbey.

Now, while it would be absurd not to rejoice in this increasing receptivity of cultivated men—absurd to wish the

struggle of genius sharper, or its recognition longer deferred—we may yet note one incidental advantage which belonged to the older régime. While victory was kept longer in doubt, and while the conflict was rougher, the advocates of a new cause felt a stronger obligation to master it in all its aspects, and to set it forth with such exposition as might best prepare a place for it in ordinary minds. The merits of Wordsworth (to take an obvious instance) were long ignored by the public; but in the meantime his admirers had explained them so often and so fully that the recognition which was at last accorded to them was given *on* those merits, and not in mere deference to the authority of any esoteric circle.

The exhibition of Dante Rossetti's pictures which now (February, 1883) covers the walls of Burlington House is the visible sign of the admission of a new strain of thought and emotion within the pale of our artistic orthodoxy. And since Rossetti's poetry expresses with singular exactness the same range of ideas as his painting, and is at any rate not inferior to his painting in technical skill, we may fairly say that his poetry also has attained hereby some sort of general recognition, and that the enthusiastic notices which appeared on his decease embodied a view of him to which the public is willing to some extent to defer.

Yet it hardly seems that enough has been done to make that deference spontaneous or intelligent. The students of Rossetti's poems—taking their tone from Mr. Swinburne's magnificent eulogy—have for the most part rather set forth their artistic excellence than endeavoured to explain their contents, or to indicate the relation of the poet's habit of thought and feeling to the ideas which Englishmen are accustomed to trust or admire. And consequently many critics, whose ethical point of view demands respect, continue to find in Rossetti's works an enigma not worth the pains of solution, and to decry them as obscure, fantastic, or even as grossly immoral in tendency.

It will be the object of this essay—written from a point of view of by no means exclusive sympathy with the movement which Rossetti led—to show, in the first place, the great practical importance of that movement for good or evil; and, further, to trace such relations between this Religion of Art, this Worship of Beauty, and the older and more accredited manifestations of the Higher Life, as may indicate to the moralist on what points he should concentrate his efforts if,

hopeless of withstanding the rising stream, he seeks at least to retain some power of deepening or modifying the channel.

From the æsthetic side such an attempt will be regarded with indifference, and from the ethical side with little hope. Even so bold a peacemaker as the author of *Natural Religion* has shrunk from this task; for the art which he admits as an element in his Church of Civilisation is an art very different from Rossetti's. It is an art manifestly untainted by sensuousness, manifestly akin to virtue; an art which, like Wordsworth's, finds its revelation in sea and sky and mountain rather than in "eyes which the sun-gate of the soul unbar", or in

"Such fire as Love's soul-winnowing hands distil,
Even from the inmost ark of light and dew."

Yet, however slight the points of contact between the ethical and the æsthetic theories of life may be, it is important that they should be noted and dwelt upon. For assuredly the "æsthetic movement" is not a mere fashion of the day - the modish pastime of nincompoops and charlatans. The imitators who surround its leaders, and whose jargon almost disgusts us with the very mysteries of art, the very vocabulary of emotion—these men are but the straws that mark its current, the inevitable parasites of a rapidly-rising cause. We have, indeed, only to look around us to perceive that—whether or not the conditions of the modern world are favourable to artistic *excellence*—all the main forces of civilisation are tending toward artistic *activity*. The increase of wealth, the diffusion of education, the gradual decline of the military, the hieratic, the aristocratic ideals - each of these causes removes some obstacle from the artist's path or offers some fresh prize to his endeavours. Art has outlived both the Puritans and the Inquisition; she is no longer deadened by the spirit of self-mortification, nor enslaved by a jealous orthodoxy. The increased wealth of the world makes the artist's life stable and secure, while it sets free a surplus income so large that an increasing share of it must almost necessarily be diverted to some form of æsthetic expenditure.

And more than this. It is evident, especially in new countries, that a need is felt of some kind of social distinction—some new aristocracy—based on differences other than those of birth and wealth. Not, indeed, that rank and family are likely to cease to

be held in honour; but, as power is gradually dissociated from them, they lose their exclusive predominance, and take their place on the same footing as other graces and dignities of life. Still less need we assume any slackening in the pursuit of riches; the fact being rather that this pursuit is so widely successful that in civilised capitals even immense opulence can now scarcely confer on its possessor all the distinction which he desires. In America, accordingly, where modern instincts find their freest field, we have before our eyes the process of the gradual distribution of the old prerogatives of birth amongst wealth, culture, and the proletariat. In Europe a class privileged by birth used to supply at once the rulers and the ideals of other men. In America the *rule* has passed to the multitude; largely swayed in subordinate matters by organised wealth, but in the last resort supreme. The *ideal* of the new community at first was Wealth; but, as its best literature and its best society plainly show, that ideal is shifting in the direction of Culture. The younger cities, the coarser classes, still bow down undisguisedly to the god Dollar; but when this Philistine deity is rejected as shaming his worshippers, æsthetic Culture seems somehow the only Power ready to instal itself in the vacant shrine.

And all over the world the spread of Science, the diffusion of Morality, tend in this same direction. For the net result of Science and Morality for the mass of men is simply to give them comfort and leisure, to leave them cheerful, peaceful, and anxious for occupation. Nay, even the sexual instinct, as men become less vehement and unbridled, merges in larger and larger measure into the mere æsthetic enjoyment of beauty; till Stesichorus might now maintain with more truth than of old that our modern Helen is not herself fought for by two continents, but rather her εἶδωλον or image is blamelessly diffused over the albums of two hemispheres.

It is by no means clear that these modern conditions are favourable to the development either of the highest art or of the highest virtue. It is not certain even that they are permanent—that this æsthetic paradise of the well-to-do may not sometime be convulsed by an invasion from the rough world without. Meantime, however, it exists and spreads, and its leading figures exert an influence which few men of science, and fewer theologians, can surpass. And alike to *savant*, to theologian, and to moralist, it must be important to trace the workings of a

powerful mind, concerned with interests which are so different from theirs, but which for a large section of society are becoming daily more paramount and engrossing.

"Under the arch of Life," says Rossetti in a sonnet whose Platonism is the more impressive because probably unconscious—

"Under the arch of Life, where love and death,
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze struck awe,
I drew it in as simply as my breath."

Rossetti was ignorant of Greek, and it seems doubtful whether he knew Plato even by translations. But his idealising spirit has reproduced the myth of the Phædrus—even to the *τρέφεται καὶ εὐπαθεῖ*—the words that affirm the repose and well-being of the soul when she perceives beneath the arch of heaven the pure Idea which is at once her sustenance and her lord:—

"Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,
The sky and sea bend on thee; which can draw,
By sea or sky or woman, to one law
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath."

For Beauty, as Plato has told us, is of all the divine ideas at once most manifest and most lovable to men. When "Justice and Wisdom and all other things that are held in honour of souls" are hidden from the worshipper's gaze, as finding no avenue of sense by which to reach him through the veil of flesh, Beauty has still some passage and entrance from mortal eyes to eyes, "and he that gazed so earnestly on what things in that holy place were to be seen, he when he discerns on earth some godlike countenance or fashion of body, that counterfeits Beauty well, first of all he trembles, and then comes over him something of the fear which erst he knew; but then, looking on that earthly beauty, he worships it as divine, and if he did not fear the reproach of utter madness he would sacrifice to his heart's idol as to the image and presence of a god".

"This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand shake still—long known to thee
By flying hair and fluttering hem—the best
Following her daily of thy heart and feet
How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond flight, how many ways and days!"

There are some few hearts, no doubt, in which "sky and sea" and the face of Nature are able to inspire this yearning passion. But with the newer school—with Rossetti especially—we feel at once that Nature is no more than an accessory. The most direct appeals, the most penetrating reminiscences, come to the worshipper of Beauty from a woman's eyes. The steady rise in the status of women; that constant deepening and complication of the commerce between the sexes which is one of the signs of progressive civilisation; all this is perpetually teaching and preaching (if I may say so) the charms of womanhood to all sections of the community. What a difference in this respect has the century since Turner's birth made in England! If another Turner were born now—an eye which gazed, as it were, on a new-created planet from the very bedchamber and outgoing of the sun—can we suppose that such an eye would still find its most attractive feminine type in the bum-boats of Wapping? The anomaly, strange enough in Turner's day, is now inconceivable. Our present danger lies in just the opposite direction. We are in danger of losing that direct and straightforward outlook on human loveliness (of which Mr. Millais may serve as a modern example) which notes and represents the object with a frank enjoyment, and seeks for no further insight into the secret of its charm. All the arts, in fact, are returning now to the spirit of Leonardo, to the sense that of all visible objects known to us the human face and form are the most complex and mysterious, to the desire to extract the utmost secret, the occult message, from all the phenomena of Life and Being.

Now there is at any rate one obvious explanation of the sense of mystery which attaches to the female form. We may interpret it all as in some way a transformation of the sexual passion. This essentially materialistic view is surrounded with a kind of glamour by such writers as Gautier and Baudelaire. The tone of sentiment thus generated is repugnant—is sometimes even nauseating—to English feeling; but this tone of sentiment is certainly not Rossetti's. There is no trace in him of this deliberate worship of Baal and Ashtoreth; no touch of the cruelty which is the characteristic note of natures in which the sexual instincts have become haunting and dominant.

It is, indeed, at the opposite end of the scale—among those who meet the mysteries of love and womanhood with a very different interpretation—that Rossetti's nearest affinities are to

be found. It must not be forgotten that one of his most exquisite literary achievements consists in a translation of the *Vita Nuova* of Dante. Now, the *Vita Nuova*, to the vulgar reader a childish or meaningless tale, is to those who rightly apprehend it the very gospel and charter of mystical passion. When the child Dante trembles at the first sight of the child Beatrice; when the voice within him cries *Ecce deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi*; when that majestic spirit passes, at a look of the beloved one, through all the upward or downward trajectory between heaven and hell; this, indeed, is a love which appertains to the category of reasoned affections no more; its place is with the visions of saints, the intuitions of philosophers, in Plato's ideal world. It is recognised as a secret which none can hope to fathom till we can discern from some mount of unearthly vision what those eternal things were indeed to which somewhat in human nature blindly perceived itself akin.

The parallel between Rossetti and Dante must not be pushed too far. Rossetti is but as a Dante still in the *selva oscura*; he has not sounded hell so profoundly, nor mounted into heaven so high. He is not a prophet but an artist; yet an artist who, both by the very intensity of his artistic vision, and by some inborn bent toward symbol and mysticism, stands on the side of those who see in material things a spiritual significance, and utters words of universal meaning from the fullness of his own heart. Yet he is, it must be repeated, neither prophet, philosopher, nor saint. The basis of his love is the normal emotion -- "the delight in beauty alloyed with appetite, and strengthened by the alloy"; and although that love has indeed learned, in George Eliot's words, to "acknowledge an effect from the imagined light of unproven firmaments, and have its scale set to the grander orbit of what hath been and shall be", this transfiguration is effected not so much by any elevation of ethical feeling, as by the mere might and potency of an ardent spirit which projects itself with passionate intensity among things unreachable and unknown. To him his beloved one seems not as herself alone, "but as the meaning of all things that are"; her voice recalls a prenatal memory, and her eyes "dream against a distant goal". We hear little of the intellectual aspects of passion, of the subtle interaction of one character on another, of the modes in which Love possesses himself of the eager or the reluctant heart. In these poems the lovers have lost their

idiosyncracies; they are made at one for ever; the two streams have mingled only to become conscious that they are being drawn together into a boundless sea. Nay, the very passion which serves to unite them, and which is sometimes dwelt on with an Italian emphasis of sensuousness which our English reserve condemns, tends oftener to merge itself in the mystic companionship which holds the two souls together in their enchanted land.

‘One flame-winged brought a white-winged harp-player
 Even where my lady and I lay all alone;
 Saying: ‘Behold, this minstrel is unknown;
 Bid him depart, for I am minstrel here;
 Only my strains are to Love’s dear ones dear.’
 Then said I: ‘Through thine haut-boy’s rapturous tone
 Unto my lady still this harp makes moan,
 And still she deems the cadence deep and clear.’

“Then said my lady: ‘Thou art Passion of Love,
 And this Love’s Worship; both he plights to me.
 Thy mastering music walks the sunlit sea;
 But where wan water trembles in the grove,
 And the wan moon is all the light thereof,
 This harp still makes my name its Voluntary.’ ”

The voluntaries of the white-winged harp-player do not linger long among the accidents of earth: they link with the beloved name all “the soul’s sphere of infinite images”, all that she finds of benign or wondrous “amid the bitterness of things occult”. And as the lover moves amid those mysteries it appears to him that Love is the key which may unlock them all. For the need is not so much of an intellectual insight as of an elevation of the whole being – a rarefaction, as it were, of man’s spirit which Love’s pure fire effects, and which enables it to penetrate more deeply into the ideal world.

In that thin air Love undergoes a yet further transformation. The personal element already sublimed into a mystic companionship, retires into the background. The lover is now, in Plato’s words, ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος τετραμμένος τοῦ καλοῦ; he has set sail upon the ocean of Beauty, and Love becomes the ἐρμηνεῦον καὶ διαπορθεῦον, the “interpreter and mediator between God and man”, through whom the true prayer passes and the true revelation is made.

"Not I myself know all my love for thee:
 How should I reach so far, who cannot weigh
 To-morrow's dower by gauge of yesterday?
 Shall birth and death, and all dark names that be
 As doors and windows bared to some loud sea,
 Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face with spray;
 And shall my sense pierce love—the last relay
 And ultimate outpost of eternity?"

For thus, indeed, is Love discerned to be something which lies beyond the region of this world's wisdom or desire—something out of proportion to earthly needs and to causes that we know. Here is the point where the lover's personality seems to be exalted to its highest, and at the same moment to disappear; as he perceives that his individual emotion is merged in the flood and tideway of a cosmic law:—

"Lo! what am I to Love, the lord of all?
 One murmuring shell he gathers from the sand—
 One little heart-flame sheltered in his hand.
 Yet through thine eyes he grants me clearer call
 And veriest touch of powers primordial
 That any hour-girt life may understand."

Alas! this call, by its very nature, is heard in one heart alone; this "touch of powers primordial" is intransferable to other souls. The eyes which, to the lover's vision,

"The sun-gate of the soul unbar,
 Being of its furthest fires oracular,"

can send this message to the world only through sign and symbol; the "bower of unimagined flower and tree" is fashioned by Love in such hearts only as he has already made his own.

And thus it is that so much of Rossetti's art, in speech or colour, spends itself in the effort to communicate the incommunicable. It is toward "the vale of magical dark mysteries" that those grave low-hanging brows are bent, and "vanished hours and hours eventual" brood in the remorseful gaze of Pandora, the yearning gaze of Proserpine. The pictures that perplex us with their obvious incompleteness, their new and haunting beauty, are not the mere caprice of a richly-dowered but wandering spirit. Rather they may be called (and none the less so for their shortcomings) the sacred pictures of a new religion; forms and faces which bear the same

relation to that mystical worship of Beauty on which we have dwelt so long, as the forms and faces of a Francia or a Leonardo bear to the mediæval mysteries of the worship of Mary or of Christ. And here it is that in Rossetti's pictures we find ourselves in the midst of a novel symbolism—a symbolism genuine and deeply felt as that of the fifteenth century, and using once more birds and flowers and stars, colours and lights of the evening or the dawn, to tell of beauties impalpable, spaces unfathomed, the setting and resurrection of no measurable or earthly day.

It is chiefly in a series of women's faces that these ideas seek expression. All these have something in common, some union of strange and puissant physical loveliness with depth and remoteness of gaze. They range from demon to angel—as such names may be interpreted in a Religion of Beauty—from Lilith, whose beauty is destruction, and Astarte, throned between the Sun and Moon in her sinister splendour, to the *Blessed Damozel* and the "maiden pre-elect", type of the love whose look regenerates and whose assumption lifts to heaven. But all have the look—characteristic of Rossetti's faces as the mystic smile of Leonardo's—the look which bids the spectator murmur

"What netherworld gulf-whispers doth she hear,
In answering echoes from what planisphere,
Along the wind, along the estuary?"

And since the primal impulses, at any rate, will remain to mankind, since Love's pathway will be retrodden by many a generation, and all of faith or knowledge to which that pathway leads will endure, it is no small part of the poet's function to show in how great a measure Love does actually presuppose and consist of this exaltation of the mystic element in man; and how the sense of unearthly destinies may give dignity to Love's invasion, and steadfastness to his continuance, and surround his vanishing with the mingled ecstasy of anguish and of hope. Let us trace, with Rossetti, some stages of his onward way.

The inexplicable suddenness with which Love will sometimes possess himself of two several hearts—finding a secret kinship which like a common aroma, permeates the whole being of each—has often suggested the thought that such companionship is not in reality now first begun; that it is founded in a pre-

natal affection, and is the unconscious prolongation of the emotions of an ideal world—

“Even so, when first I saw you, seemed it, love,
That among souls allied to mine was yet
One nearer kindred than life hinted of,
O born with me somewhere that men forget,
And though in years of sight and sound unmet,
Known for my soul’s birth-partner well enough!”

It is thus that Rossetti traces backward the kindling of the earthly flame. And he feels also that if love be so pervading, so fateful a thing, the man who takes it upon him has much to fear. He moves among great risks; “the moon-track of the journeying face of Fate” is subject for him to strange perturbations, to terrible eclipse. What if his love be a mistake?—if he feels against his will a disenchantment stealing over the enchanted garden, and his new self walking, a ghastly intruder, among scenes vainly consecrated by an illusive past?

“Whence came his feet into my field, and why?
How is it that he finds it all so drear?
How do I see his seeing, and how hear
The name his bitter silence knows it by?”

Or what of him for whom some unforgotten hour has marred his life’s best felicity, *et inquinavit aere tempus aureum*? What of the recollection that chills his freest moments with an inward and icy breath?

“Look in my face, my name is Might-have-been;
I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell.”

There is no need to invite attention to the lines which thus begin. They will summon their own auditors; they will not die till that inward Presence dies also, and there sits not at the heart of any man a memory deeper than his joy.

But over all lovers, however wisely they may love, and well, there hangs one shadow which no wisdom can avert. To one or other the shock must come, the separation which will make the survivor’s after life seem something posthumous, and its events like the changes in a dream.

Without intruding into the private story of a life which has not yet been authoritatively recounted to us, we may recognise that on Rossetti the shock of severance, of bereavement, must

have fallen with desolating force. In several of his most pregnant poems—in the sonnets entitled *Willow-wood* most of all—those who know the utmost anguish of yearning have listened to a voice speaking as though from their own hearts. The state of tension, indeed, which finds utterance in these sonnets is by its very nature transitory. There comes a time when most men forget. But in some hearts the change which comes over the passion of love is not decay, but transfiguration. That passion is generalised, as Plato desired that it should be generalised, though in a somewhat different way. The Platonic enthusiasm of admiration was to extend itself “from one fair form to all fair forms”, and from fair forms to noble and beautiful ideas and actions, and all that is likeliest God. And something not unlike this takes place when the lover feels that the object of his earthly worship, now removed from his sight, is becoming identified for him with all else that he has been wont to revere—representative to him, to use Plato’s words again, “of those things, by dwelling on which it is that even a god is divine”. It is not, indeed, the bereaved lover only who finds in a female figure the ideal recipient of his impulses of adoring love. Of how many creeds has this been the inspiring element!—from the painter who invokes upon his canvas a Virgin revealed in sleep, to the philosopher who preaches the worship of Humanity in a woman’s likeness, to be at once the Mother and the Beloved of all. Yet this ideal will operate most actively in hearts which can give to that celestial vision a remembered reality, whose “memorial threshold” seems visibly to bridge the passage between the transitory and the supernal world.

“City, of thine a single simple door,
By some new Power reduplicate, must be
Even yet my life-porch in eternity,
Even with one presence filled, as once of yore;
Or mocking winds whirl round a chaff-strewn floor
Thee and thy years and these my words and me.”

And if sometimes this transmuted passion—this religion of beauty spiritualised into a beatific dream—should prompt to quietism rather than to vigorous action—if sometimes we hear in the mourner’s utterance a tone as of a man too weak for his destiny—this has its pathos too. For it is a part of the lot of man that the fires which purify should also consume him, and

that as the lower things become distasteful the energy which seeks the higher things should fade too often into a sad repose.

"Here with her face doth Memory sit.
 Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline,
 Till other eyes shall look from it—
 Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,
 Even than the old gaze tenderer;
 While hopes and aims, long lost with her,
 Stand round her image side by side,
 Like tombs of pilgrims that have died
 About the Holy Sepulchre."

And when the dream and the legend which inspired Rossetti's boyhood with the vision of the *Blessed Damsel*— which kindled his early manhood into the sweetest *Ave* that ever saluted "Mary Virgin, full of grace"— had transformed themselves in his heart into the reality and the recollection; when Love had been made known to him by life itself and death— then he had at least gained power to show how the vaguer worship may become a concentrated expectancy: how one vanished hand may seem to offer the endless welcome, one name to symbolise all heaven, and to be in itself the single hope.

"Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
 Between the scripted petals softly blown
 Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown,—
 Ah! let none other alien spell soe'er,
 But only the one Hope's one name be there,—
 Not less nor more, but e'en that word alone."

Enough, perhaps, has been said to indicate not only how superficial is the view which represents Rossetti as a dangerous sensualist, but also how inadequately we shall understand him if we think to find in him only the commonplaces of passion dressed out in fantastic language and Italianised allegory. There is more to be learned from him than this, though it be too soon, as yet, to discern with exactness his place in the history of our time. Yet we may note that his sensitive and reserved individuality; his life, absorbed in Art, and aloof from—without being below—the circles of politics or fashion; his refinement, created as it were from within, and independent of conventional models, point him out as a member of the new aristocracy of which we have already spoken, that *optimacy* of passion and genius (if we may revive an obsolete word to

express a new shade of meaning) which is coming into existence as a cosmopolitan gentility among the confused and fading class-distinctions of the past. And, further, we may observe in him the reaction of Art against Materialism, which becomes more marked as the dominant tone of science grows more soulless and severe. The instincts which make other men Catholics, Ritualists, Hegelians, have compelled him, too, to seek "the meaning of all things that are" elsewhere than in the behaviour of ether and atoms, though we can track his revelation to no source more explicit than the look in a woman's eyes.

But if we ask—and it was one of the questions with which we started—what encouragement the moralist can find in this counter-wave of art and mysticism which meets the materialistic tide, there is no certain or easy answer. The one view of life seems as powerless as the other to supply that antique and manly virtue which civilisation tends to undermine by the lessening effort that it exacts of men, the increasing enjoyment that it offers to them. "Time has run back and fetched the age of gold", in the sense that the opulent can now take life as easily as it was taken in Paradise; and Rossetti's poems, placed beside Sidney's or Lovelace's, seem the expression of a century which is refining itself into quietism and mellowing into decay.

Yet thus much we may safely affirm, that if we contrast æstheticism with pure hedonism—the pursuit of pleasure through art with the pursuit of pleasure simply as pleasure—the one has a tendency to quicken and exalt, as the other to deaden and vulgarise, the emotions and appetencies of man. If only the artist can keep clear of the sensuous selfishness which will, in its turn, degrade the art which yields to it: if only he can worship beauty with a strong and single heart, his emotional nature will acquire a grace and elevation which are not, indeed, identical with the elevation of virtue, the grace of holiness, but which are none the less a priceless enrichment of the complex life of man. Rossetti could never have summoned us to the clear heights of Wordsworth's *Laodamia*. Yet who can read the *House of Life* and not feel that the poet has known Love as Love can be—not an enjoyment only or a triumph, but a worship and a regeneration; Love not fleeting nor changeful, but "far above all passionate winds of welcome and farewell"; Love offering to the soul no mere excitation and by-play, but "a heavenly solstice, hushed and halcyon"; Love whose "hours

elect in choral consonancy" bear with them nothing that is vain or vulgar, common or unclean. He must have felt as no passing tragedy the long ache of parted pain, "the ground-whirl of the perished leaves of hope," "the sunset's desolate disarray", the fruitless striving "to wrest a bond from night's inveteracy", to behold "for once, for once alone", the unforgotten eyes re-risen from the dark of death.

Love, as Plato said, is the ἐρμηνεύων καὶ διαπορομέων, "the interpreter and mediator" between things human and things divine; and it may be to Love that we must look to teach the worshipper of Beauty that the highest things are also the loveliest, and that the strongest of moral agencies is also the most pervading and keenest joy. Art and Religion, which by no compression could amalgamate, may by Love be expanded and interfused; and thus the poet may not err so wholly who seeks in a woman's eyes "the meaning of things that are;" and "the soul's sphere of infinite images" may not be a mere prismatic fringe in reality, but rather those images may be as dark rays made visible by passing through the medium of a mind which is fitted to refract and reflect them.

A faint, a fitful reflex! Whether it be from light of sun or of moon, *sole repercussum aut radiantis imagine luna*—the glimmer of a vivifying or of a phantom day—may scarcely be for us to know. But never yet has the universe been proved smaller than the conceptions of man, whose farthest, deepest speculation has only found *within* him yet profounder abysses—*without*, a more unfathomable heaven.

JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER

Mr. Whistler's "Ten o'Clock"

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is with great hesitation and much misgiving that I appear before you, in the character of The Preacher.

If timidity be at all allied to the virtue modesty, and can find favour in your eyes, I pray you, for the sake of that virtue, accord me your utmost indulgence.

I would plead for my want of habit, did it not seem preposterous, judging from precedent, that aught save the most efficient effrontery could be ever expected in connection with

my subject—for I will not conceal from you that I mean to talk about Art. Yes, Art—that has of late become, as far as much discussion and writing can make it, a sort of common topic for the tea-table.

Art is upon the Town!—to be chucked under the chin by the passing gallant—to be enticed within the gates of the householder—to be coaxed into company, as a proof of culture and refinement.

If familiarity can breed contempt, certainly Art—or what is currently taken for it—has been brought to its lowest stage of intimacy.

The people have been harassed with Art in every guise, and vexed with many methods as to its endurance. They have been told how they shall love Art, and live with it. Their homes have been invaded, their walls covered with paper, their very dress taken to task—until, roused at last, bewildered and filled with the doubts and discomforts of senseless suggestion, they resent such intrusion, and cast forth the false prophets, who have brought the very name of the beautiful into disrepute, and derision upon themselves.

Alas! ladies and gentlemen, Art has been maligned. She has naught in common with such practices. She is a goddess of dainty thought—reticent of habit, abjuring all obtrusiveness, purposing in no way to better others.

She is, withal, selfishly occupied with her own perfection only—having no desire to teach—seeking and finding the beautiful in all conditions and in all times, as did her high priest, Rembrandt, when he saw picturesque grandeur and noble dignity in the Jews' quarter of Amsterdam, and lamented not that its inhabitants were not Greeks.

As did Tintoretto and Paul Veronese, among the Venetians, while not halting to change the brocaded silks for the classic draperies of Athens.

As did, at the Court of Philip, Velasquez, whose Infantas, clad in inæsthetic hoops, are, as works of Art, of the same quality as the Elgin marbles.

No reformers were these great men—no improvers of the way of others! Their productions alone were their occupation, and, filled with the poetry of their science, they required not to alter their surroundings—for, as the laws of their Art were revealed to them they saw, in the development of their work, that real beauty which, to them, was as much a matter of

certainty and triumph as is to the astronomer the verification of the result, foreseen with the light given to him alone. In all this, their world was completely severed from that of their fellow-creatures with whom sentiment is mistaken for poetry; and for whom there is no perfect work that shall not be explained by the benefit conferred upon themselves.

Humanity takes the place of Art, and God's creations are excused by their usefulness. Beauty is confounded with virtue, and, before a work of Art, it is asked: "What good shall it do?"

Hence it is that nobility of action, in this life, is hopelessly linked with the merit of the work that portrays it; and thus the people have acquired the habit of looking, as who should say, not *at* a picture, but *through* it, at some human fact, that shall, or shall not, from a social point of view, better their mental or moral state. So we have come to hear of the painting that elevates, and of the duty of the painter—of the picture that is full of thought, and of the panel that merely decorates.

A favourite faith, dear to those who teach, is that certain periods were especially artistic, and that nations, readily named, were notably lovers of Art.

So we are told that the Greeks were, as a people, worshippers of the beautiful, and that in the fifteenth century Art was engrained in the multitude.

That the great masters lived in common understanding with their patrons—that the early Italians were artists—all—and that the demand for the lovely thing produced it.

That we, of to-day, in gross contrast to this Arcadian purity, call for the ungainly, and obtain the ugly.

That, could we but change our habits and climate—were we willing to wander in groves—could we be roasted out of broad-cloth—were we to do without haste, and journey without speed, we should again *require* the spoon of Queen Anne, and pick at our peas with the fork of two prongs. And so, for the flock, little hamlets grow near Hammersmith, and the steam horse is scorned.

Useless! quite hopeless and false is the effort!—built upon fable, and all because "a wise man has uttered a vain thing and filled his belly with the East wind".

Listen! There never was an artistic period.

There never was an Art-loving nation.

In the beginning, man went forth each day—some to do

battle, some to the chase; others, again, to dig and to delve in the field—all that they might gain and live, or lose and die. Until there was found among them one, differing from the rest, whose pursuits attracted him not, and so he stayed by the tents with the women, and traced strange devices with a burnt stick upon a gourd.

This man, who took no joy in the ways of his brethren—who cared not for conquest, and fretted in the field—this designer of quaint patterns—this deviser of the beautiful—who perceived in Nature about him curious curvings, as faces are seen in the fire—this dreamer apart, was the first artist.

And when, from the field and from afar, there came back the people, they took the gourd—and drank from out of it.

And presently there came to this man another—and, in time, others—of like nature, chosen by the Gods—and so they worked together; and soon they fashioned, from the moistened earth, forms resembling the gourd. And with the power of creation, the heirloom of the artist, presently they went beyond the slovenly suggestion of Nature, and the first vase was born, in beautiful proportion.

And the toilers tilled, and were athirst; and the heroes returned from fresh victories, to rejoice and to feast; and all drank alike from the artists' goblets, fashioned cunningly, taking no note the while of the craftsman's pride, and understanding not his glory in his work; drinking at the cup, not from choice, not from a consciousness that it was beautiful, but because, forsooth, there was none other!

And time, with more state, brought more capacity for luxury, and it became well that men should dwell in large houses, and rest upon couches, and eat at tables; whereupon the artist, with his artificers, built palaces, and filled them with furniture, beautiful in proportion and lovely to look upon.

And the people lived in marvels of art—and ate and drank out of masterpieces—for there was nothing else to eat and to drink out of, and no bad building to live in; no article of daily life, of luxury, or of necessity, that had not been handed down from the design of the master, and made by his workmen.

And the people questioned not, *and had nothing to say in the matter.*

So Greece was in its splendour, and Art reigned supreme—by force of fact, not by election—and there was no meddling from the outsider. The mighty warrior would no more have

ventured to offer a design for the temple of Pallas Athene than would the sacred poet have proffered a plan for constructing the catapult.

And the Amateur was unknown—and the Dilettante undreamed of!

And history wrote on, and conquest accompanied civilisation, and Art spread, or rather its products were carried by the victors among the vanquished from one country to another. And the customs of cultivation covered the face of the earth, so that all peoples continued to use what *the artist alone produced*.

And centuries passed in this using, and the world was flooded with all that was beautiful, until there arose a new class, who discovered the cheap, and foresaw fortune in the facture of the sham.

Then sprang into existence the tawdry, the common, the gewgaw.

The taste of the tradesman supplanted the science of the artist, and what was born of the million went back to them, and charmed them, for it was after their own heart; and the great and the small, the statesman and the slave, took to themselves the abomination that was tendered, and preferred it—and have lived with it ever since!

And the artist's occupation was gone, and the manufacturer and the huckster took his place.

And now the heroes filled from the jugs and drank from the bowls—with understanding—noting the glare of their new bravery, and taking pride in its worth.

And the people—this time—had much to say in the matter—and all were satisfied. And Birmingham and Manchester arose in their might—and Art was relegated to the curiosity shop.

Nature contains the elements, in colour and form, of all pictures, as the keyboard contains the notes of all music.

But the artist is born to pick, and choose, and group with science, these elements, that the result may be beautiful—as the musician gathers his notes, and forms his chords, until he bring forth from chaos glorious harmony.

To say to the painter, that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player, that he may sit on the piano.

That Nature is always right, is an assertion, artistically, as untrue, as it is one whose truth is universally taken for granted.

Nature is very rarely right, to such an extent even, that it might almost be said that Nature is usually wrong: that is to say, the condition of things that shall bring about the perfection of harmony worthy a picture is rare, and not common at all.

This would seem, to even the most intelligent, a doctrine almost blasphemous. So incorporated with our education has the supposed aphorism become, that its belief is held to be part of our moral being, and the words themselves have, in our ear, the ring of religion. Still, seldom does Nature succeed in producing a picture.

The sun blares, the wind blows from the east, the sky is bereft of cloud, and without, all is of iron. The windows of the Crystal Palace are seen from all points of London. The holiday-maker rejoices in the glorious day, and the painter turns aside to shut his eyes.

How little this is understood, and how dutifully the casual in Nature is accepted as sublime, may be gathered from the unlimited admiration daily produced by a very foolish sunset.

The dignity of the snow-capped mountain is lost in distinctness, but the joy of the tourist is to recognise the traveller on the top. The desire to see, for the sake of seeing it, is, with the mass, alone the one to be gratified, hence the delight in detail.

And when the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the poor buildings lose themselves in the dim sky, and the tall chimneys become campanili, and the warehouses are palaces in the night, and the whole city hangs in the heavens, and fairy-land is before us—then the wayfarer hastens home; the working man and the cultured one, the wise man and the one of pleasure, cease to understand, as they have ceased to see, and Nature, who, for once, has sung in tune, sings her exquisite song to the artist alone, her son and her master—her son in that he loves her, her master in that he knows her.

To him her secrets are unfolded, to him her lessons have become gradually clear. He looks at her flower, not with the enlarging lens, that he may gather facts for the botanist, but with the light of the one who sees in her choice selection of brilliant tones and delicate tints, suggestions of future harmonies.

He does not confine himself to purposeless copying, without thought, each blade of grass, as commended by the inconsequent, but, in the long curve of the narrow leaf, corrected by the straight tall stem, he learns how grace is wedded to dignity,

how strength enhances sweetness, that elegance shall be the result.

In the citron wing of the pale butterfly, with its dainty spots of orange, he sees before him the stately halls of fair gold, with their slender saffron pillars, and is taught how the delicate drawing high upon the walls shall be traced in tender tones of orpiment, and repeated by the base in notes of graver hue.

In all that is dainty and lovable he finds hints for his own combinations, and *thus* is Nature ever his resource and always at his service, and to him is naught refused.

Through his brain, as through the last alembic, is distilled the refined essence of that thought which began with the Gods, and which they left him to carry out.

Set apart by them to complete their works, he produces that wondrous thing called the masterpiece, which surpasses in perfection all that they have contrived in what is called Nature; and the Gods stand by and marvel, and perceive how far away more beautiful is the Venus of Melos than was their own Eve.

For some time past, the unattached writer has become the middleman in this matter of Art, and his influence, while it has widened the gulf between the people and the painter, has brought about the most complete misunderstanding as to the aim of the picture.

For him a picture is more or less a hieroglyph or symbol of story. Apart from a few technical terms, for the display of which he finds an occasion, the work is considered absolutely from a literary point of view; indeed, from what other can he consider it? And in his essays he deals with it as with a novel—a history—or an anecdote. He fails entirely and most naturally to see its excellences, or demerits—artistic—and so degrades Art, by supposing it a method of bringing about a literary climax.

It thus, in his hands, becomes merely a means of perpetrating something further, and its mission is made a secondary one, even as a means is second to an end.

The thoughts emphasised, noble or other, are inevitably attached to the incident, and become more or less noble, according to the eloquence or mental quality of the writer, who looks the while, with disdain, upon what he holds as “mere execution”—a matter belonging, he believes, to the training of the schools, and the reward of assiduity. So that, as he goes on

with his translation from canvas to paper, the work becomes his own. He finds poetry where he would feel it were he himself transcribing the event, invention in the intricacy of the *mise en scène*, and noble philosophy in some detail of philanthropy, courage, modesty, or virtue, suggested to him by the occurrence.

All this might be brought before him, and his imagination be appealed to, by a very poor picture—indeed, I might safely say that it generally is.

Meanwhile, the painter's poetry is quite lost to him—the amazing invention that shall have put form and colour into such perfect harmony, that exquisiteness is the result, he is without understanding—the nobility of thought, that shall have given the artist's dignity to the whole, says to him absolutely nothing.

So that his praises are published, for virtues we would blush to possess—while the great qualities, that distinguish the one work from the thousand, that make of the masterpiece the thing of beauty that it is—have never been seen at all.

That this is so, we can make sure of, by looking back at old reviews upon past exhibitions, and reading the flatteries lavished upon men who have since been forgotten altogether—but, upon whose works, the language has been exhausted, in rhapsodies—that left nothing for the National Gallery.

A curious matter, in its effect upon the judgment of these gentlemen, is the accepted vocabulary of poetic symbolism, that helps them, by habit, in dealing with Nature: a mountain, to them, is synonymous with height—a lake, with depth—the ocean, with vastness—the sun, with glory.

So that a picture with a mountain, a lake, and an ocean—however poor in paint—is inevitably “lofty”, “vast”, “infinite”, and “glorious”—on paper.

There are those also, sombre of mien, and wise with the wisdom of books, who frequent museums and burrow in crypts: collecting—comparing—classifying—contradicting.

Experts these—for whom a date is an accomplishment—a hall-mark, success!

Careful in scrutiny are they, and conscientious of judgment—establishing, with due weight, unimportant reputations—discovering the picture, by the stain on the back—testing the torso, by the leg that is missing—filling folios with doubts on the way of that limb—disputatious and dictatorial, concerning

the birth-place of inferior persons—speculating, in much writing, upon the great worth of bad work.

True clerks of the collection, they mix memoranda with ambition, and, reducing Art to statistics, they “file” the fifteenth century, and “pigeon-hole” the antique!

Then the Preacher “appointed”!

He stands in high places—harangues and holds forth.

Sage of the Universities—learned in many matters, and of much experience in all, save his subject.

Exhorting—denouncing—directing.

Filled with wrath and earnestness.

Bringing powers of persuasion, and polish of language, to prove—nothing.

Torn with much teaching—having naught to impart.

Impressive—important—shallow.

Crying out, and cutting himself—while the gods hear not.

Gentle priest of the Philistine withal, again he ambles pleasantly from all point, and through many volumes, escaping scientific assertion—“babbles of green fields”.

So Art has become foolishly confounded with education—that all should be equally qualified.

Whereas, while polish, refinement, culture, and breeding, are in no way arguments for artistic result, it is also no reproach to the most finished scholar or greatest gentleman in the land that he be absolutely without eye for painting or ear for music—that in his heart he prefers the popular print to the scratch of Rembrandt’s needle, or the songs of the hall to Beethoven’s “C minor Symphony”.

Let him have but the wit to say so, and not feel the admission a proof of inferiority.

Art happens—no hovel is safe from it, no Prince may depend upon it, the vastest intelligence cannot bring it about, and puny efforts to make it universal end in quaint comedy, and coarse farce.

This is as it should be—and all attempts to make it otherwise are due to the eloquence of the ignorant, the zeal of the conceited.

The boundary-line is clear. Far from me to propose to bridge it over—that the pestered people be pushed across. No! I would save them from further fatigue. I would come to

their relief, and would lift from their shoulders this incubus of Art.

Why, after centuries of freedom from it, and indifference to it, should it now be thrust upon them by the blind—until wearied and puzzled, they know no longer how they shall eat or drink—how they shall sit or stand—or wherewithal they shall clothe themselves—without afflicting Art.

But, lo! there is much talk without!

Triumphantly they cry, "Beware! This matter does indeed concern us. We also have our part in all true Art!—for, remember the 'one touch of Nature' that 'makes the whole world kin'."

True, indeed. But let not the unwary jauntily suppose that Shakespeare herewith hands him his passport to Paradise, and thus permits him speech among the chosen. Rather, learn that, in this very sentence, he is condemned to remain without—to continue with the common.

This one chord that vibrates with all—this "one touch of Nature" that calls aloud to the response of each—that explains the popularity of the "Bull" of Paul Potter—that excuses the price of Murillo's "Conception"—this one unspoken sympathy that pervades humanity, is—Vulgarity!

Vulgarity—under whose fascinating influence "the many" have elbowed "the few", and the gentle circle of Art swarms with the intoxicated mob of mediocrity, whose leaders prate and counsel, and call aloud, where the Gods once spoke in whisper!

And now from their midst the Dilettante stalks abroad. The amateur is loosed. The voice of the æsthete is heard in the land, and catastrophe is upon us.

The meddler beckons the vengeance of the Gods, and ridicule threatens the fair daughters of the land.

And there are curious converts to a weird *culte*, in which all instinct for attractiveness—all freshness and sparkle—all woman's winsomeness—is to give way to a strange vocation for the unlovely—and this desecration in the name of the Graces!

Shall this gaunt, ill-at-ease, distressed, abashed mixture of *mauvaise honte* and desperate assertion call itself artistic, and claim counsinsip with the artist—who delights in the dainty, the sharp, bright gaiety of beauty?

No!—a thousand times no! Here are no connections of ours.

We will have nothing to do with them.

Forced to seriousness, that emptiness may be hidden, they dare not smile—

While the artist, in fullness of heart and head, is glad, and laughs aloud, and is happy in his strength, and is merry at the pompous pretension—the solemn silliness that surrounds him.

For Art and Joy go together, with bold openness, and high head, and ready hand—fearing naught, and dreading no exposure.

Know, then, all beautiful women, that we are with you. Pay no heed, we pray you, to this outcry of the unbecoming—this last plea for the plain.

It concerns you not.

Your own instinct is near the truth—your own wit far surer guide than the untaught ventures of thick-heeled Apollos.

What! Will you up and follow the first piper that leads you down Petticoat Lane, there, on a Sabbath, to gather, for the week, from the dull rags of ages wherewith to bedeck yourselves? that, beneath your travestied awkwardness, we have trouble to find your own dainty selves? Oh, fie! Is the world, then, exhausted? and must we go back because the thumb of the mountebank jerks the other way?

Costume is not dress.

And the wearers of wardrobes may not be doctors of taste!

For by what authority shall these be pretty masters? Look well, and nothing have they invented—nothing put together for comeliness' sake.

Haphazard from their shoulders hang the garments of the hawker—combining in their person the motley of many manners with the medley of the mummers' closet.

Set up as a warning, and a finger-post of danger, they point to the disastrous effect of Art upon the middle classes.

Why this lifting of the brow in deprecation of the present—this pathos in reference to the past?

If Art be rare to-day, it was seldom heretofore.

It is false, this teaching of decay.

The master stands in no relation to the moment at which he occurs—a monument of isolation—hinting at sadness—having no part in the progress of his fellow-men.

He is also no more the product of civilisation than is the scientific truth asserted dependent upon the wisdom of a period. The assertion itself requires the *man* to make it. The truth was from the beginning.

So Art is limited to the infinite, and beginning there cannot progress.

A silent indication of its wayward indepenence from all extraneous advance, is in the absolutely unchanged condition and form of implement since the beginning of things.

The painter has but the same pencil—the sculptor the chisel of centuries.

Colours are not more since the heavy hangings of night were first drawn aside, and the loveliness of light revealed.

Neither chemist nor engineer can offer new elements of the masterpiece.

False again, the fabled link between the grandeur of Art and the glories and virtues of the State, for Art feeds not upon nations, and peoples may be wiped from the face of the earth, but Art *is*.

It is indeed high time that we cast aside the weary weight of responsibility and co-partnership, and know that, in no way, do our virtues minister to its worth, in no way do our vices impede its triumph!

How irksome! how hopeless! how superhuman the self-imposed task of the nation! How sublimely vain the belief that it shall live nobly or art perish.

Let us reassure ourselves, at our own option is our virtue. Art we in no way affect.

A whimsical goddess, and a capricious, her strong sense of joy tolerates no dullness, and, live we never so spotlessly, still may she turn her back upon us.

As, from time immemorial, she has done upon the Swiss in their mountains.

What more worthy people! Whose every Alpine gap yawns with tradition, and is stocked with noble story; yet, the perverse and scornful one will none of it, and the sons of patriots are left with the clock that turns the mill, and the sudden cuckoo, with difficulty restrained in its box.

For this was Tell a hero! For this did Gessler die!

Art, the cruel jade, cares not, and hardens her heart, and hies her off to the East, to find among the opium-eaters of

Nankin, a favourite with whom she lingers fondly—caressing his blue porcelain, and painting his coy maidens, and marking his plates with her six marks of choice—indifferent in her companionship with him, to all save the virtue of his refinement.

He it is who calls her—he who holds her!

And again to the West, that her next lover may bring together the Gallery at Madrid, and show to the world how the Master towers above all; and in their intimacy they revel, he and she, in this knowledge; and he knows the happiness untasted by other mortal.

She is proud of her comrade, and promises that in after-years, others shall pass that way, and understand.

So in all times does this superb one cast about for the man worthy her love—and Art seeks the Artist alone.

Where he is, there she appears, and remains with him—loving and fruitful—turning never aside in moments of hope deferred—of insult—and of ribald misunderstanding; and when he dies she sadly takes her flight, though loitering yet in the land, from fond association, but refusing to be consoled.*

With the man, then, and not with the multitude, are her intimacies; and in the book of her life the names inscribed are few—scant, indeed, the list of those who have helped to write her story of love and beauty.

From the sunny morning, when, with her glorious Greek relenting, she yielded up the secret of repeated line, as, with his hand in hers, together they marked in marble, the measured rhyme of lovely limb and draperies flowing in unison, to the day when she dipped the Spaniard's brush in light and air, and made his people live within their frames, and *stand upon their legs*, that all nobility and sweetness, and tenderness, and magnificence should be theirs by right, ages had gone by, and few had been her choice.

Countless, indeed, the horde of pretenders! But she knew them not.

A teeming, seething, busy mass, whose virtue was industry, and whose industry was vice!

Their names go to fill the catalogue of the collection at home, of the gallery abroad, for the delectation of the bagman and the critic.

* And so have we the ephemeral influence of the Master's memory—the afterglow, in which are warmed, for a while, the worker and disciple.

Therefore have we cause to be merry!—and to cast away all care— resolved that all is well— as it ever was—and that it is not meet that we should be cried at, and urged to take measures!

Enough have we endured of dullness! Surely are we weary of weeping, and our tears have been cozened from us falsely, for they have called out woe! when there was no grief—and alas! where all is fair!

We have then but to wait—until, with the mark of the Gods upon him— there come among us again the chosen—who shall continue what has gone before. Satisfied that, even were he never to appear, the story of the beautiful is already complete— hewn in the marbles of the Parthenon—and broidered, with the birds, upon the fan of Hokusai—at the foot of Fujiyama.

OSCAR WILDE

Impressions

1

Les Silhouettes

The sea is flecked with bars of grey,
The dull dead wind is out of tune,
And like a withered leaf the moon
Is blown across the stormy bay.

Etched clear upon the pallid sand
The black boat lies: a sailor boy
Clambers aboard in careless joy
With laughing face and gleaming hand.

And overhead the curlews cry,
Where through the dusky upland grass
The young brown-throated reapers pass,
Like silhouettes against the sky.

2

La Fuite de la Lune

To outer senses there is peace,
A dreamy peace on either hand,
Deep silence in the shadowy land,
Deep silence where the shadows cease.

Save for a cry that echoes shrill
From some lone bird disconsolate;
A corncrake calling to its mate;
The answer from the misty hill.

And suddenly the moon withdraws
Her sickle from the lightening skies,
And to her sombre cavern flies,
Wrapped in a veil of yellow gauze.

Impression du Matin

The Thames nocturne of blue and gold
Changed to a Harmony in gray:
A barge with ochre-coloured hay
Dropt from the wharf: and chill and cold

The yellow fog came creeping down
The bridges, till the houses' walls
Seemed changed to shadows, and St. Paul's
Loomed like a bubble o'er the town.

Then suddenly arose the clang
Of waking life; the streets were stirred
With country waggons: and a bird
Flew to the glistening roofs and sang.

But one pale woman all alone,
The daylight kissing her wan hair,
Loitered beneath the gas lamp's flare,
With lips of flame and heart of stone.

Impression

Le Réveillon

The sky is laced with fitful red,
The circling mists and shadows flee,
The dawn is rising from the sea,
Like a white lady from her bed.

And jagged brazen arrows fall
Athwart the feathers of the night,
And a long wave of yellow light
Breaks silently on tower and hall,

And spreading wide across the wold
Wakes into flight some fluttering bird,
And all the chestnut tops are stirred,
And all the branches streaked with gold.

MAX BEERBOHM

A Defence of Cosmetics

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

For behold! The Victorian era comes to its end and the day of sancta simplicitas is quite ended. The old signs are here and the portents to warn the seer of life that we are ripe for a new epoch of artifice. Are not men rattling the dice-box and ladies dipping their fingers in the rouge-pots? At Rome, in the keenest time of her degradingolade, when there was gambling even in the holy temples, great ladies (does not Lucian tell us?) did not scruple to squander all they had upon unguents from Arabia. Nero's mistress and unhappy wife, Poppæa, of shameful memory, had in her travelling retinue fifteen—or, as some say, fifty—she-asses, for the sake of their milk, that was thought an incomparable guard against cosmetics with poison in them. Last century, too, when life was lived by candle-light, and ethics was but etiquette, and even art a question of punctilio, women, we know, gave the best hours of the day to the crafty farding of their faces and the towering of their coiffures. And men, throwing passion into the wine-bowl to sink or swim, turned out thought to browse upon the green cloth. Cannot we even now in our fancy see them, those silent exquisites round the long table at Brooks', masked, all of them, "lest the countenance should betray feeling", in quinze masks, through whose cyelets they sat peeping, peeping, while macao

brought them riches or ruin? We can see them, those silent rascals, sitting there with their cards and their rouleaux and their wooden money-bowls, long after the dawn had crept up St. James' and pressed its haggard face against the window of the little club. Yes, we can raise their ghosts—and, more, we can see anywhere a devotion to hazard fully as meek as theirs. In England there has been a wonderful revival of cards. Roulette may rival dead faro in the tale of her devotees. Her wheel is spinning busily in every house and ere long it may be that tender parents will be writing to complain of the compulsory baccarat in our public schools.

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

But now that the use of pigments is becoming general, and most women are not so young as they are painted, it may be asked curiously how the prejudice ever came into being. Indeed, it is hard to trace folly, for that it is inconsequent, to its start; and perhaps it savours too much of reason to suggest that

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

After all, the old prejudice is a-dying. We need not pry into the secret of its birth. Rather is this a time of jolliness and glad indulgence. For the era of rouge is upon us, and as only in an elaborate era can man by the tangled accrescency of his own pleasures and emotions reach that refinement which is his highest excellence, and by making himself, so to say, independent of Nature, come nearest to God, so only in an elaborate era is woman perfect. Artifice is the strength of the world, and in that same mask of paint and powder, shadowed with vermeil tinct and most trimly pencilled, is woman's strength.

For see! We need not look so far back to see woman under the direct influence of Nature. Early in this century, our grandmothers, sickening of the odour of faded exotics and spilt wine, came out into the daylight once more and let the breezes blow around their faces and enter, sharp and welcome, into their lungs. Artifice they drove forth, and they set Martin Tupper upon a throne of mahogany to rule over them. A very reign of terror set in. All things were sacrificed to the fetish Nature. Old ladies may still be heard to tell how, when they were girls, affectation was not; and, if we verify their assertion in the light of such literary authorities as Dickens, we find that it is absolutely true. Women appear to have been in those days utterly natural in their conduct flighty, gushing, blushing, fainting, giggling and shaking their curls. They knew no reserve in the first days of the Victorian era. No thought was

held too trivial, no emotion too silly, to express. To Nature everything was sacrificed. Great heavens! And in those barren days what influence was exerted by women? By men they seem not to have been feared nor loved, but regarded rather as "dear little creatures" or "wonderful little beings", and in their relation to life as foolish and ineffectual as the landscapes they did in water-colour. Yet, if the women of those years were of no great account, they had a certain charm and they at least had not begun to trespass upon men's ground; if they touched not thought, which is theirs by right, at any rate they refrained from action, which is ours. Far more serious was it when, in the natural trend of time, they became enamoured of rinking and archery and galloping along the Brighton Parade. Swiftly they have sped on since then from horror to horror. The invasion of the tennis-courts and of the golf-links, the seizure of the tricycle and of the typewriter, were but steps preliminary in that campaign which is to end with the final victorious occupation of St. Stephen's. But stay! The horrific pioneers of womanhood who gad hither and thither and, confounding wisdom with the device on her shield, shriek for the unbecoming, are doomed. Though they spin their tricycle-treadles so amazingly fast, they are too late. Though they scream victory, none follow them. Artifice, that fair exile, has returned.

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

Surely, without any of my pleading, women will welcome their great and amiable protectrix, as by instinct. For (have I not said?) it is upon her that all their strength, their life almost, depends. Artifice's first command to them is that they should repose. With bodily activity their powder will fly, their enamel crack. They are butterflies who must not flit, if they love their bloom. Now, setting aside the point of view of passion, from which very many obvious things might be said (and probably have been by the minor poets), it is, from the intellectual point of view, quite necessary that a woman should

repose. Hers is the resupinate sex. On her couch she is a goddess, but so soon as ever she put her foot to the ground—lo, she is the veriest little sillypop and quite done for. She cannot rival us in action, but she is our mistress in the things of the mind. Let her not by second-rate athletics, nor indeed by any exercise soever of the limbs, spoil the pretty procedure of her reason. Let her be content to remain the guide, the subtle suggester of what we must do, the strategist whose soldiers we are, the little architect whose workmen.

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

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

How fatal it has been, in how many ways, this confusion of soul and surface! Wise were the Greeks in making plain masks for their mummers to play in, and dunces were not to have done the same! Only the other day, an actress was saying that what she was most proud of in her art—next, of course, to having appeared in some provincial pantomime at the age of three—

was the deftness with which she contrived, in parts demanding a rapid succession of emotions, to dab her cheeks quite quickly with rouge from the palm of her right hand, or powder from the palm of her left. Gracious goodness! why do not we have masks upon the stage? Drama is the presentment of the soul in action. The mirror of the soul is the voice. Let the young critics, who seek a cheap reputation for austerity, by cavilling at "incidental music", set their faces rather against the attempt to justify inferior dramatic art by the subvention of a quite alien art like painting, of any art, indeed, whose sphere is only surface. Let those, again, who sneer, so rightly, at the "painted anecdotes of the Academy", censure equally the writers who trespass on painter's ground. It is a proclaimed sin that a painter should concern himself with a good little girl's affection for a Scotch greyhound, or the keen enjoyment of their port by elderly gentlemen of the early 'forties. Yet, for a painter to prod the soul with his paint-brush is no worse than for a novelist to refuse to dip under the surface, and the fashion of avoiding a psychological study of grief by stating that the owner's hair turned white in a single night, or of shame by mentioning a sudden rush of scarlet to the cheeks, is as lamentable as may be. But! But with the universal use of cosmetics and the consequent discernment of soul and surface, which, at the risk of irritating a reader, I must again insist upon, all those old properties that went to bolster up the ordinary novel—the trembling lips, the flashing eyes, the determined curve of the chin, the nervous trick of biting the moustache—aye and the hectic spot of red on either cheek—will be made spiflicate, as the puppets were spiflicated by Don Quixote. Yes, even now Demos begins to discern. The same spirit that has revived rouge, smote his mouth as it grinned at the wondrous painter of mist and river, and now sends him sprawling for the pearls that Meredith dived for in the deep waters of romance.

Indeed the revival of cosmetics must needs be so splendid an influence, conjuring boons innumerable, that one inclines almost to mutter against that inexorable law by which Artifice must perish from time to time. That such branches of painting as the staining of glass or the illuminating of manuscripts should fall into disuse seems, in comparison, so likely; these were esoteric arts; they died with the monastic spirit. But personal appearance is art's very basis. The painting of the

face is the first kind of painting man can have known. To make beautiful things—is it not an impulse laid upon few? But to make oneself beautiful is an universal instinct. Strange that the resultant art could ever perish! So fascinating an art too! So various in its materials from stimmis, psimythium and fuligo to bismuth and arsenic, so simple in that its ground and its subject-matter are one, so marvellous in that its very subject-matter becomes lovely when an artist had selected it! For surely this is no idle nor fantastic saying. To deny that “making-up” is an art, on the pretext that the finished work of its exponents depends for beauty and excellence upon the ground chosen for the work, is absurd. At the touch of a true artist, the plainest face turns comely. As subject-matter the face is no more than suggestive, as ground, merely a loom round which the beatus artifex may spin the threads of any golden fabric:

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

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

But of course Artifice is rather exacting. In return for the repose she forces—so wisely!—upon her followers when the sun is high or the moon is blown across heaven, she demands that they should pay her long homage at the sun's rising. The initiate may not enter lightly upon her mysteries. For, if a bad complexion be inexcusable, to be ill-painted is unforgivable; and when the toilet is laden once more with the fullness of its elaboration, we shall hear no more of the proper occupation for women. And think, how sweet an energy, to sit at the mirror of coquetry! See the dear merits of the toilet as shown upon old vases, or upon the walls of Roman dwellings, or, rather still, read Böttiger's alluring, scholarly description of *'Morgenscenen im Puttzimmer Einer Reichen Römerin'*. Read of

Sabina's face as she comes through the curtain of her bed-chamber to the chamber of her toilet. The slave-girls have long been chafing their white feet upon the marble floor. They stand, those timid Greek girls, marshalled in little battalions. Each has her appointed task, and all kneel in welcome as Sabina stalks, ugly and frowning, to the toilet chair. Scaphion steps forth from among them, and, dipping a tiny sponge in a bowl of hot milk, passes it lightly, ever so lightly, over her mistress's face. The Poppæan pastes melt beneath it like snow. A cooling lotion is poured over her brow and is fanned with feathers. Phiale comes after, a clever girl, captured in some sea-skirmish in the Ægean. In her left hand she holds the ivory box wherein are the phucus and that white powder, psimythium; in her right a sheaf of slim brushes. With how sure a touch does she mingle the colours, and in what sweet proportion blushes and blanches her lady's upturned face. Phiale is the cleverest of all the slaves. Now Calamis dips her quill in a certain powder that floats, liquid and sable, in the hollow of her palm. Standing upon tip-toe and with lips parted, she traces the arch of the eyebrows. The slaves whisper loudly of their lady's beauty, and two of them hold up a mirror to her. Yes, the eyebrows are rightly arched. But why does Psecas abase herself? She is craving leave to powder Sabina's hair with a fine new powder. It is made of the grated rind of the cedar tree, and a Gallic perfumer, whose stall is near the Circus, gave it to her for a kiss. No lady in Rome knows of it. And so, when four special slaves have piled up the head-dress, out of a perforated box this glistening powder is showered. Into every little brown ringlet it enters, till Sabina's hair seems like a pile of gold coins. Lest the breezes send it flying, the girls lay the powder with sprinkled attar. Soon Sabina will start for the Temple of Cybele.

Ah! Such are the lures of the toilet that none will for long hold aloof from them. Cosmetics are not going to be a mere prosaic remedy for age or plainness, but all ladies and all young girls will come to love them. Does not a certain blithe Marquise, whose *lettres intimes* from the Court of Louis Seize are less read than their wit would merit, tell us how she was scandalised to see "*même les toutes jeunes demoiselles émoillées comme ma tabatière?*" So it shall be with us. Surely the common prejudice against painting the lily can but be based on mere ground of economy. That which is already fair is com-

plete, it may be urged—urged implausibly, for there are not so many lovely things in this world that we can afford not to know each one of them by heart. There is only one white lily, and who that has ever seen—as I have—a lily really well painted could grudge the artist so fair a ground for his skill? Scarcely do you believe through how many nice metamorphoses a lily may be passed by him. In like manner, we all know the young girl, with her simpleness, her goodness, her wayward ignorance. And a very charming ideal for England must she have been, and a very natural one, when a young girl sat even on the throne. But no nation can keep its ideal for ever and it needed none of Mr. Gilbert's delicate satire in *Utopia* to remind us that she had passed out of our ken with the rest of the early Victorian era. What writer of plays, as lately asked some pressman, who had been told off to attend many first nights and knew what he was talking about, ever dreams of making the young girl the centre of his theme? Rather he seeks inspiration from the tried and tired woman of the world, in all her intricate maturity, whilst, by way of comic relief, he sends the young girl flitting in and out with a tennis-racket, the poor εἰδωλὸν ἀμαυρόν of her former self. The season of the unsophisticated is gone by, and the young girl's final extinction beneath the rising tides of cosmetics will leave no gap in life and will rob art of nothing.

"Tush," I can hear some damned flutterpate exclaim, "girlishness and innocence are as strong and as permanent as womanhood itself! Why, a few months past, the whole town went mad over Miss Cissie Loftus! Was not hers a success of girlish innocence and the absence of rouge? If such things as these be outmoded, why was she so wildly popular?" Indeed, the triumph of that clever girl, whose debut made London nice even in August, is but another witness to the truth of my contention. In a very sophisticated time, simplicity has a new dulcedo. Hers was a success of contrast. Accustomed to clever malaperts like Miss Lloyd or Miss Reeve, whose experienced pouts and smiles under the sun-bonnet are a standing burlesque of innocence and girlishness, Demos was really delighted, for once and away, to see the real presentment of these things upon his stage. Coming after all those sly serios, coming so young and mere with her pink frock and straightly combed hair, Miss Cissie Loftus had the charm which things of another period often do possess. Besides, just as we adored her for the abrupt

nod with which she was wont at first to acknowledge the applause, so we were glad for her to come upon the stage with nothing to tinge the ivory of her cheeks. It seemed so strange, that neglect of convention. To be behind footlights and not rouged! Yes, hers was a success of contrast. She was like a daisy in the window at Solomons'. She was delightful. And yet, such is the force of convention, that when last I saw her, playing in some burlesque at the Gaiety, her fringe was curled and her pretty face rouged with the best of them. And, if further need be to show the absurdity of having called her performance "a triumph of naturalness over the jaded spirit of modernity", let us reflect that the little mimic was not a real old-fashioned girl after all. She had none of that restless naturalness that would seem to have characterised the girl of the early Victorian days. She had no pretty ways—no smiles nor blushes nor tremors. Possibly Demos could not have stood a presentment of girlishness unrestrained.

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

And this—say you?—will make a monotony? You are mistaken, *toto cælo* mistaken. When your mistress has wearied you with one expression, then it will need but a few touches of that pencil, a backward sweep of that brush, and lo, you will be revelling in another. For though, of course, the painting of the face is, in manner, most like the painting of canvas, in outcome, it is rather akin to the art of music—lasting like music's echo, not for very long. So that, no doubt, of the many little appurtenances of the Reformed Toilet Table, not the least vital will be a list of the emotions that become its owner, with recipes for simulating them. According to the colour she wills her hair to be for the time—black or yellow or, peradventure, burnished red—she will blush for you, sneer for

you, laugh or languish for you. The good combinations of line and colour are nearly numberless, and by their means poor restless woman will be able to realise her moods in all their shades and lights and dappledoms, to live many lives and masquerade through many moments of joy. No monotony will be. And for us men matrimony will have lost its sting.

But be it remembered! Though we men will garner these oblique boons, it is into the hands of women that Artifice gives her pigments. I know, I know that many men in a certain sect of society have shown a marked tendency to the use of cosmetics. I speak not of the countless gentlemen who walk about town in the time of its desertion from August to October, artificially bronzed, as though they were fresh from the moors or from the Solent. This, I conceive, is done for purely social reasons and need not concern me here. Rather do I speak of those who make themselves up, seemingly with an æsthetic purpose. Doubtless—I wish to be quite just—there are many who look the better for such embellishment; but, at the hazard of being thought old-fashioned and prejudiced, I cannot speak of the custom with anything but strong disapproval. If men are to lie among the rouge-pots, inevitably it will tend to promote that amalgamation of the sexes which is one of the chief planks in the decadent platform and to obtund that piquant contrast between him and her, which is one of the redeeming features of creation. Besides, really, men have not the excuse of facial monotony, that holds in the case of women. Have we not hair upon our chins and upper lips? And can we not, by diverting the trend of our moustache or by growing our beard in this way or that, avoid the boredom of looking the same for long? Let us beware. For if, in violation of unwritten sexual law, men take to trifling with the paints and brushes that are feminine heritage, it may be that our great ladies will don false imperials, and the little doner deck her pretty chin with a Newgate fringe! After all, I think we need not fear that many men will thus trespass. Most of them are in the City nowadays, and the great wear and tear of that place would put their use of rouge—that demands bodily repose from its dependents—quite outside the range of practical æsthetics.

But that in the world of women they will not neglect this art, so ripping in itself, in its result so wonderfully beneficent, I am sure indeed. Much, I have said, is already done for its full

renaissance. The spirit of the age has made straight the path of its professors. Fashion has made Jezebel surrender her monopoly of the rouge-pot. As yet, the great art of self-embellishment is for us but in its infancy. But if Englishwomen can bring it to the flower of an excellence so supreme as never yet has it known, then, though Old England may lose her martial and commercial supremacy, we patriots will have the satisfaction of knowing that she has been advanced at one bound to a place in the councils of æsthetic Europe. And, in sooth, is this hoping too high of my countrywomen? True that, as the art seems always to have appealed to the ladies of Athens, and it was not until the waning time of the Republic that Roman ladies learned to love the practice of it, so Paris, Athenian in this as in all other things, has been noted hitherto as a far more vivid centre of the art than London. But it was in Rome, under the Emperors, that unguentaria reached its zenith, and shall it not be in London, soon, that unguentaria shall outstrip its Roman perfection? Surely there must be among us artists as cunning in the use of brush and puff as any who lived at Versailles. Surely the splendid, impalpable advance of good taste, as shown in dress and in the decoration of houses, may justify my hope of the pre-eminence of Englishwomen in the cosmetic art. By their innate delicacy of touch they will accomplish much, and much, of course, by their swift feminine perception. Yet it were well that they should know something also of the theoretical side of the craft. Modern authorities upon the mysteries of the toilet are, it is true, rather few; but among the ancients many a writer would seem to have been fascinated by them. Archigenes, a man of science at the Court of Cleopatra, and Criton at the Court of the Emperor Trajan, both wrote treatises upon cosmetics—doubtless most scholarly treatises that would have given many a precious hint. It is a pity they are not extant. From Lucian or from Juvenal, with his bitter picture of a Roman *lèvee*, much may be learnt; from the staid pages of Xenophon and Aristophanes' dear farces. But best of all is that fine book of the *Ars Amatoria* that Ovid had set aside for the consideration of dyes, perfumes and pomades. Written by an artist who knew the allurements of the toilet and understood its philosophy, it remains without rival as a treatise upon Artifice. It is more than a poem, it is a manual; and if there be left in England any lady who cannot read Latin in the original, she will do well to procure a discreet

translation. In the Bodleian Library there is treasured the only known copy of a very poignant and delightful rendering of this one book of Ovid's masterpiece. It was made by a certain Wye Waltonstall, who lived in the days of Elizabeth, and, seeing that he dedicated it to "the Vertuous Ladyes and Gentlewomen of Great Britain", I am sure that the gallant writer, could he know of our great renaissance of cosmetics, would wish his little work to be placed once more within their reach. "Inasmuch as to you, ladyes and gentlewomen," so he writes in his queer little dedication, "my booke of pigments doth first address itself, that it may kisse your hands and afterward have the lines thereof in reading sweetened by the odour of your breath, while the dead letters formed into words by your divided lips may receive new life by your passionate expression, and the words marryed in that Ruby coloured temple may thus happily united, multiply your contentment." It is rather sad to think that, at this crisis in the history of pigments, the Vertuous Ladyes and Gentlewomen cannot read the libellus of Wye Waltonstall, who did so dearly love pigments.

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

Loveliness shall sit at the toilet, watching her oval face in the oval mirror. Her smooth fingers shall flit among the paints and powder, to tip and mingle them, catch up a pencil, clasp a phial

and what not and what *not*, until the mask of vermeil tinct has been laid aptly, the enamel quite hardened. And, heavens, how she will charm us and ensorcel our eyes! Positively rouge will rob us for a time of all our reason; we shall go mad over masks. Was it not at Capua that they had a whole street where nothing was sold but dyes and unguents? We must have such a street, and, to fill our new Seplasia, our Arcade of the unguents, all herbs and minerals and live creatures shall give of their substance. The white cliffs of Albion shall be ground to powder for loveliness, and perfumed by the ghost of many a little violet. The fluffy eider-ducks, that are swimming round the pond, shall lose their feathers, that the powder-puff may be moonlike as it passes over loveliness's lovely face. Even the camels shall become ministers of delight, giving their hair in many tufts to be stained by the paints in her colour-box, and across her cheek the swift hare's foot shall fly as of old. The sea shall offer her the phucus, its scarlet weed. We shall spill the blood of mulberries at her bidding. And, as in another period of great ecstasy, a dancing wanton, la belle Aubrey, was crowned upon a church's lighted altar, so Arsenic, that "green-tress goddess", ashamed at length of skulking between the soup of the unpopular and the test-tubes of the Queen's analyst, shall be exalted to a place of highest honour upon loveliness's toilet-table.

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

GEORGE MOORE

Nostalglia

Fair were the dreamful days of old,
When in the summer's sleepy shade,
Beneath the beeches on the wold,
The shepherds lay and gently played
Music to maidens, who, afraid,
Drew all together rapturously,
Their white soft hands like white leaves laid,
In the old dear days of Arcady.

Men were not then as they are now
 Haunted and terrified by creeds,
They sought not then, nor cared to know
 The end that as a magnet leads,
Nor told with austere fingers beads,
 Nor reasoned with their grief and glee,
But rioted in pleasant meads
 In the old dear days of Arcady.

The future may be wrong or right,
 The present is a hopeless wrong,
For life and love have lost delight,
 And bitter even is our song;
And year by year grey doubt grows strong,
 And death is all that seems to dree.
Wherefore with weary hearts we long
 For the old dear days of Arcady.

ENVOI

Glories and triumphs ne'er shall cease,
 But men may sound the heavens and sea,
One thing is lost for aye—the peace
 Of the old dear days of Arcady.

The Ballade of Lovelace

My days for singing and loving are over
 And stark I lie in my narrow bed,
I care not at all if roses cover
 Or if above me the snow is spread;
I am weary of dreaming of my sweet dead—
Vera and Lily and Annie and May,
And my soul is set on the present fray,
 Its piercing kisses and subtle snares:
So gallants are conquered, ah wellaway,
 My love was stronger and fiercer than theirs.

O happy moths that now flit and hover
 From the blossom of white to the blossom of red,
Take heed, for I was a lordly lover
 Till the little day of my life had sped;
As straight as a pine tree, a golden head,
And eyes as blue as an austral bay.
Ladies when loosing your satin array,
 Reflect, in my years had you lived, my prayers
Might have won you from weakly lovers away.
 My love was stronger and fiercer than theirs.

Through the song of the thrush and the pipe of the plover
 Sweet voices come down through the binding lead;
 O queens that every age must discover
 For men, that Man's delight may be fed;
 Oh, sister queens to the queens I wed
 For the space of a year, a month, a day,
 No thirst but mine could your thirst allay;
 And on, for an hour of life, my dears,
 To kiss you, to laugh at your lovers' dismay,—
 My love was stronger and fiercer than theirs.

ENVOI

Prince was I ever of festival gay,
 And time never silvered my locks with grey;
 The love of your lovers is as hope that despairs,
 So think of me sometimes, dear ladies, I pray,
 My love was stronger and fiercer than theirs.

AUBREY BEARDSLEY

Dedication to *Under the Hill*

To
 The Most Eminent and Reverend Prince
 GIULIO POLDO PEZZOLI
 Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church
 Titular Bishop of S. Maria in Trastevere
 Archbishop of Ostia and Velletri
 Nuncio to the Holy See
 in
 Nicaragua and Patagonia
 A Father to the Poor
 A Reformer of Ecclesiastical Discipline
 A Pattern of Learning
 Wisdom and Holiness of Life
 This Book is Dedicated with due Reverence
 by his humble servitor
 A Scrivener and Limner of Worldly Things
 who made this book
 AUBREY BEARDSLEY

MOST EMINENT PRINCE,

I know not by what mischance the writing of epistles
 dedicatory has fallen into disuse, whether through the vanity of
 authors or the humility of patrons. But the practice seems to
 me so very beautiful and becoming that I have ventured to
 make an essay in the modest art, and lay with formalities my
 first book at your feet. I have, it must be confessed many fears

lest I shall be arraigned of presumption in choosing so exalted a name as your own to place at the beginning of this history; but I hope that such a censure will not be too lightly passed upon me, for if I am guilty it is but of a most natural pride that the accidents of my life should allow me to sail the little pinnacle of my wit under your protection.

But though I can clear myself of such a charge, I am still minded to use the tongue of apology, for with what face can I offer you a book treating of so vain and fantastical a thing as love? I know that in the judgment of many the amorous passion is accounted a shameful thing and ridiculous; indeed it must be confessed that more blushes have risen for love's sake than for any other cause and that lovers are an eternal laughing-stock. Still, as the book will be found to contain matter of deeper import than mere venery, inasmuch as it treats of the great contrition of its chiefest character, and of canonical things in certain pages, I am not without hopes that your Eminence will pardon my writing of a loving Abbé, for which extravagance let my youth excuse me.

Then I must crave your forgiveness for addressing you in a language other than the Roman, but my small freedom in Latinity forbids me to wander beyond the idiom of my vernacular. I would not for the world that your delicate Southern ear should be offended by a barbarous assault of rude and Gothic words; but methinks no language is rude that can boast polite writers, and not a few such have flourished in this country in times past, bringing our common speech to very great perfection. In the present age, alas! our pens are ravished by unlettered authors and unmannered critics, that make a havoc rather than a building, a wilderness rather than a garden. But, alack! what boots it to drop tears upon the preterit?

It is not of our own shortcomings though, but of your own great merits that I should speak, else I should be forgetful of the duties I have drawn upon myself in electing to address you in a dedication. It is of your noble virtues (though all the world know of 'em), your taste and wit, your care for letters, and very real regard for the arts that I must be the proclaimer.

Though it be true that all men have sufficient wit to pass a judgment on this or that, and not a few sufficient impudence to print the same (these last being commonly accounted critics), I have ever held that the critical faculty is more rare

than the inventive. It is a faculty your Eminence possesses in so great a degree that your praise or blame is something oracular, your utterance infallible as great genius or as a beautiful woman. Your mind, I know, rejoicing in fine distinctions and subtle procedures of thought, beautifully discursive rather than hastily conclusive, has found in criticism its happiest exercise. It is a pity that so perfect a Mæcenas should have no Horace to befriend, no Georgics to accept; for the offices and function of patron or critic must of necessity be lessened in an age of little men and little work. In times past it was nothing derogatory for great princes and men of State to extend their loves and favour to poets, for thereby they received as much honour as they conferred. Did not Prince Festus with pride take the masterwork of Julian into his protection, and was not the *Æneis* a pretty thing to offer Cæsar?

Learning without appreciation is a thing of naught, but I know not which is greatest in you—your love of the arts, or your knowledge of 'em. What wonder then that I am studious to please you, and desirous of your protection. How deeply thankful I am for your past affections you know well, your great kindness and liberality having far outgone my slight merits and small accomplishment that seemed scarce to warrant any favour. Alas! 'tis a slight offering I make you now, but if after glancing into its pages (say of an evening upon your terrace) you should deem it worthy of the remotest place in your princely library, the knowledge that it rested there would be reward sufficient for my labours, and a crowning happiness to my pleasure in the writing of this slender book.

The humble and obedient servant of your Eminence,

AUBREY BEARDSLEY.

ROBERT ROSS

Aubrey Beardsley

Middle-aged, middle-class people, with a predilection for mediæval art, still believe that subject is an important factor in a picture or drawing. I am one of the number. The subject need not be literary or historical. After you have discussed in the latest studio jargon its carpentry, valued the tones and toned the values, motive or theme must affect your appreciation of a

picture, your desire, or the contrary, to possess it. That the artist is able to endow the unattractive, and woo you to surrender, I admit. Unless, however, you are a pro-Boer in art matters, and hold that Rembrandt and the Boer school (the greatest technicians who ever lived) are finer artists than Titian, you will find yourself preferring Gainsborough to Degas, and the unskilful Whistler to the more accomplished Edouard Manet. Long ago French critics invented an æsthetic formula to conceal that poverty of imagination which sometimes stares from their perfectly executed pictures, and this was eagerly accepted by certain Englishmen, both painters and writers. Yet, when an artist frankly deals with forbidden subjects, the canons regular of English art begin to thunder; the critics forget their French accent; the old Robert Adam, which is in all of us, asserts himself; we fly for the fig-leaves.

I am led to these reflections by the memory of Aubrey Beardsley, and the reception which his work received, not from the British public, but from the inner circle of advanced intellectuals. Too much occupied with the obstetrics of art, his superfluity of naughtiness has tarnished his niche in the temple of fame. "A wish to *épater le bourgeois*," says Mr. Arthur Symons, "is a natural one." I do not think so; at least, in an artist. Now much of Beardsley's work shows the *éblouissement* of the burgeßs on arriving at Montmartre for the first time—a weakness he shared with some of his contemporaries. This must be conceded in praising a great artist for a line which he never drew, after you have taken the immortal Zeno's advice and divested yourselves of the scruples.

"I would rather be an Academician than an artist," said Aubrey Beardsley to me one day. "It takes thirty-nine men to make an Academician, and only one to make an artist." In that sneer lay all his weakness and his strength. Grave friends (in those days it was the fashion) talked to him of "Dame Nature". "*Damn Nature!*" retorted Aubrey Beardsley, and pulled down the blinds and worked by gaslight on the finest days. But he was a real Englishman, who from his glass-house peppered the English public. No Latin could have contrived his arabesque. The grotesques of Jerome Bosch are positively pleasant company beside many of Beardsley's inventions. Even in his odd little landscapes, with their twisted promontories sloping seaward, he suggested mocking laughter; and the flowers of "Under the Hill" are cackling in the grass.

An essay, which Mr. Arthur Symons published in 1897, has always been recognised as far the most sympathetic and introspective account of this strange artist's work. It has been re-issued, with additional illustrations, by Messrs. Dent. Those who welcome it as one of the most inspiring criticisms from an always inspired critic will regret that eight of the illustrations belong to the worst period of Beardsley's art. Kelmscott dyspepsia following on a surfeit of Burne-Jones, belongs to the pathology of style; it is a phase that should be produced by the prosecution, not by the eloquent advocate for the defence. Moreover, I do not believe Mr. Arthur Symons admires them any more than I do; he never mentions them in his text. *Le Débris d'un Poète*, the *Coiffing*, *Chopin's Third Ballad*, and those for *Salome* would have sufficed. With these omissions the monograph might have been smaller; but it would have been more truly representative of Beardsley's genius and Mr. Arthur Symons's taste.

At one time or another every one has been brilliant about Beardsley. "Born Puck, he died Pierrot," said Mr. MacColl in one of the superb phrases with which he gibbets into posterity an art or an artist he rather dislikes. "The Fra Angelico of Satanism," wrote Mr. Roger Fry of an exhibition of the drawings. There seems hardly anything left even for Mr. Arthur Symons to write. Long anterior to these particular fireworks, however, his criticism is just as fresh as it was twelve years ago. I believe it will always remain the terminal essay.

The preface has been revised, and I could have wished for some further revision. Why is the name of Leonard Smithers—here simply called *a* publisher—omitted, when the other Capulets and Montagus are faithfully recorded? When no one would publish Beardsley's work, Smithers stepped into the breach. I do not know that the *Savoy* exactly healed the breach between Beardsley and the public, but it gave the artist another opportunity; and Mr. Arthur Symons an occasion for song. Leonard Smithers, too, was the most delightful and irresponsible publisher I ever knew. Who remembers without a kindly feeling the little shop in the Royal Arcade with its tempting shelves; its limited editions of 5,000 copies; the shy, infrequent purchaser; the upstairs room where the roar of respectable Bond Street came faintly through the tightly-closed windows; the genial proprietor? In the closing years of the nineteenth century his silhouette reels (my metaphor is drawn

from a Terpsichorean and Caledonian exercise) across an artistic horizon of which the *Savoy* was the afterglow. Again, why is Mr. Arthur Symons so precise about forgetting the date of Beardsley's expulsion from the *Yellow Book*? It was in April 1895, April 10th. A number of poets and writers blackmailed Mr. Lane by threatening to withdraw their own publications unless the Beardsley Body was severed from the Bodley Head. I am glad to have this opportunity, not only of paying a tribute to the courage of my late friend Smithers, but of defending my other good friend, Mr. John Lane, from the absurd criticism of which he was too long the victim. He could hardly be expected to wreck a valuable business in the cause of unpopular art. Quite wrongly Beardsley's designs had come to be regarded as the pictorial and sympathetic expression of a decadent tendency in English literature. But if there was any relation thereto, it was that of Juvenal towards Roman Society. Never was mordant satire more evident. If Beardsley is carried away in spite of himself by the superb invention of *Salome*, he never forgets his hatred of its author. It is characteristic that he hammered beauty from the gold he would have battered into caricature. *Salome* has survived other criticism and other caricature. And Mr. Lane once informed an American interviewer that since that April Fool's Day poetry has ceased to sell altogether. The bards unconsciously committed suicide; and the *Yellow Book* perished in the odour of sanctity.

Recommending the perusal of some letters (written by Beardsley to an unnamed friend) published some years ago, Mr. Arthur Symons says: "Here, too, we are in the presence of the real thing." I venture to doubt this. I do not doubt Beardsley's sincerity in the religion he embraced, but his expression of it in the letters. At least, I hope it was insincere. The letters left on some of us a disagreeable impression, at least of the recipient. You wonder if this pietistic friend received a copy of the *Lysistrata* along with the eulogy of St. Alfonso Liguori and Aphra Behn. A fescennine temperament is too often allied with religiosity. It certainly was in Beardsley's case, but I think the other and stronger side of his character should, in justice to his genius, be insisted upon, as Mr. Arthur Symons insisted upon it. If we knew that the ill-advised and unnamed friend was the author of certain pseudo-scientific and pornographic works issued in Paris, we should be

better able to gauge the unimportance of these letters. Far more interesting would have been those written to Mr. Joseph Pennell, one of the saner influences; or those to Aubrey Beardsley's mother and sister.

"It was at Arques," says Mr. Arthur Symonds . . . "that I had the only serious, almost solemn conversation I ever had with Beardsley." You can scarcely believe that any of the conversations between the two were other than serious and solemn, because he approaches Beardsley as he would John Bunyan or Aquinas. Art, literature and life, are all to this engaging writer a scholiast's pilgrim's progress. Beside him, Walter Pater, from whom he derives, seems almost flippant—and to have dallied too long in the streets of Vanity Fair.

LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS

The City of the Soul

In the salt terror of a stormy sea
 There are high altitudes the mind forgets;
 And undesired days are hunting nets
 To snare the souls that fly Eternity.
 But we being gods will never bend the knee,
 Though sad moons shadow every sun that sets,
 And tears of sorrow be like rivulets
 To feed the shallows of Humility.

Within my soul are some mean gardens found
 Where drooped flowers are, and unsung melodies,
 And all companioning of piteous things.
 But in the midst is one high terraced ground,
 Where level lawns sweep through the stately trees
 And the great peacocks walk like painted kings.

ii

What shall we do, my soul, to please the King?
 Seeing he hath no pleasure in the dance,
 And hath condemned the honeyed utterance
 Of silver flutes and mouths made round to sing.
 Along the wall red roses climb and cling,
 And oh! my prince, lift up thy countenance,
 For there be thoughts like roses that entrance
 More than the languors of soft lute-playing.

Think how the hidden things that poets see
In amber eves or mornings crystalline,
Hide in the soul their constant quenchless light,
Till, called by some celestial alchemy,
Out of forgotten depths, they rise and shine
Like buried treasure on Midsummer night.

iii

The fields of Phantasy are all too wide,
My soul runs through them like an untamed thing.
It leaps the brooks like threads, and skirts the ring
Where fairies danced, and tenderer flowers hide.
The voice of music has become the bride
Of an imprisoned bird with broken wing.
What shall we do, my soul, to please the King,
We that are free, with ample wings untied?

We cannot wander through the empty fields
Till beauty like a hunter hurl the lance.
There are no silver snares and springes set,
Nor any meadow where the plain ground yields.
O let us then with ordered utterance
Forge the gold chain and twine the silken net.

iv

Each new hour's passage is the acolyte
Of inarticulate song and syllable,
And every passing moment is a bell,
To mourn the death of undiscerned delight.
Where is the sun that made the noon-day bright,
And where the midnight moon? O let us tell,
In long carved line and painted parable,
How the white road curves down into the night.

Only to build one crystal barrier
Against this sea which beats upon our days;
To ransom one lost moment with a rhyme
Or if fate cries and grudging gods demur,
To clutch Life's hair, and thrust one naked phrase
Like a lean knife between the ribs of Time.

GEORGE MOORE

FROM *Confessions of a Young Man*

I read the French poets of the modern school—Coppée, Mendès, Léon Dierx, Verlaine, José Maria de Hérédia, Mallarmé, Richepin, Villiers de l'Isle Adam. Coppée, as may be imagined, I was only capable of appreciating in his first

manner, when he wrote those exquisite but purely artistic sonnets "La Tulipe", and "Le Lys". In the latter a room, decorated with daggers, armour, jewellery, and china, is beautifully described, and it is only in the last line that the lily, which animates and gives life to the whole, is introduced. *Noble et pur un grand lys se meurt dans une coupe.* But the exquisite poetic perceptivity Coppée showed in his modern poems, the certainty with which he raised the commonest subject, investing it with sufficient dignity for his purpose, escaped me wholly, and I could not but turn with horror from such poems as "La Nourrice" and "Le Petit Epicier". I could not understand how anybody could bring himself to acknowledge the vulgar details of our vulgar age. The fiery glory of José Maria de Hérédia, on the contrary, filled me with enthusiasm—ruins and sand, shadow and silhouette of palms and pillars, negroes, crimson swords, silence, and arabesques. Like great copper pans goes the clangour of the rhymes.

"Entre le ciel qui brûle et la mer qui moutonne,
 Au somnolent soleil d'un midi monotone,
 Tu songes, O guerrière, aux vieux conquistadors;
 Et dans l'énervement des nuits chaudes et calmes,
 Berçant ta gloire éteinte, O cité, tu t'endors
 Sous les palmiers, au long frémissement des palmes."

Catulle Mendès, a perfect realisation of his name, with his pale hair, and his fragile face illuminated with the idealism of a depraved woman. He takes you by the arm, by the hand, he leans towards you, his words are caresses, his fervour is delightful, and to hear him is as sweet as drinking a smooth perfumed yellow wine. All he says is false—the book he has just read, the play he is writing, the woman who loves him. . . . He buys a packet of bonbons in the streets and eats them, and it is false. An exquisite artist; physically and spiritually he is art; he is the muse herself, or rather, he is one of the minions of the muse. Passing from flower to flower he goes, his whole nature pulsing with butterfly voluptuousness. He has written poems as good as Hugo, as good as Leconte de Lisle, as good as Banville, as good as Baudelaire, as good as Gautier, as good as Coppée; he never wrote an ugly line in his life, but he never wrote a line that some one of his brilliant contemporaries might not have written. He has produced good work of all kinds "et voilà tout". Every generation, every country, has its Catulle

Mendès. Robert Buchanan is ours, only in the adaptation Scotch gruel has been substituted for perfumed yellow wine. No more delightful talker than Mendès, no more accomplished *littérateur*, no more fluent and translucid critic. I remember the great moonlights of the *Place Pigalle*, when, on leaving the *café*, he would take me by the arm, and expound Hugo's or Zola's last book, thinking as he spoke of the Greek sophists. There were for contrast Mallarmé's Tuesday evenings, a few friends sitting round the hearth, the lamp on the table. I have met none whose conversation was more fruitful, but I never enjoyed his poetry, his early verses of course excepted. When I knew him he had published the celebrated "L'Après-Midi d'un Faune:" the first poem written in accordance with the theory of symbolism. But when it was given to me (this marvellous brochure furnished with strange illustrations and wonderful tassels), I thought it absurdly obscure. Since then, however, it has been rendered by force of contrast with the enigmas the author has since published a marvel of lucidity; I am sure if I were to read it now I should appreciate its many beauties. It bears the same relation to the author's later work as *Rienzi* to *The Walkyrie*. But what is symbolism? Vulgarly speaking, saying the opposite to what you mean. For example, you want to say that music, which is the new art, is replacing the old art, which is poetry. First symbol: a house in which there is a funeral, the pall extends over the furniture. The house is poetry, poetry is dead. Second symbol: "*Notre vieux grimoire*" *grimoire* is the parchment, parchment is used for writing, therefore *grimoire* is the symbol for literature, "*d'où s'exaltent les milliers*", thousands of what? of letters of course. We have heard a great deal in England of Browning's obscurity. The "Red Cotton Nightcap Country" is a child at play compared to a sonnet by such a determined symbolist as Mallarmé, or better still his disciple Ghil who has added to the infirmities of symbolism those of poetic instrumentation. For according to M. Ghil and his organ *Les Ecrits pour l'Art*, it would appear that the syllables of the French language evoke in us the sensations of different colours; consequently the timbre of the different instruments. The vowel *u* corresponds to the colour yellow, and therefore to the sound of flutes.

Arthur Rimbaud was, it is true, first in the field with these pleasant and genial theories; but M. Ghil informs us that Rimbaud was mistaken in many things, particularly in

coupling the sound of the vowel *u* with the colour green instead of with the colour yellow. M. Ghil has corrected this very stupid blunder and many others; and his instrumentation in his last volume, "*Le Geste Ingénu*," may be considered as complete and definitive. The work is dedicated to Mallarmé, "*Père et Seigneur des ors, des pierreries, et des poisons*," and other works are to follow: the six tomes of "*Légendes des Rêves et de Sang*," the innumerable tomes of "*La Glose*," and the single tome of "*La Loi*".

And that man Gustave Kahn, who takes the French language as a violin, and lets the bow of his emotion run at wild will upon it, producing strange acute strains, unpremeditated harmonies comparable to nothing that I know of but some Hungarian rhapsody; verses of seventeen syllables interwoven with verses of eight, and even nine masculine rhymes, seeking strange union with feminine rhymes in the middle of the line—a music sweet, subtil, and epicene; the half-note, the inflection, but not the full tone—as "*se fondre, ô souvenir, des lys âcres délices*".

Se penchant vers les dahlias,
Des paons cabrient des rosaces lunaires
L'assoupissement des branches vénère
Son pâle visage aux mourants dahlias.

Elle écoute au loin les brèves musiques
Nuit claire aux ramures d'accords,
Et la lassitude a bercé son corps
Au rythme odorant des pures musiques.

Les paons ont dressé la rampe ocellée
Pour la descente de ses yeux vers le tapis
De choses et de sens
Qui va vers l'horizon, parure vermiculée
De son corps alangui
En l'âme se tapit
Le flou désir molli de récits et d'encens.

I laughed at these verbal eccentricities, but they were not without their effect, and that a demoralising one; for in me they aggravated the fever of the unknown, and whetted my appetite for the strange, abnormal and unhealthy in art. Hence all pallidities of thought and desire were eagerly welcomed; Verlaine became my poet, and the terraces and colonnades of "*Les Fêtes Galantes*" the chapel of my meditations, and my

desire the lady who descends her castle stairs unmindful that her page, a little nigger, is lifting her train higher than is necessary, sharing thereby with her monkey a view of her thighs. "Les Fêtes Galantes" is lit with dresses, white, blue, yellow, green, mauve, and undecided purple; the voices? strange contraltos; the forms? not those of men or women, but mystic, hybrid creatures, with hands nervous and pale, and eyes charged with eager and fitful light . . . "*un soir équivoque d'automne*" . . . "*les belles pendent rêveuses à nos bras*" . . . and they whisper "*les mots précieux et tout bas*".

Gautier sang to his antique lyre praise of the flesh and contempt of the soul; Baudelaire on a mediæval organ chanted his unbelief in goodness and truth and his hatred of life. But Verlaine advanced one step further: hate is to him as commonplace as love, unfaith as vulgar as faith. The world is merely a doll to be attired to-day in eighteenth-century hoops, to-morrow in aureoles and stars. The Virgin is a pretty thing, worth a poem, but it would be quite too silly to talk about belief or unbelief; Christ in wood or plaster we have heard too much of, but Christ in painted glass amid crosiers and Latin terminations, is an amusing subject for poetry. And strangely enough, a withdrawing from all commerce with virtue and vice is, it would seem, a licentiousness more curiously subtle and penetrating than any other; and the licentiousness of the verse is equal to that of the emotion; every natural instinct of the language is violated, and the simple music native in French metre is replaced by falsetto notes sharp and intense. The charm is that of an odour of iris exhaled by some ideal tissues, or of a missal in a gold case, a precious relic of the pomp and ritual of an archbishop of Persepolis.

Parsifal a vaincu les Filles, leur gentil
Babil et la luxure amusante et sa pente
Vers la Chair de garçon vierge que cela tente
D'aimer des seins légers et ce gentil babil.

Il a vaincu la Femme belle au cœur subtil
Etalant ses bras frais et sa gorge excitante;
Il a vaincu l'Enfer, il rentre sous la tente
Avec un lourd trophée à son bras puéril.

Avec la lance qui perça le Flanc suprême
Il a guéri le roi, le voici roi lui-même.
Et prêtre du très-saint Trésor essentiel;

En robe d'or il adore, gloire et symbole,
 Le vase pur où resplendit le Sang réel,
 Et, ô ces voix d'enfants chantant dans la coupole.

No English sonnet lingers in the ear like this one, and its beauty is as inexhaustible as a Greek marble. The hiatus in the last line was at first a little trying, but I have learnt to love it. Not in Baudelaire, nor even in Poe is there more beautiful poetry to be found. Poe, unread and ill-understood in America and England, here, thou art an integral part of our artistic life.

The Island o' Fay, Silence, Eleonore, were the familiar spirits of an apartment beautiful with Manets and tapestry; Swinburne and Rossetti were the English poets I read there; and I, a unit in the generation they have enslaved, clanked fetters and trailed a golden chain, in a set of stories in many various metres, to be called "Roses of Midnight". One of the characteristics of the volume was banishment of daylight: from its pages terraces, gardens and orchards were held forbidden; and my fantastics lived out their loves in the lamplight of yellow boudoirs, and died with the dawn which was supposed to be an awakening to consciousness of reality.

JOHN GRAY

Parsifal

Conquered the flower-maidens, and the wide embrace
 Of their round proffered arms, that tempt the virgin boy;
 Conquered the trickling of their babbling tongues; the coy
 Back glances, and the mobile breasts of subtle grace;

Conquered the Woman Beautiful, the fatal charm
 Of her hot breast, the music of her babbling tongue;
 Conquered the gate of Hell, into the gate the young
 Man passes, with the heavy trophy at his arm,

The holy Javelin that pierced the Heart of God.
 He heals the dying king, he sits upon the throne,
 King, and high priest of that great gift, the living Blood.

In robe of gold the youth adores the glorious Sign
 Of the green goblet, worships the mysterious Wine.
 And oh! the chime of children's voices in the dome.

from the French of Paul Verlaine.

Sagesse
(1881)

"Mon Dieu m'a Dit: . . ."

God has spoken: Love me,
 Son, thou must; Oh see
 My broken side; my heart,
 its rays refulgent shine;
 My feet, insulted, stabbed,
 that Mary bathes with brine
 Of bitter tears; my sad arms,
 helpless, son, for thee;

With thy sins heavy; and my hands;
 thou seest the rod;
 Thou seest the nails, the sponge,
 the gall; and all my pain
 Must teach thee love, amidst a world
 where flesh doth reign,
 My flesh alone, my blood,
 my voice, the voice of God.

Say, have I not loved thee,
 loved thee to death,
 O brother in my Father,
 in the Spirit son?
 Say, as the word is written,
 is my work not done?
 Thy deepest woe have I not sobbed
 with struggling breath?

Has not thy sweat of anguished nights
 from all my pores in pain
 Of blood dripped, piteous friend,
 who seekest me in vain?

from the French of Paul Verlaine.

Sound

Fumes of dead feasts and half sped dreams retold,
 Recall all instruments of subtle mould;
 Rude Balalaika; Harp, with voice of gold,
 With heavy limbs and harp-strings gilt;
 The Oboe, half afraid for guilt;
 Pan's clustered phials, stored with all the notes,
 The myriad cries of all his woodland throats,
 The mellow wondering the night-fowl hoots,
 And creeping morning's rapture trills,
 That fall in bars of lewd quadrilles;

Bring cruel Bells that scream with lips of jade;
 Bring wooden Bells that bark and make afraid;
 And Dulcimers that tinkle to their grade;
 Zombamba's monophonous hum;
 The laughter of the copper Drum;
 The Tambour, with its laugh less comatose;
 Bring, song-birds' tutors, tiny Zuffolos;
 Hail, weirdness of the comic mask of those
 Whose fingers crawl on hollow Flutes;
 Come, courteous Viol, that dilutes
 A moment's joy into a life of pain,
 Crime into song, its poisonous balm, like rain,
 Drips from its wailing in the sufferer's brain;
 Come, shrieking Siren; pitiless Gong;
 Unnatural Woman, lead the song;
 Come all fierce instruments, the Bugle blare;
 Come, whistling of the fretted Steeple, where
 The wind grows frightened in the iron stair.

O, lust of sound, be quenched. Beat! Blow!
 —Insult the tiresome Piano.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS

FROM *A Vision of Mermaids*

Soon—as when Summer of his sister Spring
 Crushes and tears the rare enjewelling,
 And boasting "I have fairer things than these"
 Plashes amid the billowy apple-trees
 His lusty hands, in gusts of scented wind
 Swirling out bloom till all the air is blind
 With rosy foam and pelting blossom and mists
 Of driving vermeil-rain; and, as he lists,
 The dainty onyx-coronals deflowers,
 A glorious wanton;—all the wrecks in showers
 Crowd down upon a stream, and jostling thick
 With bubbles bugle-eyed, struggle and stick
 On tangled shoals that bar the brook—a crowd
 Of filmy globes and rosy floating cloud:—
 So those Mermaidens crowded to my rock.
 But most in a half-circle watched the sun;
 And a sweet sadness dwelt on every one;
 I knew not why, but know that sadness dwells
 On Mermaids—whether that they ring the knells
 Of sea-men whelm'd in chasms of the mid-main,
 As poets sing; or that it is a pain
 To know the dusk depths of the ponderous sea,
 The miles profound of solid green, and be
 With loath'd cold fishes, far from man, or what;—
 I know the sadness, but the cause know not.

Then they, thus ranged, gan make full plaintively
A piteous Siren sweetness on the sea,
Withouten instrument, or conch or bell,
Or stretch'd chords tuneable on turtle's shell:
Only with utterance of sweet breath they sung
An antique chaunt and in an unknown tongue.
Now melting upward through the sloping scale
Swell'd the sweet strain to a melodious wail;
Now ringing clarion-clear to whence it rose
Slumbered at last in one sweet, deep, heart-broken close.

JOHN PAYNE

Sybil

This is the glamour of the world antique;
The thyme-scents of Hymettus fill the air,
And in the grass narcissus-cups are fair.
The full brook wanders through the ferns to seek
The amber haunts of bees; and on the peak
Of the soft hill, against the gold-marg'd sky,
She stands, a dream from out the days gone by.
Entreat her not. Indeed, she will not speak!
Her eyes are full of dreams; and in her ears
There is the rustle of immortal wings;
And ever and anon the slow breeze bears
The mystic murmur of the songs she sings.
Entreat her not: she sees thee not, nor hears
Aught but the sights and sounds of bygone springs.

Hesperia

My dream is of a city in the west,
Built with fair colour, still and sad as flow'rs
That wear the blazon of the autumn hours,
Set by the side of some wide wave's unrest;
And there the sun-fill'd calm is unimprest
Save by a flutter as of silver showers,
Rain-rippled on dim Paradisal bowers,
And some far tune of bells chimed softliest.
About the still clear streets my love-thoughts go;
A many-coloured throng—some pale as pearl,
Some gold as the gold brow-locks of a girl:
And 'midst them where the saddest memories teem,
My veiled hope wanders, musingly and slow,
And hears the sad sea murmur like a dream.

EDWARD DOWDEN

An Interior

The grass around my limbs is deep and sweet;
 Yonder the house has lost its shadow wholly,
 The blinds are dropped, and softly now and slowly
 The day flows in and floats; a calm retreat
 Of tempered light where fair things fair things meet;
 White busts and marble Dian make it holy,
 Within a niche hangs Dürer's Melancholy
 Brooding; and, should you enter, there will greet
 Your sense with vague allurements effluence faint
 Of one magnolia bloom; fair fingers draw
 From the piano Chopin's heart-complaint;
 Alone, white-robed she sits; a fierce macaw
 On the verandah, proud of plume and paint,
 Screams, insolent despot, showing beak and claw.

Brother Death

When thou would'st have me go with thee, O Death,
 Over the utmost verge, to the dim place,
 Practise upon me with no amorous grace
 Of fawning lips, and words of delicate breath,
 And curious music thy lute uttereth;
 Nor think for me there must be sought-out ways
 Of cloud and terror; have we many days
 Sojourned together, and is this thy faith?
 Nay, be there plainness 'twixt us; come to me
 Even as thou art, O brother of my soul;
 Hold thy hand out and I will place mine there;
 I trust thy mouth's inscrutable irony,
 And dare to lay my forehead where the whole
 Shadow lies deep of thy purple hair.

EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON

On Some Fourteenth-Century Saints

In or and azure were they shrined of old,
 Where led dim aisle to glowing stained-glass rose,
 Like Life's dim lane, with Heaven at its close;
 Where censor swung, and organ-thunder rolled;
 Where, mitred, croziered, and superbly stoled,
 Pale pontiffs gleamed, in dusky minster shows;
 Where, like a soul that trembling skyward goes,
 The Easter hymn soared up on wings of gold.

And now they stand, with aureoles that time dims,
Near young Greek fauns that pagan berries wreathe,
In crowded glaring galleries of dead art.

Their hands still fold; their lips still sing faint hymns;
Or are they prayers that beautiful shapes breathe
For shelter in some cold eclectic heart?

What the Sonnet is

Fourteen small broidered berries on the hem
Of Circe's mantle, each of magic gold;
Fourteen of lone Calypso's tears that rolled
Into the sea, for pearls to come of them;

Fourteen clear signs of omen in the gem
With which Medea human fate foretold;
Fourteen small drops, which Faustus, growing old,
Craved of the Fiend, to water Life's dry stem.

It is the pure white diamond Dante brought
To Beatrice; the sapphire Laura wore
When Petrarch cut it sparkling out of thought;

The ruby Shakespeare hewed from his heart's core;
The dark deep emerald that Rossetti wrought
For his own soul, to wear for evermore.

The Grave of Omar Khayyám

They washed his body with a wine of gold,
And wrapped it round, to meet his last desire,
In leaves of vine, whose every pale-green spire
Tightened about him with an amorous hold;

And then they buried him in vineyard mould,
Where vintage hymns in summer dusk expire,
And where great vine-roots sucked all round him fire
For fiery cups, as ages o'er him rolled.

A lethargy creeps o'er us on this spot
Where bulbul warbles on oblivion's brink,
And all that man should live for is forgot.

The wine-girl floats towards us with her cup;
Or is it Azrael with darker drink?
Wake up, wake up; shake free thy soul; wake up!

ARTHUR SYMONS

Ernest Dowson

i

The death of Ernest Dowson will mean very little to the world at large, but it will mean a great deal to the few people who care passionately for poetry. A little book of verses, the manuscripts of another, a one-act play in verse, a few short stories, two novels written in collaboration, some translations from the French, done for money; that is all that was left by a man who was undoubtedly a man of genius, not a great poet, but a poet, one of the very few writers of our generation to whom that name can be applied in its most intimate sense. People will complain, probably, in his verses, of what will seem to them the factitious melancholy, the factitious idealism, and (peeping through at a few rare moments) the factitious suggestions of riot. They will see only a literary affectation, where in truth there is as genuine a note of personal sincerity as in the more explicit and arranged confessions of less admirable poets. Yes, in these few evasive, immaterial snatches of song, I find, implied for the most part, hidden away like a secret, all the fever and turmoil and the unattained dreams of a life which had itself so much of the swift, disastrous, and suicidal impetus of genius.

Ernest Christopher Dowson was born at The Grove, Belmont Hill, Lee, Kent, on August 2nd, 1867; he died at 26 Sandhurst Gardens, Catford, S.E., on Friday morning, February 23rd, 1900, and was buried in the Roman Catholic part of the Lewisham cemetery on February 27th. His great-uncle was Alfred Domett, Browning's "Waring", at one time Prime Minister of New Zealand, and author of *Ranolf and Amohia*, and other poems. His father, who had himself a taste for literature, lived a good deal in France and on the Riviera, on account of the delicacy of his health, and Ernest had a somewhat irregular education, chiefly out of England, before he entered Queen's College, Oxford. He left in 1887 without taking a degree, and came to London, where he lived for several years, often revisiting France, which was always his favourite country. Latterly, until about a year ago, he lived almost entirely in Paris, Brittany, and Normandy. Never

robust, and always reckless with himself, his health had been steadily getting worse for some years, and when he came back to London he looked, as indeed he was, a dying man. Morbidly shy, with a sensitive independence, he would not communicate with his relatives, who would gladly have helped him, or with any of the really large number of attached friends whom he had in London; and, as his disease weakened him more and more, he hid himself away in his miserable lodgings, refused to see a doctor, let himself half starve, and was found one day in a "Bodega" with only a few shillings in his pocket, and so weak as to be hardly able to walk, by a friend, himself in some difficulties, who immediately took him back to the bricklayer's cottage in a muddy outskirt of Catford, where he was himself living, and there generously looked after him for the last six weeks of his life.

He did not realise that he was going to die, and was full of projects for the future, when the £600 which was to come to him from the sale of some property should have given him a fresh chance in the world; began to read Dickens, whom he had never read before, with singular zest; and, on the last day of his life, sat up talking eagerly till five in the morning. At the very moment of his death he did not know that he was dying. He tried to cough, could not cough, and the heart quietly stopped.

I cannot remember my first meeting with Ernest Dowson. It may have been in 1891, at one of the meetings of the Rhymer's Club, in an upper room at the "Cheshire Cheese", where long clay pipes lay in slim heaps on the wooden tables, between tankards of ale; and young poets, then very young, recited their own verses to one another with a desperate and ineffectual attempt to get into key with the Latin Quarter. Though few of us were, as a matter of fact, Anglo-Saxon, we could not help feeling that we were in London, and the atmosphere of London is not the atmosphere of movements or of societies. In Paris it is the most natural thing in the world to meet and discuss literature, ideas, one's own and one another's work; and it can be done without pretentiousness or constraint, because, to the Latin mind, art, ideas, one's work and the work of one's friends, are definite and important things, which it would never occur to

anyone to take anything but seriously. In England art has to be protected, not only against the world, but against oneself and one's fellow artist, by a kind of affected modesty which is the Englishman's natural pose, half pride and half self-distrust. So this brave venture of the Rhymer's Club, though it lasted for two or three years, and produced two little books of verse which will some day be literary curiosities, was not quite a satisfactory kind of *cénacle*. Dowson, who enjoyed the real thing so much in Paris, did not, I think, go very often; but his contributions to the first book of the club were at once the most delicate and the most distinguished poems which it contained. Was it, after all, at one of these meetings that I first saw him, or was it, perhaps, at another haunt of some of us at that time, a semi-literary tavern near Leicester Square, chosen for its convenient position between two stage doors? It was at the time when one or two of us sincerely worshipped the ballet; Dowson, alas, never. I could never get him to see that charm in harmonious and coloured movement, like bright shadows seen through the floating gauze of the music, which held me night after night at the two theatres which alone seemed to me to give an amusing colour to one's dreams. Neither the stage nor the stage-door had any attraction for him; but he came to the tavern because it was a tavern, and because he could meet his friends there. Even before that time I have a vague impression of having met him, I forget where, certainly at night; and of having been struck, even then, by a look and manner of pathetic charm, a sort of Keats-like face, the face of a demoralised Keats, and by something curious in the contrast of a manner exquisitely refined, with an appearance generally somewhat dilapidated. That impression was only accentuated later on, when I came to know him, and the manner of his life, much more intimately.

I think I may date my first impression of what one calls "the real man" (as if it were more real than the poet of the disembodied verses!) from an evening in which he first introduced me to those charming supper-houses, open all night through, the cabmen's shelters. I had been talking over another vagabond poet, Lord Rochester, with a charming and sympathetic descendant of that poet, and somewhat late at night we had come upon Dowson and another man wandering aimlessly and excitedly about the streets. He invited us to supper, we did not quite realise where, and the cabman came in

with us, as we were welcomed, cordially and without comment, at a little place near the Langham; and, I recollect, very hospitably entertained. The cooking differs, as I found in time, in these supper-houses, but there the rasher was excellent and the cups admirably clean. Dowson was known there, and I used to think he was always at his best in a cabman's shelter. Without a certain sordidness in his surroundings he was never quite comfortable, never quite himself; and at those places you are obliged to drink nothing stronger than coffee or tea. I liked to see him occasionally, for a change, drinking nothing stronger than coffee or tea. At Oxford, I believe, his favourite form of intoxication had been hashish; afterwards he gave up this somewhat elaborate experiment in visionary sensations for readier means of oblivion; but he returned to it, I remember, for at least one afternoon, in a company of which I had been the gatherer and of which I was the host. I remember him sitting, a little anxiously, with his chin on his breast, awaiting the magic, half-shy in the midst of a bright company of young people, whom he had only seen across the footlights. The experience was not a very successful one; it ended in what should have been its first symptom, immoderate laughter.

Always, perhaps, a little consciously, but at least always sincerely, in search of new sensations, my friend found what was for him the supreme sensation in a very passionate and tender adoration of the most escaping of all ideals, the ideal of youth. Cherished, as I imagine, first only in the abstract, this search after the immature, the ripening graces which time can only spoil in the ripening, found itself at the journey's end, as some of his friends thought, a little prematurely. I was never of their opinion. I only saw twice, and for a few moments only, the young girl to whom most of his verses were to be written, and whose presence in his life may be held to account for much of that astounding contrast between the broad outlines of his life and work. The situation seemed to me of the most exquisite and appropriate impossibility. The daughter of a refugee, I believe of good family, reduced to keeping a humble restaurant in a foreign quarter of London, she listened to his verses, smiled charmingly, under her mother's eyes, on his two years' courtship, and at the end of two years married the waiter instead. Did she ever realise more than the obvious part of what was being offered to her, in this shy and eager devotion? Did it ever mean very much to her to have made and to have

killed a poet? She had, at all events, the gift of evoking, and, in its way, of retaining, all that was most delicate, sensitive, shy, typically poetic, in a nature which I can only compare to a weedy garden, its grass trodden down by many feet, but with one small, carefully tended flower-bed, luminous with lilies. I used to think, sometimes, of Verlaine and his "girl-wife", the one really profound passion, certainly, of that passionate career; the charming, child-like creature, to whom he looked back, at the end of his life, with an unchanged tenderness and disappointment: "*Vous n'avez rien compris à ma simplicité,*" as he lamented. In the case of Dowson, however, there was a sort of virginal devotion, as to a Madonna; and I think had things gone happily, to a conventionally happy ending, he would have felt (dare I say?) that his ideal had been spoilt.

But, for the good fortune of poets, things rarely do go happily with them, or to conventionally happy endings. He used to dine every night at the little restaurant, and I can always see the picture, which I have so often seen through the window in passing; the narrow room with the rough tables, for the most part empty, except in the innermost corner, where Dowson would sit with that singularly sweet and singularly pathetic smile on his lips (a smile which seemed afraid of its right to be there, as if always dreading a rebuff) playing his invariable after-dinner game of cards. Friends would come in, during the hour before closing time; and the girl, her game of cards finished, would quietly disappear, leaving him with hardly more than the desire to kill another night as swiftly as possible.

Meanwhile she and the mother knew that the fragile young man, who dined there so quietly every day, was apt to be quite another sort of person after he had been three hours outside. It was only when his life seemed to have been irretrievably ruined that Dowson quite deliberately abandoned himself to that craving for drink, which was doubtless lying in wait for him in his blood, as consumption was also; it was only latterly, when he had no longer any interest in life, that he really wished to die. But I have never known him when he could resist either the desire or the consequences of drink. Sober, he was the most gentle, in manner the most gentlemanly of men; unselfish to a fault, to the extent of weakness; a delightful companion, charm itself. Under the influence of drink, he became almost literally insane, certainly quite irresponsible.

He fell into furious and unreasoning passions; a vocabulary unknown to him at other times sprang up like a whirlwind; he seemed always about to commit some act of absurd violence. Along with that forgetfulness came other memories. As long as he was conscious of himself, there was but one woman for him in the world, and for her he had an infinite tenderness, and an infinite respect. When that face faded from him, he saw all the other faces, and he saw no more difference than between sheep and sheep. Indeed, that curious love of the sordid, so common an affectation of the modern decadent, and with him so genuine, grew upon him, and dragged him into more and more sorry corners of a life which was never exactly "gay" to him. His father, when he died, left him in possession of an old dock, where for a time he lived in a mouldering house, in that squalid part of the East End which he came to know so well, and to feel so strangely at home in. He drank the poisonous liquors of those pot-houses which swarm about the docks; he drifted about in whatever company came in his way; he let heedlessness develop into a curious disregard of personal tidiness. In Paris, Les Halles took the place of the docks. At Dieppe, where I saw so much of him one summer, he discovered strange, squalid haunts about the harbour, where he made friends with amazing innkeepers, and got into rows with the fishermen who came in to drink after midnight. At Brussels, where I was with him at the time of the Kermesse, he flung himself into all that riotous Flemish life, with a zest for what was most sordidly riotous in it. It was his own way of escape from life.

To Dowson, as to all those who have not been "content to ask unlikely gifts in vain", nature, life, destiny, whatever one chooses to call it, that power which is strength to the strong, presented itself as a barrier against which all one's strength only served to dash one to more hopeless ruin. He was not a dreamer; destiny passes by the dreamer, sparing him because he clamours for nothing. He was a child, clamouring for so many things, all impossible. With a body too weak for ordinary existence, he desired all the enchantments of all the senses. With a soul too shy to tell its own secret, except in exquisite evasions, he desired the boundless confidence of love. He sang one tune, over and over, and no one listened to him. He had only to form the most simple wish, and it was denied him. He gave way to ill-luck, not knowing that he was giving

way to his own weakness, and he tried to escape from the consciousness of things as they were at the best, by voluntarily choosing to accept them at their worst. For with him it was always voluntary. He was never quite without money; he had a little money of his own, and he had for many years a weekly allowance from Mr. Smithers, in return for translations from the French, or, if he chose to do it, original work. He was unhappy, and he dared not think. To unhappy men, thought, if it can be set at work on abstract questions, is the only substitute for happiness; if it has not strength to overleap the barrier which shuts one in upon oneself, it is the one unwearying torture. Dowson had exquisite sensibility, he vibrated in harmony with every delicate emotion; but he had no outlook, he had not the escape of intellect. His only escape, then, was to plunge into the crowd, to fancy that he lost sight of himself as he disappeared from the sight of others. The more he soiled himself at that gross contact, the further would he seem to be from what beckoned to him in one vain illusion after another vain illusion, in the delicate places of the world. Seeing himself move to the sound of lutes, in some courtly disguise, down an alley of Watteau's Versailles, while he touched fingertips with a divine creature in rose-leaf silks, what was there left for him, as the dream obstinately refused to realise itself, but a blind flight into some Teniers' kitchen, where boors are making merry, without thought of yesterday or to-morrow? There, perhaps, in that ferment of animal life, he could forget life as he dreamed it, with too faint hold upon his dreams to make dreams come true.

For, there is not a dream which may not come true, if we have the energy which makes, or chooses, our own fate. We can always, in this world, get what we want, if we will it intensely and persistently enough. Whether we shall get it sooner or later is the concern of fate; but we shall get it. It may come when we have no longer any use for it, when we have gone on willing it out of habit, or so as not to confess that we have failed. But it will come. So few people succeed greatly because so few people can conceive a great end, and work toward that end without deviating and without tiring. But we all know that the man who works for money day and night gets rich; and the man who works day and night for no matter what kind of material power, gets the power. It is the same with the deeper, more spiritual, as it seems vaguer issues,

which make for happiness and every intangible success. It is only the dreams of those light sleepers who dream faintly that do not come true.

We get out of life, all of us, what we bring to it; that, and that only, is what it can teach us. There are men whom Dowson's experiences would have made great men, or great writers; for him they did very little. Love and regret, with here and there the suggestion of an uncomfortable pleasure snatched by the way, are all that he has to sing of; and he could have sung of them at much less "expense of spirit", and, one fancies, without the "waste of shame" at all. Think what Villon got directly out of his own life, what Verlaine, what Musset, what Byron, got directly out of their own lives! It requires a strong man to "sin strongly" and profit by it. To Dowson the tragedy of his own life could only have resulted in an elegy. "I have flung roses, roses, riotously with the throng," he confesses, in his most beautiful poem; but it was as one who flings roses in a dream, as he passes with shut eyes through an unsubstantial throng. The depths into which he plunged were always waters of oblivion, and he returned forgetting them. He is always a very ghostly lover, wandering in a land of perpetual twilight, as he holds a whispered *colloque sentimentale* with the ghost of an old love:

"Dans le vieux parc solitaire et glacé,
Deux spectres ont évoqué le passé."

It was, indeed, almost a literal unconsciousness, as of one who leads two lives, severed from one another as completely as sleep is from waking. Thus we get in his work very little of the personal appeal of those to whom riotous living, misery, a cross destiny, have been of so real a value. And it is important to draw this distinction, if only for the benefit of those young men who are convinced that the first step toward genius is disorder. Dowson is precisely one of the people who are pointed out as confirming this theory. And yet Dowson was precisely one of those who owed least to circumstances; and, in succumbing to them, he did no more than succumb to the destructive forces which, shut up within him, pulled down the house of life upon his own head.

A soul "unspotted from the world" in a body which one sees visibly soiling under one's eyes; that improbability is what all who knew him saw in Dowson, as his youthful physical grace

gave way year by year, and the personal charm underlying it remained unchanged. There never was a simpler or more attaching charm, because there never was a sweeter or more honest nature. It was not because he ever said anything particularly clever or particularly interesting, it was not because he gave you ideas, or impressed you by any strength or originality, that you liked to be with him; but because of a certain engaging quality, which seemed unconscious of itself, which was never anxious to be or to do anything, which simply existed, as perfume exists in a flower. Drink was like a heavy curtain, blotting out everything of a sudden; when the curtain lifted, nothing had changed. Living always that double life, he had his true and his false aspect, and the true life was the expression of that fresh, delicate, and uncontaminated nature which some of us knew in him, and which remains for us, untouched by the other, in every line that he wrote.

III

Dowson was the only poet I ever knew who ever cared more for his prose than his verse; but he was wrong, and it is not by his prose that he will live, exquisite as that prose was, at its best. He wrote two novels in collaboration with Mr. Arthur Moore: *A Comedy of Masks*, in 1893, and *Adrian Rome*, in 1899, both done under the influence of Mr. Henry James, both interesting because they were personal studies, and studies of known surroundings, rather than for their actual value as novels. A volume of "Stories and Studies in Sentiment," called *Dilemmas*, in which the influence of Mr. Wedmore was felt in addition to the influence of Mr. James, appeared in 1895. Several other short stories, among his best work in prose, have not yet been reprinted from the *Savoy*. Some translations from the French, done as hack work, need not be mentioned here, though they were never without some traces of his peculiar quality of charm in language. The short stories were indeed rather "studies in sentiment" than stories; studies of singular delicacy, but with only a faint hold on life, so that perhaps the best of them was not unnaturally a study in the approaches of death: *The Dying of Francis Donne*. For the most part they dealt with the same motives as the poems, hopeless and reverent love, the ethics of renunciation, the disappointment of those who are too weak or

too unlucky to take what they desire. They have a sad and quiet beauty of their own, the beauty of second thoughts and subdued emotions, of choice and scholarly English, moving in the more fluid and reticent harmonies of prose almost as daintily as if it were moving to the measure of verse. Dowson's care over English prose was like that of a Frenchman writing his own language with the respect which Frenchmen pay to French. Even English things had to come to him through France, if he was to prize them very highly; and there is a passage in *Dilemmas* which I have always thought very characteristic of his own tastes, as it refers to an "infinitesimal library, a few French novels, an Horace, and some well-thumbed volumes of the modern English poets in the familiar edition of Tauchnitz". He was Latin by all his affinities, and that very quality of slightness, of parsimony almost in his dealings with life and the substance of art, connects him with the artists of Latin races, who have always been so fastidious in their rejection of mere nature, when it comes too nakedly or too clamorously into sight and hearing, and so gratefully content with a few choice things faultlessly done.

And Dowson in his verse (the *Verses* of 1896, *The Pierrot of the Minute*, a dramatic phantasy in one act, of 1897, the posthumous volume, *Decorations*) was the same scrupulous artist as in his prose, and more felicitously at home there. He was quite Latin in his feeling for youth, and death, and "the old age of roses", and the pathos of our little hour in which to live and love; Latin in his elegance, reticence, and simple grace in the treatment of these motives; Latin, finally, in his sense of their sufficiency for the whole of one's mental attitude. He used the commonplaces of poetry frankly, making them his own by his belief in them: the Horatian Cynara or Neobule was still the natural symbol for him when he wished to be most personal. I remember his saying to me that his ideal of a line of verse was the line of Poe:

"The viol, the violet, and the vine;"

and the gracious, not remote or unreal beauty, which clings about such words and such images as these, was always to him the true poetical beauty. There never was a poet to whom verse came more naturally, for the song's sake; his theories were all æsthetic, almost technical ones, such as a theory,

indicated by his preference for the line of Poe, that the letter "v" was the most beautiful of the letters, and could never be brought into verse too often. For any more abstract theories he had neither tolerance nor need. Poetry as a philosophy did not exist for him; it existed solely as the loveliest of the arts. He loved the elegance of Horace, all that was most complex in the simplicity of Poe, most bird-like in the human melodies of Verlaine. He had the pure lyric gift, unweighted or unballasted by any other quality of mind or emotion; and a song, for him, was music first, and then whatever you please afterwards, so long as it suggested, never told, some delicate sentiment, a sigh or a caress; finding words, at times, as perfect as these words of a poem headed, "*O Mors! quam amara est memoria tua homini pacem habenti in substantiis suis*":

"Exceeding sorrow
Consumeth my sad heart!
Because tomorrow
We must depart,
Now is exceeding sorrow
All my part!

"Give over playing,
Cast thy viol away:
Merely laying
Thine head my way:
Prithee, give over playing,
Grave or gay.

"Be no word spoken;
Weep nothing: let a pale
Silence, unbroken
Silence prevail!
Prithee, be no word spoken,
Lest I fail!

"Forget tomorrow!
Weep nothing: only lay
In silent sorrow
Thine head my way:
Let us forget tomorrow,
This one day!"

There, surely, the music of silence speaks, if it has ever spoken. The words seem to tremble back into the silence which their whisper has interrupted, but not before they have created for us a mood, such a mood as the Venetian Pastoral

attributed to Giorgione renders in painting. Languid, half inarticulate, coming from the heart of a drowsy sorrow very conscious of itself, and not less sorrowful because it sees its own face looking mournfully back out of the water, the song seems to have been made by some fastidious amateur of grief, and it has all the sighs and tremors of the mood, wrought into a faultless strain of music. Stepping out of a paradise in which pain becomes so lovely, he can see the beauty which is the other side of madness, and, in a sonnet *To One in Bedlam*, can create a more positive, a more poignant mood, with this fine subtlety:

"With delicate, mad hands, behind his sordid bars
Surely he hath his posies, which they tear and twine;
Those scentless wisps of straw, that miserably line
His strait, caged universe, whereat the dull world stares,
Pedant and pitiful. O how his rapt gaze wars
With their stupidity! Know they what dreams divine
Lift his long, laughing reveries like enchanted wine,
And make his melancholy germane to the stars?"

"O lamentable brother! if those pity thee,
Am I not fain of all thine lone eyes promise me;
Half a fool's kingdom, far from men who sow and reap,
All their days' vanity? Better than mortal flowers,
Thy moon-kissed roses seem: better than love or sleep,
The star-crowned solitude of thine oblivious hours!"

Here, in the moment's intensity of this comradeship with madness, observe how beautiful the whole thing becomes; how instinctively the imagination of the poet turns what is sordid into a radiance, all stars and flowers and the divine part of forgetfulness! It is a symbol of the two sides of his own life: the side open to the street, and the side turned away from it, where he could "hush and bless himself with silence". No one ever worshipped beauty more devoutly, and just as we see him here transfiguring a dreadful thing with beauty, so we shall see, everywhere in his work, that he never admitted an emotion which he could not so transfigure. He knew his limits only too well; he knew that the deeper and graver things of life were for the most part outside the circle of his magic; he passed them by, leaving much of himself unexpressed, because he would permit himself to express nothing imperfectly, or according to anything but his own conception of the dignity of poetry. In the lyric in which he has epitomised himself and his whole life, a lyric which is certainly one of the greatest lyrical poems of our

time, "Non sum qualis eram bonæ sub regno Cynaræ", he has for once said everything, and he has said it to an intoxicating and perhaps immortal music:

"Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine,
There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine;
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, I was desolate and bowed my head:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

"All night upon mine heart I felt her warm heart beat,
Night-long within mine arms in love and sleep she lay;
Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth were sweet;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
When I awoke and found the dawn was grey:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

"I have forgot much, Cynara! gone with the wind,
Flung roses, roses riotously with the throng,
Dancing, to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, all the time, because the dance was long:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion;

"I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine;
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion."

Here, perpetuated by some unique energy of a temperament rarely so much the master of itself, is the song of passion and the passions, at their eternal war in the soul which they quicken or deaden, and in the body which they break down between them. In the second book, the book of *Decorations*, there are a few pieces which repeat, only more faintly, this very personal note. Dowson could never have developed; he had already said, in his first book of verse, all that he had to say. Had he lived, had he gone on writing, he could only have echoed himself; and probably it would have been the less essential part of himself; his obligation to Swinburne, always evident, increasing as his own inspiration failed him. He was always without ambition, writing to please his own fastidious taste, with a kind of proud humility in his attitude toward the public, not expecting or requiring recognition. He died obscure,

having ceased to care even for the delightful labour of writing. He died young, worn out by what was never really life to him, leaving a little verse which has the pathos of things too young and too frail ever to grow old.

ERNEST DOWSON

Amantium Irae

When this, our rose, is faded,
And these, our days, are done,
In lands profoundly shaded
From tempest and from sun:
Ah, once more come together,
Shall we forgive the past,
And safe from worldly weather
Possess our souls at last?

Or in our place of shadows
Shall still we stretch an hand
To green, remembered meadows,
Of that old pleasant land?
And vainly there foregathered,
Shall we regret the sun?
The rose of love, ungathered?
The bay, we have not won?

Ah, child! the world's dark marges
May lead to Nevermore,
The stately funeral barges
Sail for an unknown shore,
And love we vow to-morrow,
And pride we serve to-day:
What if they both should borrow
Sad hues of yesterday?

Our pride! Ah, should we miss it,
Or will it serve at last?
Our anger, if we kiss it,
Is like a sorrow past.
While roses deck the garden,
While yet the sun is high,
Doff sorry pride for pardon,
Or ever love go by.

Beyond

Love's aftermath! I think the time is now
That we must gather in, alone, apart
The saddest crop of all the crops that grow,
Love's aftermath.

Ah, sweet,—sweet yesterday, the tears that start
Can not put back the dial; this is, I trow,
Our harvesting! Thy kisses chill my heart,
Our lips are cold; averted eyes avow
The twilight of poor love; we can but part,
Dumbly and sadly, reaping as we sow,
Love's aftermath.

Villanelle of the Poet's Road

Wine and woman and song,
Three things garnish our way:
Yet is day over long.

Lest we do our youth wrong,
Gather them while we may:
Wine and woman and song.

Three things render us strong,
Vine leaves, kisses and bay;
Yet is day over long.

Unto us they belong,
Us the bitter and gay,
Wine and woman and song.

We, as we pass along,
Are sad that they will not stay;
Yet is day over long.

Fruits and flowers among,
What is better than they:
Wine and woman and song?
Yet is day over long.

Dregs

The fire is out, and spent the warmth thereof
(This is the end of every song man sings!)
The golden wine is drunk, the dregs remain,
Bitter as wormwood and as salt as pain;
And health and hope have gone the way of love
Into the drear oblivion of lost things.
Ghosts go along with us until the end;
This was a mistress, this, perhaps, a friend.
With pale, indifferent eyes, we sit and wait
For the dropt curtain and the closing gate:
This is the end of all the songs man sings.

ARTHUR SYMONS

Venice

Minuet: The Masque of the Ghosts

The coloured dancing shadows creep
Like ghosts from a mysterious street;
And Venice wakens out of sleep
At the sound of their feet.

Here Pulcinello solemn stands,
And the pale patient Pierrot shakes
His shivering shanks and starving hands,
And Columbine awakes.

She has forgotten him, and gay,
Runs past him towards the colonnades
Where the immortal masquers stay,
Unhappy shades.

Their aching hearts beneath their masks
Palpitate like caught butterflies;
They move in their appointed tasks
With disappointed eyes.

The music of a minuet
Beckons to their unwilling feet;
The light loves, they would fain forget,
The stately measures slowly beat.

Dear disappointed shades of joy
That lived merrily without thought,
Your hearts are turned into a toy
To be tossed and caught.

Venice, the tyrant of the years,
Commands you to perpetuate,
With listless feet and weary tears,
The sunken splendours of her state.

Studies in Strange Sins

(After Beardsley's Designs)

1

The Woman in the Moon

A naked youth adores the mocking Sun,
With a woman's sidelong eyes and lips,
Before unto the stormless Sea he dips.

The dark girl has the weariness of one
 Who, after being satiated, is not won;
 He, with some fever in his finger-tips,
 Urges the fever in the girl who strips
 Her body naked. Sinister, alone,
 The dishevelled seaweed shifts under their feet;
 Upon the margin of the moonless sea
 What shall the end be of their agony?
 He to Salome: "It is the moon we see,
 And not the Sun. O moon's maiden, O cheat,
 The globe of the Earth, fruit from a fruitless Tree!"

For Des Esseintes

Rings

I have a morbid fear of these my ancient rings.
 Have I not found subtle poison in many a gem?
 This serpent, see how abominably he stings!
 This opal that I love, more for its intricate flame
 Than for its changing colours, shoots forth fires;
 This paler sapphire, Cesare Borgia's ring
 That hid the translucent poison of desires
 That eat one up beyond imagining:
 Of these I endure the intolerable agonies.
 Some die of them, some say, but I say no.
 The spirit has more tenebrous maladies
 Than the hard-hearted hearts of witches know.
 Of certain stones I am hallucinated.
 The Devil's in me; and my intense luxury
 Stings me like ardent fires that stir the dead:
 Shall all these visions be the end of me?

WILLIAM MORRIS

Children on the Road

Past the Broadway there were fewer houses on either side. We presently crossed a pretty little brook that ran across a piece of land dotted over with trees, and awhile after came to another market and town hall, as we should call it. Although there was nothing familiar to me in its surroundings, I knew pretty well where we were, and was not surprised when my guide said briefly: "Kensington Market."

Just after this we came into a short street of houses; or

rather, one long house on either side of the way, built of timber and plaster, and with a pretty arcade over the footway before it.

Quoth Dick: "This is Kensington proper. People are apt to gather here rather thick, for they like the romance of the wood; and naturalists haunt it, too; for it is a wild spot even here, what there is of it; for it does not go far to the south: it goes from here northward and west right over Paddington and a little way down Notting Hill: thence it runs north-east to Primrose Hill, and so on; rather a narrow strip of it gets through Kingsland to Stoke-Newington and Clapton, where it spreads out along the heights above the Lea marshes; on the other side of which, as you know, is Epping Forest holding out a hand to it. This part we are just coming to is called Kensington Gardens; though why 'gardens' I don't know."

I rather longed to say: "Well, *I* know"; but there were so many things about me which I did *not* know, in spite of his assumptions, that I thought it better to hold my tongue.

The road plunged at once into a beautiful wood spreading out on either side, but obviously much further on the north side, where even the oaks and sweet chestnuts were of a good growth; while the quicker-growing trees (among which I thought the planes and sycamores too numerous) were very big and fine-grown.

It was exceedingly pleasant in the dappled shadow, for the day was growing as hot as need be, and the coolness and shade soothed my excited mind into a condition of dreamy pleasure, so that I felt as if I should like to go on for ever through that balmy freshness. My companion seemed to share in my feelings, and let the horse go slower and slower as he sat inhaling the green forest's scents, chief among which was the smell of the trodden bracken near the wayside.

Romantic as this Kensington wood was, however, it was not lonely. We came on many groups both coming and going, or wandering in the edges of the wood. Among these were many children from six to eight years old up to sixteen or seventeen. They seemed to me to be especially fine specimens of their race, and were clearly enjoying themselves to the utmost; some of them were hanging about little tents pitched on the greensward, and by some of these fires were burning, with pots hanging over them gipsy fashion. Dick explained to me that there were scattered houses in the forest, and indeed we caught a glimpse of one or two. He said they were mostly quite small, such as

used to be called cottages when there were slaves in the land, but they were pleasant enough and fitting for the wood.

"They must be pretty well stocked with children," said I, pointing to the many youngsters about the way.

"Oh," said he, "these children do not all come from the near houses, the woodland houses, but from the countryside generally. They often make up parties, and come to play in the woods for weeks together in summertime, living in tents, as you see. We rather encourage them to it; they learn to do things for themselves, and get to notice the wild creatures; and, you see, the less they stew inside houses the better for them. Indeed, I must tell you that many grown people will go to live in the forests through the summer; though they for the most part go to the bigger ones, like Windsor, or the Forest of Dean, or the northern wastes. Apart from the other pleasures of it, it gives them a little rough work, which I am sorry to say is getting somewhat scarce for these last fifty years."

He broke off, and then said: "I tell you all this, because I see that if I talk I must be answering questions, which you are thinking, even if you are not speaking them out; but my kinsman will tell you more about it."

I saw that I was likely to get out of my depth again, and so merely for the sake of tiding over an awkwardness and to say something, I said:

"Well, the youngsters here will be all the fresher for school when the summer gets over and they have to go back again."

"School?" he said; "yes, what do you mean by that word? I don't see how it can have anything to do with children. We talk, indeed, of a school of herring, and a school of painting, and in the former sense we might talk of a school of children—but otherwise," said he, laughing, "I must own myself beaten."

Hang it! thought I, I can't open my mouth without digging up some new complexity. I wouldn't try to set my friend right in his etymology; and I thought I had best say nothing about the boy-farms which I had been used to call schools, as I saw pretty clearly that they had disappeared; so I said after a little fumbling: "I was using the word in the sense of a system of education."

"Education?" said he, meditatively, "I know enough Latin to know that the word must come from *educere*, to lead out; and I have heard it used; but I have never met anybody who could give me a clear explanation of what it means."

You may imagine how my new friends fell in my esteems when I heard this frank avowal; and I said, rather contemptuously: "Well, education means a system of teaching young people."

"Why not old people also?" said he with a twinkle in his eye. "But," he went on, "I can assure you our children learn, whether they go through a 'system of teaching' or not. Why, you will not find one of these children about here, boy or girl, who cannot swim; and every one of them has been used to tumbling about the little forest ponies—there's one of them now! They all of them know how to cook; the bigger lads can mow; many can thatch and do odd jobs at carpentering; or they know how to keep shop. I can tell you they know plenty of things."

"Yes, but their mental education, the teaching of their minds," said I, kindly translating my phrase.

"Guest," said he, "perhaps you have not learned to do these things I have been speaking about; and if that's the case, don't you run away with the idea that it doesn't take some skill to do them, and doesn't give plenty of work for one's mind: you would change your opinion if you saw a Dorsetshire lad thatching, for instance. But, however, I understand you to be speaking of book-learning; and as to that, it is a simple affair. Most children, seeing books lying about, manage to read by the time they are four years old; though I am told it has not always been so. As to writing, we do not encourage them to scrawl too early (though scrawl a little they will), because it gets them into a habit of ugly writing; and what's the use of a lot of ugly writing being done, when rough printing can be done so easily. You understand that handsome writing we like, and many people will write their books out when they make them, or get them written; I mean books of which only a few copies are needed—poems, and such like, you know. However, I am wandering from my lambs; but you must excuse me, for I am interested in this matter of writing, being myself a fair writer."

"Well," said I, "about the children: when they know how to read and write, don't they learn something else—languages, for instance?"

"Of course," he said; "sometimes even before they can read, they can talk French, which is the nearest language talked on the other side of the water; and they soon get to know German also, which is talked by a huge number of communes and

colleges on the mainland. These are the principal languages we speak in these islands, along with English or Welsh, or Irish, which is another form of Welsh; and the children pick them up very quickly, because their elders all know them; and besides our guests from over sea often bring their children with them, and the little ones get together, and rub their speech into one another."

"And the older languages?" said I.

"Oh, yes," said he, "they mostly learn Latin and Greek along with the modern ones, when they do anything more than merely pick up the latter."

"And history?" said I; "how do you teach history?"

"Well," said he, "when a person can read, of course he reads what he likes to; and he can easily get someone to tell him what are the best books to read on such or such a subject, or to explain what he doesn't understand in the books when he is reading them."

"Well," said I, "what else do they learn? I suppose they don't all learn history?"

"No, no," said he; "some don't care about it; in fact, I don't think many do. I have heard my great-grandfather say that it is mostly in periods of turmoil and strife and confusion that people care much about history; and you know," said my friend, with an amiable smile, "we are not like that now. No; many people study facts about the make of things and the matters of cause and effect, so that knowledge increases on us, if that be good; and some, as you heard about friend Bob yonder, will spend time over mathematics. 'Tis no use forcing people's tastes."

Said I: "But you don't mean that children learn all these things?"

Said he: "That depends on what you mean by children; and also you must remember how much they differ. As a rule, they don't do much reading except for a few story-books, till they are about fifteen years old; we don't encourage early bookishness: though you will find some children who *will* take to books very early; which perhaps is not good for them; but it's no use thwarting them; and very often it doesn't last long with them, and they find their level before they are twenty years old. You see, children are mostly given to imitating their elders, and when they see most people about them engaged in genuinely amusing work, like house-building and street-paving, and

gardening, and the like, that is what they want to be doing; so I don't think we need fear having too many book-learned men."

What could I say? I sat and held my peace, for fear of fresh entanglements. Besides, I was using my eyes with all my might, wondering as the old horse jogged on, when I should come into London proper, and what it would be like now.

But my companion couldn't let his subject quite drop, and went on meditatively:

"After all, I don't know that it does them much harm, even if they do grow up book-students. Such people as that, 'tis a great pleasure seeing them so happy over work which is not much sought for. And besides, these students are generally such pleasant people; so kind and sweet-tempered; so humble, and at the same time so anxious to teach everybody all that they know. Really, I like those that I have met prodigiously."

This seemed to me such very queer talk that I was on the point of asking him another question; when just as we came to the top of a rising ground, down a long glade of the wood on my right I caught sight of a stately building whose outline was familiar to me, and I cried out: "Westminster Abbey!"

"Yes," said Dick, "Westminster Abbey—what there is left of it."

"Why, what have you done with it?" quoth I in terror.

"What have we done with it?" said he; "nothing much, save clean it. But you know the whole outside was spoiled centuries ago; as to the inside, that remains in its beauty after the great clearance, which took place over a hundred years ago, of the beastly monuments to fools and knaves, which once blocked it up, as great-grandfather says."

We went on a little further, and I looked to the right again, and said, in rather a doubtful tone of voice: "Why, there are the Houses of Parliament! Do you still use them?"

He burst out laughing, and was some time before he could control himself; then he clapped me on the back and said:

"I take you, neighbour; you may well wonder at our keeping them standing, and I know something about that, and my old kinsman has given me books to read about the strange game that they played there. Use them! Well, yes, they are used for a sort of subsidiary market, and a storage place for manure, and they are handy for that, being on the water-side. I believe it was intended to pull them down quite at the beginning of our days; but there was, I am told, a queer antiquarian society,

which had done some service in past times, and which straight-way set up its pipe against their destruction, as it has done with many other buildings, which most people looked upon as worthless, and public nuisances; and it was so energetic, and had such good reasons to give, that it generally gained its point; and I must say that when all is said I am glad of it: because you know at the worst these silly old buildings serve as a kind of foil to the beautiful ones which we build now. You will see several others in these parts; the place my great-grandfather lives in, for instance, and a big building called St. Paul's. And you see, in this matter we need not grudge a few poorish buildings standing, because we can always build elsewhere; nor need we be anxious as to the breeding of pleasant work in such matters, for there is always room for more and more work in a new building, even without making it pretentious. For instance, elbow-room *within* doors is to me so delightful that if I were driven to it I would almost sacrifice out-door space to it. Then, of course, there is the ornament, which, as we must all allow, may easily be overdone in mere living houses, but can hardly be in mote-halls and markets, and so forth. I must tell you, though, that my great-grandfather sometimes tells me I am a little cracked on this subject of fine building; and indeed I *do* think that the energies of mankind are chiefly of use to them for such work; for in that direction I can see no end to the work, while in many others a limit does seem possible."

J. W. MACKAIL

The Æneid

From pastoral meads, from task of field and fold,
To war, to love, to death by land and sea
He turned, and sang in soft Parthenope
Heroic deeds, and peoples great of old,
Who dwelt where Nar and Amasenus rolled
By Sabine slope or Volscian low-country,
Mingling the dimly-shadowed days to be
With days long dead in his high verse of gold.

Yet even sickening at loves ill allied,
Thwart fates, vext wanderings, waste of princely blood,
Harsh trumpet-notes and tossing fields of foam,
In twilight visions of the mystic wood
He sought, with longing eyes unsatisfied,
The immortality he gave to Rome.

NORMAN GALE

To Dora

God's mercy, Dora, what's a kiss
That you should whimper like a child?
A maid was ne'er as coy as this,
A woodlark never was so wild.
There went, i' faith, no niggard pinch
You little pecking sweetbill finch!

Come, loveliness, 'tis but the task
Of mating Cupid's red to red;
A rosebud touch is all I ask,
Lift up, dear nun, this shining head!
There! see how good a thing it is—
God's mercy, Dora, what's a kiss?

A Song

All night I have lain in the Gipsies' camp,
Heel to heel with a gipsy lass,
With a planet hung in the sky for lamp,
And for bed the honest grass:
At morn I have wended upon my way,
Taking only as baggage this—
The love that lies in a gipsy's eyes
And a gipsy maiden's kiss.

All day I have pined for the greensward girl,
Brown and sweet in the forest hush,
Where a man may play with a southland curl,
And a southland virgin's blush:
I'd give my wealth if there warmed me again,
Filling eve with a daring bliss,
The heart that pressed at a gipsy's vest,
And a wildwood gipsy's kiss.

Cicely Bathing

The brook told the dove
And the dove told me
That Cicely's bathing at the pool
With other virgins three.

The brook told the dove
And the dove told me
That Cicely floating on the wave
Woke music in the tree.

The brook told the dove
And the dove told me
That Cicely's drying in the sun,
A snowy sight to see.

VICTOR PLARR

Death and the Player

I watched the players playing on their stage;
An old delightful comedy was theirs,
The very picture of a gallant age,
Full of majestic airs.

Wit, virtuoso, captain, stately lord,—
Each played his part with smooth Augustan grace,
And grey, and curled, th' Olympian perruques soared
O'er each fine oval face.

Anon, young Celia, poised on high red heels,
Advanced with Chloe, the discreet soubrette:
Her laughter rings abroad in silver peals;
Her courtiers fawn and fret.

One was a whiskered son of awful Mars;
And one, the favourite, a thing of spleen,
Whose pasquil jests, a stream of falling stars,
Illumined all the scene.

They trod a minuet, and evermore,
Betwixt the curtseying lady and her thrall,
A masked and shrouded dancer kept the floor,
Unnoted by them all.

Alas, poor player, that was Death's Dance indeed!
The curtain fell; the masker's fleshless hand
Compelled thee to his chariot, which with speed
Rolled home to his own land.

And now with cheeks and eyelids that confess
Grim stains of the last midnight's gay disguise,
Th' ingenious haggard actors swiftly press
Where their dead brother lies.

How strange a graveside—oh, how strange a scene!
The player's double life in such eclipse!
What a morality would this have been
On those once mocking lips!

But they are dumb, and there's scarce time for tears.
 Back to the town! They're clamouring for our plays.
 'Tis good that arch-comedian Death appears
 But once in many days!

The Veil of Isis

To lift her veil, whose broideries
 Are hornéd moons and lotuses,
 None dare, though priest and thurifer
 Charm her with frankincense and myrrh,
 And long-drawn mystic harmonies.
 Of all mankind's divinities
 None secreter than this of his!
 Behold 'tis but to anger her
 To lift her veil.

Natheless, in each man's time there is
 A lifting of her veil: each *dies*.
 To die, when all the hate and stir
 Are o'er, to be a slumberer,
 To dream perchance,—Oh, is not this
 To lift her veil?

Ad Cinerarium

Who in this small urn reposes,
 Celt or Roman, man or woman,
 Steel of steel, or rose of roses?

Whose the dust set rustling slightly,
 In its hiding-place abiding,
 When this urn is lifted lightly?

Sure some mourner deemed immortal
 What thou holdest and enfoldest,
 Little house without a portal!

When the artificers had slowly
 Formed thee, turned thee, sealed thee, burned thee,
 Freight with thy freightage holy,

Sure he thought there's no forgetting
 All the sweetness and completeness
 Of his rising, of her setting,

And so bade them grave no token,
 Generation, age, or nation,
 On thy round side still unbroken;—

Let them score no cypress verses,
 Funeral glories, prayers, or stories,
 Mourner's tears, or mourner's curses,
 Round thy brown rim time hath polished,
 Left thee dumbly cold and comely
 As some shrine of gods abolished.

Ah, 'twas well! It scarcely matters
 What is sleeping in the keeping
 Of this house of human tatters,—

Steel of steel, or rose of roses,
 Man or woman, Celt or Roman,
 If but soundly he reposes!

JOHN DAVIDSON

Insomnia

He wakened quivering on a golden rack
 Inlaid with gems: no sign of change, no fear
 Or hope of death came near;
 Only the empty ether hovered black
 About him stretched upon his living bier,
 Of old by Marlin's Master deftly wrought:
 Two Seraphim of Gabriel's helpful race
 In that far nook of space
 With iron levers wrenched and held him taut.

The Seraph at his head was Agony;
 Delight, more terrible, stood at his feet:
 Their sixfold pinions beat
 The darkness, or were spread immovably,
 Poising the rack, whose jewelled fabric meet
 To strain a god, did fitfully unmask
 With olive light of chrysoprases dim
 The smiling Seraphim
 Implacably intent upon their task.

FROM *Spring*

By lichen'd tree and mossy plinth
 Like living flames of purple fire
 Flooding the wood, the hyacinth
 Uprears its heavy-scented spire.

The redstart shakes its crimson plume,
 Singing alone till evening's fall
 Beside the pied and homely bloom
 Of wallflower on the crumbling wall.

Now dandelions light the way,
Expecting summer's near approach;
And, bearing lanterns night and day,
The great marsh-marigolds keep watch.

FROM *Summer*

Above the shimmering square
Swallows climb the air;
Like crystal trees the fountain's shower,
A-bloom with many a rainbow flower.

Where the lake is deep
Water-lilies sleep,
Dreaming dreams with open eyes
Enchanted by the dragon-flies—

Azure dragon-flies,
Slivered from the skies,
Chased and burnished, joints and rings,
Elfin magic wands on wings.

Like an army dressed
In diamond mail and crest,
The silent light o'er park and town
In burning phalanxes comes down;

And lustrous ambuscades
In glittering streets and glades
Where daisies crowd or people throng,
Keep watch and ward the whole day long.

JOHN TODHUNTER

In an Old Library

Here the still air
Broods over drowsy nooks
Of ancient learning: one is ware,
As in a mystic aisle
Of lingering incense, of the balm of books.
So nard from cerecloths of Egyptian kings
Solemnised once the sepulchres of Nile.

Here quietness,
A ghostly presence, dwells
Among rich tombs: here doth possess
With an ecstatic dread
The intruder seeking old-world oracles
In books, centuries of books, centuries of tombs
That hold the spirits of the crowned dead.

Go softly! Here
 Sleep fair embalmèd souls
 In piled-up monuments, in their sere
 And blazoned robes of fame,
 Conquerors of Time. Whisper to these grey scrolls,
 Call Poet, Sage, Romancer, Chronicler
 And every one will answer to his name.

Man walks the earth,
 The quintessence of dust:
 Books from the ashes of his mirth,
 Madness, and sorrow, seem
 To draw the elixir of some rarer gust,
 Or, like the stone of Alchemy, transmute
 Life's cheating dross to golden truth of dream.

ALICE MEYNELL

The Love of Narcissus

Like him who met his own eyes in the river,
 The poet trembles at his own long gaze
 That meets him through the changing nights and days
 From out great Nature; all her waters quiver
 With his fair image facing him for ever;
 The music that he listens to betrays
 His own heart to his ears; by trackless ways
 His wild thoughts tend to him in long endeavour.

His dreams are far among the silent hills;
 His vague voice calls him from the darkened plain
 With winds at night; strange recognition thrills
 His lonely heart with piercing love and pain;
 He knows again his mirth in mountain rills,
 His weary tears that touch him with the rain.

November Blue

The golden tint of the electric lights seems to give a complementary colour to the air in the early evening.—*Essay on London*.

O heavenly colour, London town
 Has blurred it from her skies;
 And, hooded in an earthly brown,
 Unheaven'd the city lies.
 No longer standard-like this hue
 Above the broad road flies;
 Now does the narrow street the blue
 Wear, slender pennon-wise.

But when the gold and silver lamps
Colour the London dew,
And, misted by the winter damps,
The shops shine bright anew—
Blue comes to earth, it walks the street,
It dyes the wide air through;
A mimic sky about their feet,
The throng go crowned with blue.

FIONA MACLEOD*

FROM *The Winged Destiny*

CUILIDH MHOIRE

Within a hundred years ago many of the islefolk, and not only in the more remote places, openly practised what are called pagan rites. Many of these dealt with water, more particularly with the water of the sea; for to the people in the west the sea is an ever-present power to be feared, to be propitiated, to be beguiled if possible, to be regarded as a hard foster-mother, perhaps: hardly to be loved. I have never heard any definition of the sea more impressive than that of a fisherman of the Isle of Ulva, whom I knew. "She is like a woman whose beauty is dreadful," he said, "and who breaks your heart at last whether she smiles or frowns. But she doesn't care about that, or whether you are hurt or not. It's because she has no heart, being all a wild water."

I have often read of the great love of the islemen for the sea. They love it in a sense of course, as the people of the land love uplands and wild moors, and the movements of clouds over stony braes or above long pastures by low shores and estuaries. Nor are they happy away from it. How could they be, since the wave is in their hearts? Men and women who are born to the noise of the sea, whose cradles have rocked to the loud surge or dull croon of the tides, and who have looked on the deep every day in every season of every year, could not but feel towards it as a shepherd feels towards the barest hills, as a forester feels for the most sombre woods, as the seed-sower and the harrower

* Pseudonym of William Sharp.

I take this excellent selection from an old number of *The Bibelot*. (Ed.)

feel for the monotonous brown lands which swell upward till they seem the last ridges of the world wherefrom rounded white clouds rise like vast phantom flowers. In this sense they love it, and truly. And there are some who love it for itself, and its beauty. And there are a few who love it with passion, who feel its spell irresistible, magical. But it is not of the exceptions I speak: it is of the many. These do not love what they have so much cause to dread; what holds so many little fortunes in so great and loose a clasp; what shuts off from so many desires; what has so common a voice of melancholy; what makes an obvious destiny take the measure of fatality, an implacable doom. For them, when the sea is not a highway, it is a place of food, the Cuilidh Mhoire or Treasury of Mary, as the Catholic islesmen of the Southern Hebrides call the sustenance-giving waters. When neither, it is most likely to be a grave, the cold drifting hearths of the dead.

At the time I speak of, the people in many parts were good Christians for most days, and then one day other selves hidden under taught faiths and later symbols would stand disclosed. Above all, when certain days of traditional sanctity recurred, it was customary to perform rites of a druidic or pagan remembrance, in the face even of priests of a Faith that has ever turned stern eyes on all rites of the eager spirit of man save its own. And what the people were then, in the many, they still are in the few; though now for the most part only where the Great Disenchantment has not yet wholly usurped the fading dominion of the Great Enchantment.

It was the custom, then, and still is in some isles, for mothers to wet brow or finger of their new-born in the flow of the tide at the end of the third week of the child's life. The twenty-first day, if a Sunday, was held to be the most fortunate, and a Thursday next to it: but a Friday was always to be avoided, and a Saturday was held in some fear, unless the child was dark in hair and eyes and colour. It was above all needful to see that this wave-baptism happened when the tide was at the flow. If it were done at the ebb, woe to that child and that mother: soon or late the "baptised" would be called, to sink in deep gulfs and be homeless and no more seen—and, in the west, for the dead to have no green wave for sleep-covering is a nakedness of sorrow ill to endure for those left to mourn.

I remember, when I was a child, being taken to have tea in the cottage of one Giorsal Macleod, in Armadale of Sleat, who had

lost both husband and son through this sea-hallowing rite having been done at the ebb. Her husband was a young man, and had never spoken to her of the fear of his mother, who through a misjudgment in a time of weakness and fever had "waved" him after the turn of the ebb. But one day when Annra Macleod came in to find Giorsal crying because unwittingly she had done a like thing, he laughed at her folly, and said that for himself he cared no whit one way or the other whether the child were dipped in this hour or in that. But before the month was out, and on a calm night and just as the herring had risen, Annra's feet tangled in the nets, which fell back with him, and he sank into the strong ebb, and was sucked away like a fading shadow. And seven years from that day little Seoras, the boy, when fishing for *piocach* in the haven, stumbled from the coble's heavy bow and into the swift-slipping greenness. He was good at the swimming and could easily have saved himself on so calm a day and with the coble not a fathom-reach off: but he was an ebb-child, and he was called out to deep water and death. His mother saw this. And when she spoke of her sorrow she used invariably the words, "*A Dhia* (O God), 'twas a long-laid death for my cold darling: 'twas I that did it with that dip in the ebb, I not knowing the harm and the spell, *A cuisilin mo ghraidh*, *A m'ulaidh's m'agh!* (O pulse-let of my love, O my treasure and joy!)"

In those days I speak of, the people used to have many sea-rites, and, almost in all the isles, on *La' Chaluim-Chille* (St. Columba's Day) in particular. Offerings of honey-ale or mead, fluid porridge, kale-soup, precious bread even, were given to the god of the sea. As the darkness of Wednesday night gave way to dawn on Maundy Thursday, as Mr. Carmichael relates in his beautiful *Carmina Gadelica*, the man deputed by the islesfolk would walk into the sea up to his waist, and then, while he poured out the offering, would chant

A Dhe na mara
Cuir todhar's an tarruinn
Chon tacha'r an talaimh
Chon bailcidh dhuinn biaidh.

"O god of the sea
Put weed in the drawing wave
To enrich the isle-soil
To shower on us food."

"Then those behind the offerer took up the chant and wafted it along the seashore on the midnight air, the darkness and the rolling of the waves making the scene weird and impressive."

That I have not seen; and now I fear the god of the sea has few worshippers, and knows no scattered communes of bowed chanters at midnight.

But this, though also I have not seen, I know of at first hand. A man and his three sons, on an island which I will speak of only as south and east of the Minch, went secretly on the eve of St. Columba's Day a year ago, and took a pail of milk from the byres, and a jug of running water of a well-spring, and a small loaf of bread from the oven, and a red faggot from the fire held in a cleft stick. The youngest son threw the fire into the sea, crying "Here's fire for you!" And the other sons poured on the black flood the surf-white milk and the rain-grey water, crying, "Here's clean water for you!" and "Here's the kindly milk for you!" And the father threw the loaf of bread on the wave, and cried "Peace to your hunger!"

That was all, and they did it secretly, and the sons (it is said) half to please their father. Only one or two neighbours knew of it, and they silent before the minister; but somehow it came to the man's ears, and like most of his kind he was angry at a thing beyond him and his understanding, and spoke in contempt to one better than himself (I do not doubt), and threatened him with a public exhorting from the pulpit, so that Mr. M—— sullenly promised no more to do the thing his forebears had done for generation upon generation.

"After all, the minister was right," said someone to me, who had heard the tale: "for Mr. —— was only holding by a superstition."

I did not make the obvious retort, but said simply that it was better to hold by old things of beauty and reverence than to put a blight on them.

I do not say the minister was wholly wrong. He spoke according to his lights. Doubtless he had in remembrance some such passage as that in Deuteronomy where the ban is put upon any who will suffer his son or his daughter to go through fire, or upon any that draw omen from the cry of fowls, or upon the interpreter of signs. And compelled by that stubborn thralldom to the explicit word which has been at once the stern strength and the spiritual failure of all the Calvinistic de-

nominations (in our religion-harried Scotland at least), he spoke in numbed sympathy and twilit-knowledge.

Since, I have tried to learn if Mr. M—— had knowledge of the ancient meanings of that sea-rite, and if other words, or chant, or *urnuigh-mhara* or sea-prayer, had been used by his elders. But, as yet, I have not learned. I have wondered often if this broken and all but silent rite were a survival of a custom before ever St. Colum was heard of. The bread offering and that of the milk are easy of understanding. But why should one give fresh water from an earth-spring to that salt, unstable wilderness; why offer to it a flame of fire, whose pale crescents of light or moving green lawns beneath swaying cataracts are but the glittering robe over a cold heart, than which no other is so still everlastingly in an ancient and changeless cold?

SEA-MAGIC

In one of the remotest islands of the Hebrides I landed on a late afternoon in October a year ago. There was no one on the island except an old man, who was shepherd for the fourscore sheep which ate the sweet sea-grass from Beltane till Samhain: * one sheep for each year of his life, he told me, "forby one, and that will be right between them an' me come Candlemas next." He gave me water and oateake, and offered to make me tea, which I would not have. I gave him the messages I had brought from the distant mainland of the Lews, and other things; and some small gifts of my own to supplement the few needs and fewer luxuries of the old islander. Murdo MacIain was grateful, with the brief and simple gladness of a child. By mistake a little mouth-organ, one of those small untuneful instruments which children delight in and can buy for a few pence, was in my package, along with a "poke" of carvies, those little white sweets for buttered bread dear to both young and old—though even they, like all genuine products of the west, great and small, are falling away in disuse! The two had been intended by me for a small lass, the grand-child of a crofter of Loch Roag in the wester-side of the Lews: but when the yacht put in at the weedy haven, where scart and gillie-breed and tern screamed at the break of silence, I heard that

* *Beltane till Samhain*: 1st May till Summer-end (31st October).

little Morag had "taken a longing to be gone" and after a brief ailing had in truth returned whence she had come.

And for the moment neither snuff nor tobacco, neither woollen comforter nor knitted hose, could hold Murdo as did that packet of carvies (for the paper had loosened, and the sugary contents had swarmed like white ants) and still more that sixpenny mouth-organ. I saw what the old man eagerly desired, but was too courteous and well-bred even to hint: and when I gave him the two things of his longing my pleasure was not less than his. I asked him why he wanted the *cruit-bheul*, which was the nearest I could put the Gaelic for the foreign toy, and he said simply that it was because he was so much alone, and often at nights heard a music he would rather not be hearing. "What would that be?" I asked. And after some hesitation he answered that a woman often came out of the sea and said strange foreign words at the back of his door, and that, he added, in a whinnying voice like that of a foal; came, white as foam; and went away grey as rain. And then, he added, "she would go to that stroked rock yonder, and put songs against me, till my heart shook like a tallow-flaucht in the wind."

"Was there any other music?" I asked. "Yes," he said. When the wind was in the west, and rose quickly, coming across the sea, he had heard a hundred feet running through the wet grass and making the clover breathe a breath. "When it's a long way off I hear the snatch of an air, that I think I know and yet can never put name to. Then it's near, an' there's names called on the wind, an' whishts an' all. Then they sing an' laugh. I've seen the sheep standing— their forelegs on the slit rocks that crop up here like stony weeds— staring and listening. Then after a bit they'd go on at the grass again. But Luath, my dog, he'd sit close to me, with his eyes big, an' growling low. Then I wouldn't be hearing anything: no more at all. But, whiles, somebody would follow me home, piping, and till the very door, and then go off laughing. Once, a three-week back or so, I came home in a thin noiseless rain, and heard a woman-voice singing by the fire-flaucht, and stole up soft to the house-side; but she heard the beat of my pulse and went out at the door, not looking once behind her. She was tall and white, with red hair, and though I didn't see her face I know it was like a rock in rain, with the tears streaming on it. She was a woman till she was at the shore there, then she threw her arms into the wind an' was a gull, an' flew away in the lowness of a cloud."

While I was on the island the wind had veered with that suddenness known to all who sail these seas. A wet eddy swirled up from the south-east, and the west greyed, and rain fell. In a few minutes clouds shaped themselves out of mists I had not seen and out of travelling vapours and the salt rising breaths of the sea. A long wind moved from east to west, high, but with its sough falling to me like a wood-echo where I was. Then a cloudy rain let loose a chill air, and sighed with a moan in it: in a moment or two after, great sluices were opened, and the water came down with a noise like the tide coursing the lynns of narrow sea-lochs.

To go back in that falling flood would be to be half-drowned, and was needless too: so I was the more glad, with the howling wind and sudden gloom of darkness and thick rain, to go in to Murdo's cabin, for it was no more than that, and sit by the comfortable glow of the peats, while the old man, happy in that doing, made tea for me.

He was smiling and busy, when I saw his face cloud.

"Will you be hearing that?" he said, looking round.

"What was it?" I answered, for I thought I had heard the long scream of the gannet against the waves of the wind high above us.

Having no answer, I asked Murdo if it was the bird he meant. "Ay, it might be a bird. Sometimes it's a bird, sometimes it's a seal, sometimes it's a creature of the sea pulling itself up the shore an' makin' a hoarse raughlin like a boat being dragged over pebbles. But when it comes in at the door there it is always the same, a tall man, with the great beauty on him, his hands hidden in the white cloak he wears, a bright, cold, curling flame under the soles of his feet, and a crest like a bird's on his head."

I looked instinctively at the door, but no one stood there.

"Was the crest of feathers, Murdo?" I asked, remembering an old tale of a messenger of the Hidden People who is known by the crest of cuckoo-feathers that he wears.

"No," he said, "it wasn't. It was more like white canna blowing in the wind, but with a blueness in it."

"And what does he say to you?"

"His say is the say of good Gaelic, but with old words in it that I have forgotten. The mother of my mother had great wisdom, and I've heard her using the same when she was out speaking in the moonlight to them that were talking to her."

"What does he tell you, Murdo?"

"Sure, sometimes he has nothing to say. He just looks in the fire a long time, an' then goes away smiling."

"And who did you think it was?"

"Well, I thought it might be Mr. Macalister, him as was drowned on St. Bride's day: the minister over at Uiseader of Harris. I've heard he was a tall, fine man, an' a scholar, an' of great goodness an' fineness. And so I asked him, the second time he came, if may be he would be Mr. Macalister. He said no, an' laughed the bit of a laugh, and then said that good man's bones were now lying in a great pool with three arches to it, deep in the sea about seven swims of a seal from Eilean Mhealastaidh, the island that lies under the shadow of Griomaval on the mainland of the Lews."*

"An' at that," added Murdo, "I asked him how he would be knowing that."

"How do you know you are a man, and that the name on you is the name you have?" he said. An' at that I laughed, an' said it was more than *he* could say, for he did not seem to have the way of a man an' he kept his name in his pocket.

"With that he touched me an' I fell into an *aisling*.† And though I saw the red peats before me, I knew I was out on the sea, and was a wave herded by the wind an' lifted an' shaken by the tide—an' a great skua flyin' over saw my name floating like a dead fish an' sank to it an' swallowed it an' flew away. An' when I sat up, I was here on this stool before the peats, and no one beside me. But the door was open, an' though there was no rain the flagstone was wet, an' there was a heavy wetness in the room, an' it was salt. It was like a spilt wave, it was."

"But tell me, Murdo, how you know this was not all a dream?"

"Because of what I saw when he touched me."

"And what was that?"

"I have the fear of it still," he said simply. "His arms were like water, and I saw the sea-weed floating among the bones in his hand. And so I knew him to be a *morar-mhara*,‡ a lord of the sea."

* *Seven swims of a seal.* A seal is supposed to swim a mile on one side, without effort, without twist; and then to change to the other side and swim in the same way the next mile; and so on.

† An *aisling*: i.e., a swoon with remembrance.

‡ *Morar* (or *Morair*) a lord, as Morair Gilleasbuig Mhic 'Illeathain (Lord Archibald Maclean).

"And did you see him after that?"

"Yes."

"And did he say anything to you then?"

"Yes. He said to me after he had sat a long time staring in the fire: 'Murdo, what age have you?' An' I told him. I said I would have eighty years come Candlemas. He said, 'You've got a clean heart: an' you'll have three times eighty years of youth an' joy before you have your long sleep. An' that is a true word. It will be when the wild geese fly north again.' An' then he rose and went away. There was a mist on the sea, an' creepin' up the rocks. I watched him go into it, an' I heard him hurling great stones an' dashing them. '*These are the kingdoms of the world,*' I heard him crying in the mist. No, I have not been seeing him any more at all: not once since that day. An' that's all, *Bàn-Morar*."

That was many months ago. There is no one on the island now: no sheep even, for the pastures are changed. When the wild geese flew north this year, the soul of Murdo MacIain went with them. Or if he did not go with them, he went where Manan promised him he should go. For who can doubt that it was Manan, in the body or vision, he the living prince of the waters, the son of the most ancient god, who, crested as with snow-white canna with a blueness in it, and foot-circt with cold curling flame—the uplifted wave and the wandering sea-fire—appeared to the old islander? And if it were he, be sure the promise is now joy and peace to him to whom it was made.

Murdo must have soothed his last hours of weakness with the *cruit-bheul*, the little mouth-organ, for it was by the side of his pillow. In these childish things have we our delight, even those few of us who, simple of heart and poor in all things save faith and wonder, can, like Murdo MacIain, make a brief happiness out of a little formless music with our passing breath, and contentedly put it away at last for the deep music of immortal things.

FARA-GHAOL

At a running water, that comes out at a place called Stràth-na-mara, near the sea-gates of Loch Suibhne, there is a pool called the Pool of the Changeling. None ever goes that way from choice, for it is not only the crying of the curlew is heard there, or the querulous wailing lapwing.

It was here that one night, in a September of many storms, a woman stood staring at the sea. The screaming seamews wheeled and sank and circled overhead, and the solanders rose with heavy wing and hoarse cries, and the black scarts screeched to the startled guillemots or to the foam-white terns blown before the wind like froth. The woman looked neither at the seafowl nor at the burning glens of scarlet flame which stretched dishevelled among the ruined lands of the sunset.

Between the black flurries of the wind, striking the sea like flails, came momentary pauses or long silences. In one of these the woman raised her arms, she the while unheeding the cold tide-wash about her feet, where she stood insecurely on the wet slippery tangle.

Seven years ago this woman had taken the one child she had, that she did not believe to be her own but a changeling, and had put it on the shore at the extreme edge of the tide-reach, and there had left it for the space of an hour. When she came back, the child she had left with a numbness on its face and with the curse of dumbness, was laughing wild, and when she came near, it put out its arms and gave the cry of the young of birds. She lifted the *leanav* in her arms and stared into its eyes, but there was no longer the weary blankness, and the little one yearned with the petulant laughing and idle whimpering of the children of other mothers. And that mother there gave a cry of joy, and with a singing heart went home.

It was in the seventh year after that finding by the sea, that one day, when a cold wind was blowing from the west, the child Morag came in by the peat-fire, where her mother was boiling the porridge, and looked at her without speaking. The mother turned at that, and looked at Morag. Her heart sank like a pool-lily at shadow, when she saw that Morag had woven a wreath of brown tangled sea-weed into her hair. But that was nothing to the bite in her breast when the girl began singing a song that had not a word in it she had ever heard on her own or other lips, but was wild as the sound of the tide calling in dark nights of cloud and wind, or as the sudden coming of waves over a quiet sea in the silence of the black hours of sleep.

"What is it, Morag-mo-rùn?" she asked, her voice like a reed in the wind.

"It's time," says Morag, with a change in her eyes, and her face smiling with a gleam on it.

"Time for what, Morag?"

"For me to be going back to the place I came from."

"And where will that be?"

"Where would it be but to the place you took me out of, and called across?"

The mother gave a cry and a sob. "Sure, now, Morag-a-ghràidh, you will be my own lass and no other?"

"Whist, woman," answered the girl; "don't you hear the laughing in the burn, and the hoarse voice out in the sea?"

"That I do not, O Morag-mo-chridh, and sure it's black sorrow to you and to me to be hearing that hoarse voice and that thin laughing."

"Well, sorrow or no sorrow, I'm off now, poor woman. And it's good-bye and a good-bye to you I'll be saying to you, poor woman. Sure it's a sorrow to me to leave you in grief, but if you'll go down to the edge of the water, at the place you took me from, where the runnin' water falls into the sea-pool, you'll be having there against your breast in no time the child of your own that I never was and never could be."

"And why that, and why that, O Morag, lennavan-mo?"

"Peace on your sorrow, woman, and good-bye to you now"; and with that the sea-changeling went laughing out at the door, singing a wave-song that was so wild and strange the mother's woe was turned to a fear that rose like chill water in her heart.

When she dared follow—and why she did not go at once she did not know—she saw at first no sight of Morag or any other on the lonely shore. In vain she called, with a great sorrowing cry. But as, later, she stood with her feet in the sea, she became silent of a sudden, and was still as a rock, with her ragged dress about her like draggled sea-weed. She had heard a thin crying. It was the voice of a breast-child, and not of a grown lass like Morag.

When a grey heron toiled sullenly from a hollow among the rocks she went to the place. She was still now, with a frozen sorrow. She knew what she was going to find. But she did not guess till she lifted the little frail child she had left upon the shore seven years back, that the secret people of the sea or those who call across running water could have the hardness and coldness to give her again the unsmiling dumb thing she had mothered with so much bitterness of heart.

Morag she never saw again, nor did any other see her, except Padruig Macrae, the innocent, who on a New Year's eve, that

was a Friday, said that as he was whistling to a seal down by the Pool at Stràth-na-mara he heard some one laughing at him; and when he looked to see who it was he saw it was no other than Morag—and he had called to her, he said, and she called back to him: “Come away, Padruig dear,” and then had swum off like a seal, crying the heavy tears of sorrow.

And as for the child she had found again on the place she had left her own silent breast-babe seven years back, it never gave a cry or made any sound whatever, but stared with round, strange eyes only, and withered away in three days, and was hidden by her in a sand-hole at the root of a stunted thorn that grew there.

At every going down of the sun thereafter, the mother of the changeling went to the edge of the sea, and stood among the wet tangle of the wrack, and put out her supplicating hands, but never spoke word nor uttered cry.

But on this night of September, while the gleaming sea-fowl were flying through the burning glens of scarlet flame in the wide purple wildness of the sky, with the wind falling and wailing and wailing and falling, the woman went over to the running water beyond the sea-pool, and put her skirt over her head and stepped into the pool, and, hooded thus and thus patient, waited till the tide came in.

THE TWO VOICES

Of the delight of the sea no man or woman, from Sappho to the latest sea-singer of the Gael, has ever chanted more than a small choric cry of rapture in an unapproachable pæan: the pæan of the worship and joy and dread love of the sons and daughters of men since time was. To many there is no rapture like the rapture of the sea, no beauty like its beauty, no enchantment greater, no spell so subtle and so strong.

But even for these, as for many of those who do not feel this enchantment or know this spell, it is possible to touch in the magic of the sea a sorrow as deep as any human sorrow when time has healed the sting of the first lash; a melancholy more profound than that inhabiting the most waste places or the desolate regions of the poor in great cities.

This knowledge, which has been intimate to so many, never

so poignantly came home to me as when, one day in the spring of this year, while on those wild Breton coasts of the Tréguier headland, I was shown an ancient sundial which had been found in the sea, on a day when the tide had fallen away to an unprecedented distance. It had belonged to the mediæval manor to whose successor I was now a visitor—a successor itself perilously close to that ever climbing, grey, muttering waste.

When the dial was cleared of the weedy tangle which had so long held it in its place beneath the ceaseless tumult of tides and driven surge, the inscription, faint as it was, was at last deciphered. It ran—

Les Jours passent, la Douleur reste.

“The days pass, grief endures”. Is not that at times the very burden of the sea? And how could that memory of mortal sorrow, wedded to the inexplicable sadness of the ancient waters, come with a more searching pitifulness than from an old sundial long sunken from the rose-sweet manor-garden beneath the cold and barren drift of the tides?

It was a grey day when I read this inscription on the brine-bitten dial: the grey wind of the east laboured across heavy seas, that here and there turned over green flanks, and sank in a swirling seethe, spreading idly in long ragged traceries on the grey flats and green-grey hollows. Not a sea-bird rose on white wing, or complained with hoarse scream or shrill reiterated cry along the wild and deserted shore. *Les Jours passent, la Douleur reste.* It was the dull chime of the sea put into human speech.

Later, in the manor-garden, among the roses already falling after days of rain, I could hear the slow, monotonous beat of the sea. The words of a singer of to-day came into my mind:

“Love is a barren sea, bitter and deep—

We gave love many dreams and days to keep,
Saying, ‘If thou wilt, thrust in thy sickle, and reap:’
All is reaped now; no grass is left to mow.”

I could not shake off the depression which had come upon me, and even when in the little chapel, alone there save for one old woman sitting with bowed head so that I could see nothing of

her but a blurred darkness in the shadow, I heard the solemn words of the Franciscan hymn—

“O Beata Solitudo!
O Sola Beatitudo!”

The sadness of that melancholy magic did not pass, but only deepened into a more solemn inward cadence.

But in the morning, when I woke, the sound and call of the sea came with a lifting wing. Out on the tossing wilderness of blue and white all the tides of happiness in the world seemed to be on the moving dazzle of exultant life.

Then I thought no more of that sad sea-music of the grey dusk, of the days that pass and of the sorrow that stays. But, instead, I turned with a new gladness to a volume lying near, that had in it my book-plate motto—

Le Temps passe, la Beauté survit.

Here I felt was the truer, or at least the better, reading of the obscure voice of the many waters. To the artist, what words could have so high and deliberate dignity, so deep an inward fortifying?

And all that day, through sun and shine and lifting and resting wind, if I heard one deep muffled voice sighing, *Le Temps passe*, I heard a deeper and unmuffled voice answering, *La Beauté survit*.

FROM: CHILDREN OF WATER

There is a restlessness unlike any other restlessness in the vagrant spirit of man: a disquietude that is of the soul as well as of the body, for it is the tossed spray of forgotten and primitive memories. And yet, perhaps, this feeling is only the dream of those unquiet minds who are the children of water.

Long ago, when Manannan, the god of wind and sea, offspring of Lir, the Oceanus of the Gael, lay once by weedy shores, he heard a man and a woman talking. The woman was a woman of the sea, and some say that she was a seal: but that is no matter, for it was in the time when the divine race and the human race and the soulless race and the dumb races that are near to man were all one race. And Manannan heard the man

say: "I will give you love and home and peace." The sea-woman listened to that, and said: "And I will bring you the homelessness of the sea, and the peace of the restless wave, and love like the wandering wind." At that the man chided her, and said she could be no woman, though she had his love. She laughed, and slid into green water. Then Manannan took the shape of a youth, and appeared to the man. "You are a strange love for a sea-woman," he said: "and why do you go putting your earth-heart to her sea-heart?" The man said he did not know, but that he had no pleasure in looking at women who were all the same. At that Manannan laughed a low laugh. "Go back," he said, "and take one you'll meet singing on the heather. She's white and fair. But because of your lost love in the water, I'll give you a gift." And with that Manannan took a wave of the sea and threw it into the man's heart. He went back, and wedded, and, when his hour came, he died. But he, and the children he had, and all the unnumbered clan that came of them, knew by day and by night a love that was tameless and changeable as the wandering wind, and a longing that was unquiet as the restless wave, and the homelessness of the sea. And that is why they are called the Sliochd-na-mara, the clan of the waters, or the Treud-na-thonn, the tribe of the sea-wave.

And of that clan are some who have turned their longing after the wind and wave of the mind—the wind that would overtake the waves of thought and dream, and gather them and lift them into clouds of beauty drifting in the blue glens of the sky.

How are these ever to be satisfied, children of water?

W. B. YEATS

Aedh Tells of the Rose in his Heart

All things uncomely and broken, all things worn out and old,
The cry of a child by the roadway, the creak of a lumbering cart,
The heavy steps of the ploughman, splashing the wintry mould,
Are wronging your image that blossoms a rose in the deeps of my heart.

The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great to be told;
I hunger to build them anew and sit on a green knoll apart,
With the earth and the sky and the water, remade, like a casket of gold
For my dreams of your image that blossoms a rose in the deeps of my
heart.

The Cap and Bells

A queen was beloved by a jester,
And once when the owls grew still
He made his soul go upward
And stand on her window sill.

In a long and straight blue garment,
It talked before morn was white,
And it had grown wise by thinking
Of a footfall hushed and light.

But the young queen would not listen;
She rose in her pale night gown,
She drew in the brightening casement
And pushed the brass bolt down.

He bade his heart go to her,
When the bats cried out no more,
In a red and quivering garment
It sang to her through the door,

The tongue of it sweet with dreaming
Of a flutter of flower-like hair,
But she took up her fan from the table
And waved it off on the air.

'I've cap and bell,' he pondered,
'I will send them to her and die.'
And as soon as the morn had whitened
He left them where she went by.

She laid them upon her bosom,
Under a cloud of her hair,
And her red lips sang them a love song.
The stars grew out of the air.

She opened her door and her window,
And the heart and the soul came through,
To her right hand came the red one,
To her left hand came the blue.

They set up a noise like crickets,
A chattering wise and sweet,
And her hair was a folded flower,
And the quiet of love in her feet.

The Song of the Happy Shepherd

The woods of Arcady are dead,
And over is their antique joy;
Of old the world on dreaming fed;
Gray Truth is now her painted toy;
Yet still she turns her restless head:
But O, sick children of the world,
Of all the many changing things
In dreary dancing past us whirled,
To the cracked tune that Chronos sings,
Words alone are certain good.
Where are now the warring kings,
Word be-mockers?—By the Rood
Where are now the warring kings?
An idle word is now their glory,
By the stammering schoolboy said,
Reading some entangled story:
The kings of the old time are fled.
The wandering earth herself may be
Only a sudden flaming word,
In clanging space a moment heard,
Troubling the endless reverie.
Then nowise worship dusty deeds,
Nor seek; for this is also sooth;
To hunger fiercely after truth,
Lest all thy toiling only breeds
New dreams, new dreams; there is no truth
Saving in thine own heart. Seek, then,
No learning from the starry men,
Who follow with the optic glass
The whirling ways of stars that pass—
Seek, then, for this is also sooth,
No word of theirs—the cold star-bane
Has cloven and rent their hearts in twain,
And dead is all their human truth.
Go gather by the humming sea
Some twisted, echo-harboured shell,
And to its lips thy story tell,
And they thy comforters will be,
Rewording in melodious guile,
Thy fretful words a little while,
Till they shall singing fade in ruth,
And die a pearly brotherhood;
For words alone are certain good:
Sing, then, for this is also sooth.
I must be gone: there is a grave
Where daffodil and lily wave,
And I would please the hapless faun,
Buried under the sleepy ground,
With mirthful songs before the dawn.

His shouting days with mirth were crowned;
 And still I dream he treads the lawn,
 Walking ghostly in the dew,
 Pierced by my glad singing through,
 My songs of old earth's dreamy youth:
 But ah! she dreams not now; dream thou!
 For fair are poppies on the brow:
 Dream, dream, for this is also sooth.

*A Mystical Prayer to the Masters of the Elements, Finvarra, Feacra, and
 Caoilte*

The Powers, not kind like you, came where God's garden blows,
 And stole the crimson Rose,
 And hurled it from its place amid the pearly light
 Into a blinding night,—
 O, when shall Sorrow wander no more in the land
 With Beauty hand in hand?

Great elemental Powers of wind, and wave, and fire,
 With your harmonious quire,
 Encircle her I love and sing her into peace,
 That my old care may cease,
 And she forget the wandering and the crimson gloom
 Of the Rose in its doom.

Great Rulers of stillness, let her no longer be
 As the light on the sea,
 Or as the changing spears flung by the golden stars
 Out of their whirling cars,
 But let a gentle silence enwrought with music flow
 Where her soft footsteps go.

FIONA MACLEOD

FROM The Hills of Dream

Across the silent stream
 Where the slumber-shadows go,
 From the dim blue Hills of Dream
 I have heard the west wind blow.

Who hath seen that fragrant land,
 Who hath seen that unscanned west?
 Only the listless hand
 And the unpulsing breast.

But when the west wind blows
 I see moon-lances gleam
 Where the Host of Faerie flows
 Athwart the Hills of Dream.

And a strange song I have heard
By a shadowy stream,
And the singing of a snow-white bird
On the Hills of Dream.

The Rune of the Passion of Women

We who love are those who suffer,
We who suffer most are those who most do love.
O the heartbreak come of longing love,
O the heartbreak come of love deferred,
O the heartbreak come of love grown listless.
Far upon the lonely hills I have heard the crying,
The lamentable crying of the ewes,
And dreamed I heard the sorrow of poor mothers
Made lambless too and weary with that sorrow:
And far upon the waves I have heard the crying,
The lamentable crying of the seamews,
And dreamed I heard the wailing of the women
Whose hearts are flamed with love above the gravestone,
Whose hearts beat fast but hear no fellow-beating.
Bitter, alas, the sorrow of lonely women,
When no man by the ingle sits, and in the cradle
No little flower-like faces flush with slumber:
Bitter the loss of these, the lonely silence,
The void bed, the hearthside void,
The void heart, and only the grave not void:
But bitterer, oh more bitter still, the longing
Of women who have known no love at all, who never,
Never, never, have grown hot and cold with rapture
'Neath the lips or 'neath the clasp of longing,
Who have never opened eyes of heaven to man's devotion,
Who have never heard a husband whisper "wife,"
Who have lost their youth, their dreams, their fairness,
In a vain upgrowing to a light that comes not.
Bitter these: but bitterer than either,
O most bitter for the heart of woman
To have loved and been beloved with passion,
To have known the height and depth, the vision
Of triple-flaming love—and in the heart-self
Sung a song of deathless love, immortal,
Sunrise-haired, and starry-eyed, and wondrous:
To have felt the brain sustain the mighty
Weight and reach of thought unspanned and spanless,
To have felt the soul grow large and noble,
To have felt the spirit dauntless, eager, swift in hope and daring,
To have felt the body grow in fairness,
All the glory and the beauty of the body
Thrill with joy of living, feel the bosom
Rise and fall with sudden tides of passion,

Feel the lift of soul to soul, and know the rapture
Of the rising triumph of the ultimate dream
Beyond the pale place of defeated dreams:
To know all this, to feel all this, to be a woman
Crowned with the double crown of lily and rose
And have the morning star to rule the golden hours
And have the evening star thro' hours of dream,
To live, to do, to act, to dream, to hope,
To be a perfect woman with the full
Sweet, wondrous, and consummate joy
Of womanhood fulfilled to all desire—
And then . . . oh then, to know the waning of the vision,
To go through days and nights of starless longing,
Through nights and days of gloom and bitter sorrow:
To see the fairness of the body passing,
To see the beauty wither, the sweet colour
Fade, the coming of the wintry lines
Upon pale faces chilled with idle loving,
The slow subsidence of the tides of living.
To feel all this, and know the desolate sorrow
Of the pale place of all defeated dreams,
And to cry out with aching lips, and vainly;
And to cry out with aching heart, and vainly;
And to cry out with aching brain, and vainly;
And to cry out with aching soul, and vainly;
To cry, cry, cry with passionate heartbreak, sobbing,
To the dim wondrous shape of Love Retreating—
To grope blindly for the warm hand, for the swift touch,
To seek blindly for the starry lamps of passion,
To crave blindly for the dear words of longing!
To go forth cold, and drear, and lonely, O so lonely,
With the heart-cry even as the crying,
The lamentable crying on the hills
When lambless ewes go desolately astray—
Yea, to go forth disrowned at last, who have worn
The flower-sweet lovely crown of rapturous love:
To know the eyes have lost their starry wonder;
To know the hair no more a fragrant dusk is
Wherein to whisper secrets of deep longing,
To know the breasts shall henceforth be no haven
For the dear weary head that loved to lie there—
To go, to know, and yet to live and suffer,
To be as use and wont demand, to fly no signal
That the soul flounders in a sea of sorrow,
But to be "true," "woman," "patient," "tender,"
"Divinely acquiescent," all-forbearing,
To laugh, and smile, to comfort, to sustain,
To do all this—oh this is bitterest,
O this the heaviest cross, O this the tree
Whereon the woman hath her crucifixion.

But O ye women, what avail? Behold,
Men worship at the tree, whereon is writ
The legend of the broken hearts of woman.
And this is the end: for young and old the end:
For fair and sweet, for those not sweet nor fair,
For loved, unloved, for those who once were loved,
For all the women of all this weary world
Of joy too brief and sorrow far too long,
This is the end: the cross, the bitter tree,
And worship of the phantom raised on high
Out of your love, your passion, your despair,
Hopes unfulfilled, and unavailing tears.

ALICE MEYNELL

The Lesson of Landscape

The landscape, like our literature, is apt to grow and to get itself formed under too luxurious ideals. This is the evil work of that *little more* which makes its insensible but persistent additions to styles, to the arts, to the ornaments of life—to nature, when unluckily man becomes too explicitly conscious of her beauty, and too deliberate in his arrangement of it. The landscape has need of moderation, of that fast-disappearing grace of unconsciousness, and, in short, of a return toward the ascetic temper. The English way of landowning, above all, has made for luxury. Naturally the country is fat. The trees are thick and round—a world of leaves; the hills are round; the forms are all blunt; and the grass is so deep as to have almost the effect of snow in smoothing off all points and curving away all abruptness. England is almost as blunt as a machine-made moulding or a piece of early Victorian cast-iron work. And on all this we have, of set purpose, improved by our invention of the country park. There all is curves and masses. A little more is added to the greenness and the softness of the forest glade, and for increase of ornament the fat land is devoted to idleness. Not a tree that is not impenetrable, inarticulate. Thick soil below and thick growth above cover up all the bones of the land, which in more delicate countries show brows and hollows resembling those of a fine face after mental experience. By a very intelligible paradox, it is only in a landscape made up for

beauty that beauty is so ill achieved. Much beauty there must needs be where there are vegetation and the seasons. But even the seasons, in park scenery, are marred by the *little too much*: too complete a winter, too emphatic a spring, an ostentatious summer, an autumn too demonstrative.

'Seek to have less rather than more'. It is a counsel of perfection in *The Imitation of Christ*. And here, undoubtedly, is the secret of all that is virile and classic in the art of man, and of all in nature that is most harmonious with that art. Moreover, this is the secret of Italy. How little do the tourists and the poets grasp this latter truth, by the way—and the artists! The legend of Italy is to be gorgeous, and they have her legend by rote. But Italy is slim and all articulate; her most characteristic trees are those that are distinct and distinguished, with lines that suggest the etching-point rather than a brush loaded with paint. Cyresses shaped like flames, tall pines with the abrupt flatness of their tops, thin canes in the brakes, sharp aloes by the roadside, and olives with the delicate acuteness of the leaf—these make clean lines of slender vegetation. And they own the seasons by a gentle confession. Rather than be over-powered by the clamorous proclamation of summer in the English woods, we would follow June to this subtler South: even to the Campagna, where the cycle of the seasons passes within such narrow limitations that insensitive eyes scarcely recognise it. In early spring there is a fresher touch of green on all the spaces of grass, the distance grows less mellow and more radiant; by the coming of May the green has been imperceptibly dimmed again; it blushes with the mingled colours of minute and numberless flowers—a dust of flowers, in lines longer than those of ocean billows. This is the desert blossoming like a rose: not the obvious rose of gardens, but the multitudinous and various flower that gathers once in the year in every hand's-breadth of the wilderness. When June comes the sun has burnt all to leagues of harmonious seed, coloured with a hint of the colour of harvest, which is gradually changed to the lighter harmonies of winter. All this fine chromatic scale passes within such modest boundaries that it is accused as a monotony. But those who find its modesty delightful may have a still more delicate pleasure in the blooming and blossoming of the sea. The passing from the winter blue to the summer blue, from the cold colour to the colour that has in it the fire of the sun, the kindling of the sapphire of the Mediterranean—the significance

of these sea-seasons, so far from the pasture and the harvest, is imperceptible to ordinary senses, as appears from the fact that so few stay to see it all fulfilled. And if the tourist stayed, he would no doubt violate all that is lovely and moderate by the insistence of his description. He would find adjectives for the blue sea, but probably he would refuse to search for words for the white. A white Mediterranean is not in the legend. Nevertheless it blooms, now and then, pale as an opal; the white sea is the flower of the breathless midsummer. And in its clear, silent waters, a few days, in the culmination of the heat, bring forth translucent living creatures, many-shaped jelly-fish, coloured like mother-of-pearl.

But without going so far from the landscape of daily life, it is in agricultural Italy that the *little less* makes so undesignedly, and as it were so inevitably, for beauty. The country that is formed for use and purpose only is immeasurably the loveliest. What a lesson in literature! How feelingly it persuades us that all except a very little of the ornament of letters and of life makes the dullness of the world. The tenderness of colour, the beauty of series and perspective, and the variety of surface, produced by the small culture of vegetables, are among the charms that come unsought, and that are not to be found by seeking—are never to be achieved if they are sought for their own sake. And another of the delights of the useful laborious land is its vitality. The soil may be thin and dry, but man's life is added to its own. He has embanked the hill to make little platforms for the growth of wheat in the light shadows of olive leaves. Thanks to the métayer land-tenure, man's heart, as well as his strength, is given to the ground, with his hope and his honour. Louis Blanc's 'point of honour of industry' is a conscious impulse—it is not too much to say—with most of the Tuscan contadini; but as each effort they make for their master they make also for the bread of their children, it is no wonder that the land they cultivate has a look of life. But in all colour, in all luxury, and in all that gives material for picturesque English, this lovely scenery for food and wine and raiment has that *little less* to which we desire to recall a rhetorical world.

MAURICE HEWLETT

Saint Beauty

'Or pensa quanta bellezza avea . . . che nessuno che la vedesse mai la guardo per concupiscenza, tanto era la santità che rilustrava in lei.'

—Savonarola.

In chamber thought my mind is like a fire
 Kindled and set to roar by a strong wind,
 And my tongue eloquent, and my eyes blind
 To all but mad pursuit of their desire.
 But I am mute before thee, as a quire
 Of singers when one chant soars unconfin'd
 From one gold-throated minstrel: thou dost bind
 My lips, eyes, heart, my very thought's attire

For body's beauty is thy soul's thin veil
 Where thro' soul's beauty shineth like a jewel
 Blood-bright, whose too pure strength would else assail
 Earth-groping eyes: it hath thy soul's impress,
 It hath thy soul's white magic, but, less cruel,
 Soul's pride softened by body's courteousness.

HENRY C. BEECHING

Beauty

These other things of earth and sky
 Are still most beautiful, and yet
 I still can love them quietly.

That broad flush where the sun has set
 Lingering awhile for the moon's sake,
 And the grey sea, I shall forget.

Why will forgetfulness not take
 The troubled longing from my heart
 Which thy flushed face and grey eyes make?

Art thou, thou only, more than part
 Of this great beauty of the whole
 That but for thee my quick nerves start?

Hast thou some hidden magic of soul
 Which draws my eyes and hands and feet
 As the moon draws the waves that roll?

It may be, for I know well, sweet,
 I have no word to say at best,
 But the wave's word which the winds repeat.

(Moon, is this spell thy potentest?
 Cannot the waves mount up to heaven,
 Or else this tossing sink to rest?)

Conjure no more; let me be given
 To love thy beauty peacefully
 Like sunshine or the silver Seven.

HERBERT P. HORNE

*Tot tibi tamque dabit formosas Roma puellas: hæc habet, ut dicas, quidquid
 in orbe fuit*

Oh! had you eyes, but eyes that move
 Within the light and realm of love,
 Then would you, on the sudden, meet
 A Helen walking down the street.

Here in this London 'mid the stir,
 The traffic, and the burdened air,
 Oh! could your eyes divine their home,
 Then this were Greece, or that were Rome.

The state of Dian is not gone,
 The dawn she fled is yet the dawn;
 Her crystal flesh the years renew
 Despite her bodice, skirt, and shoe.

Nor is she only to be seen
 With Juno's height, and Pallas' sheen;
 The knit, all-wondrously wrought, form
 Of Cytherea, soft and warm,

Yet, like her jewelled Hesperus,
 Puts forth its light, and shines on us;
 Whene'er she sees, and would control,
 Love, at the windows of the soul.

Nec violæ semper, nec hiantia lilia florent; et riget amissa spina relictæ rosæ

Why are you fair? Is it because we know,
 Your beauty stays but for another hour?
 Why are you sweet? Is it because you show,
 Even in the bud, the blasting of the flower?
 Is it that we,
 Already in the mind,
 Too surely see
 The thoughtless, ruthless, hurry of the wind
 Scatter the petals of this perfect rose?

Why are you sad? Is it because our kisses,
 That were so sweet in kissing, now are past?
 But are not all things swift to pass as this is,
 Which we desire to last?
 Being too happy, we may not abide
 Within the happiness, that we possess;
 But needs are swept on by the ceaseless tide
 Of Life's unwisdom, and of our distress:
 As if, to all this crowd of ecstasies,
 The present close
 Were beauty faded, and deceived trust;
 Locks, that no hands may braid; dull lifeless eyes,
 Eyes, that have wept their lustre into dust.
 Who knows?

ARTHUR SYMONS

For a Picture of Watteau

Here the vague winds have rest;
 The forest breathes in sleep,
 Lifting a quiet breast;
 It is the hour of rest.

How summer glides away!
 An autumn pallor blooms
 Upon the cheek of day.
 Come, lovers, come away!

But here, where dead leaves fall
 Upon the grass, what strains,
 Languidly musical,
 Mournfully rise and fall?

Light loves that woke with spring
 This autumn afternoon
 Beholds meandering,
 Still, to the strains of spring.

Your dancing feet are faint,
 Lovers: the air recedes
 Into a sighing plaint,
 Faint, as your loves are faint.

It is the end, the end,
 The dance of love's decease.
 Feign no more now, fair friend!
 It is the end, the end.

Pierrot in Half-mourning

I, that am Pierrot, pray you pity me!
To be so young, so old in misery:
See me, and how the winter of my grief
Wastes me, and how I whiten like a leaf,
And how, like a lost child, lost and afraid,
I seek the shadow, I that am a shade,
I that have loved a moonbeam, nor have won
Any Diana to Endymion.
Pity me, for I have but loved too well
The hope of the too fair impossible.
Ah, it is she, she, Columbine: again
I see her, and I woo her, and in vain.
She lures me with her beckoning finger-tips;
How her eyes shine for me, and how her lips
Bloom for me, roses, roses, red and rich!
She waves to me the white arms of a witch
Over the world: I follow, I forget
All, but she'll love me yet, she'll love me yet!

Impression

To M. C.

The pink and black of silk and lace,
Flushed in the rosy-golden glow
Of lamplight on her lifted face;
Powder and wig, and pink and lace,

And those pathetic eyes of hers;
But all the London footlights know
The little plaintive smile that stirs
The shadow in those eyes of hers.

Outside, the dreary church-bell tolled,
The London Sunday faded slow;
Ah, what is this? what wings unfold
In this miraculous rose of gold?

At Dieppe: After Sunset

The sea lies quieted beneath
The after-sunset flush
That leaves upon the heaped grey clouds
The grape's faint purple blush.

Pale, from a little space in heaven
Of delicate ivory,
The sickle-moon and one gold star
Look down upon the sea.

At Dieppe: Grey and Green

To Walter Sickert

The grey-green stretch of sandy grass,
Indefinitely desolate;
A sea of lead, a sky of slate;
Already autumn in the air, alas!

One stark monotony of stone,
The long hotel, acutely white,
Against the after-sunset light
Withers grey-green, and takes the grass's tone.

Listless and endless it outlies,
And means, to you and me, no more
Than any pebble on the shore,
Or this indifferent moment as it dies.

FRANCIS THOMPSON

FROM *Ode to the Setting Sun*

Alpha and Omega, sadness and mirth,
The springing music, and its wasting breath—
The fairest things in life are Death and Birth,
And of these two the fairer thing is Death.
Mystical twins of Time inseparable,
The younger hath the holier array,
And hath the awfuller sway:
It is the falling star that trails the light,
It is the breaking wave that hath the might,
The passing shower that rainbows maniple.
Is it not so, O thou down-stricken Day,
That draw'st thy splendours round thee in thy fall?
High was thine Eastern pomp inaugural;
But thou dost set in statelier pageantry
Lauded with tumults of a firmament:
Thy visible music-blasts make deaf the sky,
Thy cymbals clang to fire the Occident,
Thou dost thy dying so triumphally:
I see the crimson blaring of thy shawms!
Why do those lucent palms
Strew thy feet's failing thicklier than their might,
Who dost but hood thy glorious eyes with night,
And vex the heels of all the yesterdays?
Lo! this loud, lackeying praise
Will stay behind to greet the usurping moon,
When they have cloud-barred over thee the West.

Oh, shake the bright dust from thy parting shoon!
 The earth not paeans thee, nor serves thy hest,
 Be godded not by Heaven! avert thy face,
 And leave to blank disgrace
 The oblivious world! unsceptre thee of state and place!

Yet ere Olympus thou wast, and a god!
 Though we deny thy nod,
 We cannot spoil thee of thy divinity.
 What know we elder than thee?
 When thou didst, bursting from the great void's husk,
 Leap like a lion on the throat o' the dusk;
 When the angels rose-chapleted
 Sang each to other,
 The vaulted blaze overhead
 Of their vast pinions spread,
 Hailing thee brother;
 How chaos rolled back from the wonder,
 And the First Morn knelt down to thy visage of thunder!
 Thou didst draw to thy side
 Thy young Auroral bride,
 And lift her veil of night and mystery;
 Tellus with baby hands
 Shook off her swaddling-bands,
 And from the unswathed vapours laughed to thee.

Thou two-form deity, nurse at once and sire!
 Thou genitor that all things nourishest!
 The earth was suckled at thy shining breast,
 And in her veins is quick thy milky fire.
 Who scarfed her with the morning? and who set
 Upon her brow the day-fall's carcanet?
 Who queened her front with the enronoured moon?
 Who dug night's jewels from their vaulty mine
 To dower her, past an eastern wizard's dreams,
 When, hovering on him through his haschish-swoon,
 All the rained gems of the old Tartarian line
 Shiver in lustrous throbbings of tinged flame?—
 Whereof a moiety in the Paoli's seams
 Stately builded their Venetian name.
 Thou hast enwoofed her
 An empress of the air,
 And all her births are propertied by thee:
 Her teeming centuries
 Drew being from thine eyes:
 Thou fatt'st the marrow of all quality.

Who lit the furnace of the mammoth's heart?
 Who shagged him like Pilatus' ribbed flanks?
 Who raised the columned ranks
 Of that old pre-diluvian forestry,

Which like a continent torn oppressed the sea,
 When the ancient heavens did in rains depart,
 While the high-dancèd whirls
 Of the tossed scud made hiss thy drenched curls?
 Thou rear'dst the enormous brood;
 Who hast with life imbued
 The lion maned in tawny majesty,
 The tiger velvet-barred,
 The stealthy-stepping pard,
 And the lithe panther's flexuous symmetry.

How came the entombèd tree a light-bearer,
 Though sunk in lightless lair?
 Friend of the forgers of earth,
 Mate of the earthquake and thunders volcanic,
 Clapsed in the arms of the forces Titanic
 Which rock like a cradle the girth
 Of the ether-hung world;
 Swart son of the swarthy mine,
 When flame on the breath of his nostrils feeds
 How is his countenance half-divine,
 Like thee in thy sanguine weeds?
 Thou gavest him his light,
 Though sepultured in night
 Beneath the dead bones of a perished world;
 Over his prostrate form
 Though cold, and heat, and storm,
 The mountainous wrack of a creation hurled.

Who made the splendid rose
 Saturate with purple glows;
 Cupped to the marge with beauty; a perfume-press
 Whence the wind vintages
 Gushes of warmèd fragrance richer far
 Than all the flavorful ooze of Cyprus' vats?
 Lo, in yon gale which waves her green cymar,
 With dusky cheeks burnt red
 She sways her heavy head,
 Drunk with the must of her own odorousness;
 While in a moted trouble the vexed gnats
 Maze, and vibrate, and tease the noontide hush.
 Who girt dissolvèd lightnings in the grape?
 Summered the opal with an Irised flush?
 Is it not thou that dost the tulip drape,
 And huest the daffodilly,
 Yet who hast snowed the lily;
 And her frail sister, whom the waters name,
 Dost vestal-vesture 'mid the blaze of June,
 Cold as the new-sprung girlhood of the moon
 Ere Autumn's kiss sultry her cheek with flame?
 Thou sway'st thy sceptred beam
 O'er all delight and dream;

Beauty is beautiful but in thy glance:
 And, like a jocund maid
 In garland-flowers arrayed,
 Before thy ark Earth keeps her sacred dance.

And now, O shaken from thine antique throne,
 And sunken from thy cœrule empery,
 Now that the red glare of thy fall is blown
 In smoke and flame about the windy sky,
 Where are the wailing voices that should meet
 From hill, stream, grove, and all of mortal shape
 Who tread thy gifts, in vineyards as stray feet
 Pulp the globed weight of juiced Iberia's grape?
 Where is the threne o' the sea?
 And why not dirges thee
 The wind, that sings to himself as he makes stride
 Lonely and terrible on the Andéan height?
 Where is the Naiad 'mid her sworded sedge?
 The Nymph wan-glimmering by her wan fount's verge?
 The Dryad at timid gaze by the wood-side?
 The Oread jutting light
 On one up-strained sole from the rock-ledge?
 The Nereid tip-toe on the scud o' the surge,
 With whistling tresses dank athwart her face,
 And all her figure poised in lithe Circean grace?
 Why withers their lament?
 Their tresses tear-besprent,
 Have they sighed hence with trailing garment-hem?
 O sweet, O sad, O fair,
 I catch your flying hair,
 Draw your eyes down to me, and dream on them!

A Corymbus for Autumn

Hearken, my chant,—'tis
 As a Bacchante's,
 A grape-spurt, a vine-splash, a tossed tress, flown vaunt 'tis!
 Suffer my singing,
 Gipsy of Seasons, ere thou go winging;
 Ere Winter throws
 His slaking snows
 In thy feasting-flagon's impurpurate glows!
 Tanned maiden! with cheeks like apples russet,
 And breast a brown agaric faint-flushing at tip,
 And a mouth too red for the moon to buss it
 But her cheek unvow its vestalship;
 Thy mists enclip
 Her steel-clear circuit illuminous,
 Until it crust
 Rubiginous
 With the glorious gules of a glowing rust.

Far other saw we, other indeed,
 The crescent moon, in the May-days dead,
 Fly up with its slender white wings spread
 Out of its nest in the sea's waved mead!
 How are the veins of thee, Autumn, laden?
 Umbered juices,
 And pulpèd oozes
 Pappy out of the cherry-bruises,
 Froth the veins of thee, wild, wild maiden!
 With hair that musters
 In globèd clusters,
 In tumbling clusters, like swarthy grapes,
 Round thy brow and thine ears o'ershaden;
 With the burning darkness of eyes like pansies,
 Like velvet pansies
 Wherethrough escapes
 The splendid might of thy conflagrate fancies;
 With robe gold-tawny not hiding the shapes
 Of the feet whereunto it falleth down,
 Thy naked feet unsandallèd;
 With robe gold-tawny that does not veil
 Feet where the red
 Is meshed in the brown,
 Like a rubied sun in a Venice-sail.

The wassailous heart of the Year is thine!
 His Bacchic fingers disentwine
 His coronal
 At thy festival;
 His revelling fingers disentwine
 Leaf, flower, and all,
 And let them fall
 Blossom and all in thy wavering wine.
 The Summer looks out from her brazen tower,
 Through the flashing bars of July,
 Waiting thy ripened golden shower;
 Whereof there cometh, with sandals fleet,
 The North-west flying viewlessly,
 With a sword to sheer, and untameable feet,
 And the gorgon-head of the Winter shown
 To stiffen the gazing earth as stone.

 In crystal Heaven's magic sphere
 Poised in the palm of thy fervid hand,
 Thou seest the enchanted shows appear
 That stain Favonian firmament;
 Richer than ever the Occident
 Gave up to bygone Summer's wand.
 Day's dying dragon lies drooping his crest,
 Panting red pants into the West.

Or the butterfly sunset claps its wings
 With flitter alit on the swinging blossom,
 The gusty blossom, that tosses and swings,
 Of the sea with its blown and ruffled bosom;
 Its ruffled bosom wherethrough the wind sings
 Till the crisped petals are loosened and strown
 Overblown, on the sand;
 Shed, curling as dead
 Rose-leaves curl, on the fleckèd strand.

Or higher, holier, saintlier when, as now,
 All Nature sacerdotal seems, and thou.
 The calm hour strikes on yon golden gong,
 In tones of floating and mellow light,
 A spreading summons to even-song:
 See how there
 The cowlèd Night
 Kneels on the Eastern sanctuary-stair.
 What is this feel of incense everywhere?
 Clings it round folds of the blanch-amiced clouds,
 Upwafted by the solemn thurifer,
 The mighty Spirit unknown,
 That swingeth the slow earth before the embannered Throne?
 Or is't the Season under all these shrouds
 Of light, and sense, and silence, makes her known
 A presence everywhere,
 An inarticulate prayer,
 A hand on the soothed tresses of the air?
 But there is one hour scant
 Of this Titanian, primal liturgy;
 As there is but one hour for me and thee,
 Autumn, for thee and thine hierophant,
 Of this grave ending chant.
 Round the earth still and stark
 Heaven's death-lights kindle, yellow spark by spark,
 Beneath the dreadful catafalque of the dark.

And I had ended there:
 But a great wind blew all the stars to flare,
 And cried, "I sweep a path before the moon!
 Tarry ye now the coming of the moon,
 For she is coming soon";
 Then died before the coming of the moon.
 And she came forth upon the trepidant air,
 In vesture unimagined-fair,
 Woven as woof of flag-lilies;
 And, curdled as of flag-lilies,
 The vapour at the feet of her;
 And a haze about her tinged in fainter wise;

As if she had trodden the stars in press,
 Till the gold wine spurted over her dress,
 Till the gold wine gushed out round her feet;
 Spouted over her stained wear,
 And bubbled in golden froth at her feet,
 And hung like a whirlpool's mist round her.

Still, mighty Season, do I see't,
 Thy sway is still majestic!
 Thou holds't of God, by title sure,
 Thine indefeasible investiture,
 And that right round thy locks are native to;
 The heavens upon thy brow imperial,
 This huge terrene thy ball,
 And o'er thy shoulders thrown wide air's depending pall
 What if thine earth be blear and bleak of hue?
 Still, still the skies are sweet!
 Still, Season, still thou hast thy triumphs there!
 How have I, unaware,
 Forgetful of my strain inaugural,
 Cleft the great rondure of thy reign complete,
 Yielding thee half, who hast indeed the all?
 I will not think thy sovereignty begun
 But with the shepherd Sun
 That washes in the sea the stars' gold fleeces;
 Or that with Day it ceases
 Who sets his burning lips to the salt brine,
 And purples it to wine;
 While I behold how ermined Artemis
 Ordained weeds must wear,
 And toil thy business;
 Who witness am of her,
 Her too in autumn turned a vintager;
 And, laden with its lampèd clusters bright,
 The fiery-fruited vineyard of this night.

HERBERT TRENCH

FROM *To a Dead Poet**

Therefore we hail him, winged poet undated,
 Backward-gazer, seer Chaldean belated,
 Hymning Terror and Chaos, as Earth in her vagrance
 Leaves long behind her in space wild tresses of fragrance,
 Hymning all wonder, as momentarily grey Earth breaketh
 Still into spaces new, and new-eyed awaketh!

* Edgar Allen Poe.

He floats in the ivory boat he hath carven for pleasure,
 On, down a faery gorge, as one treads a measure,
 Bound for the paradise still where his heart hath treasure.
 Deep-wombed valleys delight him, ambrosial, clouded
 Clear streams wan with lilies and forest-shrouded,
 Walled by autumnal mountains, all sunset-lustred,
 Streams that mirror the cypress, dark, cedar-clustered.

Down the mid-flood he bears through a vaporous Rhineland
 Borne in his plumed shallop by pool and vineland
 (Strange and phantasmal country!) by towers enchanted
 Ablaze with his enemies' souls or by demons haunted.
 Broideries droop no longer from keep or casement
 Ruins honeycombed with horror and foul abasement,
 Rats swim off in the water—dead shoulders welter—
 Cold on the bulwark, lo, a dead hand craves shelter.
 No, he must hasten past, this poet unfriended,
 He too is shelterless, cold, till this voyage be ended.

Melodies dark he sings, low-toned, melancholy,
 He, too, has wrestled with Gods in his radiant folly,
 He, too, has felt the breath of passion too near him,
 Still the lost ecstasy clings, and lost arms ensphere him.

O high houses crumbling down to the water,
 He seeks one lost and gone, the heaven's wise daughter!
 Named under many names, although none recalls her—
 Ligcia or Berenice, ah, what befalls her?

Valleys and forests and cities that Time enchanteth,
 Have they not marked her passing for whom he panteth?
 "None hath gone by, O Genius serene and sombre!
 Whom dost thou still pursue, through waking and slumber?"
 "I seek one face alone on my soul's arrival
 At Hades' glimmering wharves, one divine survival!"
 "Lo! she thy lost one it is, who in airs above thee
 Urges thy faery sail with the lips that love thee!
 She takes thy sore heart hence, and shall heal its bruises
 Far in the deathless country, the land of Muses . . ."

Requiem of Archangels for the World

Hearts, beat no more! Earth's Sleep has come!
 All iron stands her wrinkled Tree,
 The streams that sang are stricken dumb,
 The snowflake fades into the sea.

Hearts, throb no more! your time is past!
 Thousands of years for this pent field
 Ye have done battle. Now at last
 The flags may sink, the captains yield.

Sleep, ye great Wars, just or unjust!
 Sleep takes the gate and none defends.
 Soft on your craters' fire and lust,
 Civilisations, Sleep descends!

Time it is, time to cease carouse!
 Let the nations and their noise grow dim!
 Let the lights wane within the house
 And darkness cover, limb by limb!

Across your passes, Alps and plains
 A planetary vapour flows,
 A last invader, and enchains
 The vine, the woman, and the rose.

Sleep, Forests old! Sleep in your beds,
 Wild-muttering Oceans and dark Wells!
 Sleep be upon your shrunken heads,
 Blind everlasting Pinnacles!

Sleep now, ye great, high-shining Kings,
 Your torrent glories snapt in death.
 Sleep, simple men—sunk water-springs
 And all the ground Man laboureth.

Sleep, Heroes, in your mountain walls—
 The trumpet shall not sound again;
 And ranged on misty pedestals
 Sleep now, O sleepless Gods of men.

Nor keep wide your unfathomed orbs!
 These troubled clans that make and mourn
 Some heavy-lidded Cloud absorbs
 And the lulling snows of the Unborn.

The Earth lies cold. Thou, stooping Night,
 Lay forth the limbs and shroud the scars,
 And bid with chanting to the rite
 The torches of thy train of stars!

LIONEL JOHNSON

Plato in London

To Campbell Dodgson

The pure flame of one taper fall
 Over the old and comely page:
 No harsher light disturb at all
 This converse with a treasured sage.
 Seemly, and fair, and of the best,
 If Plato be our guest,
 Should things befall.

Without, a world of noise and cold:
Here, the soft burning of the fire.
And Plato walks, where heavens unfold,
About the home of his desire.
From his own city of high things,
He shows to us, and brings,
Truth of fine gold.

The hours pass; and the fire burns low;
The clear flame dwindles into death:
Shut then the book with care; and so,
Take leave of Plato, with hushed breath:
A little, by the falling gleams,
Tarry the gracious dreams:
And they too go.

Lean from the window to the air:
Hear London's voice upon the night!
Thou hast bold converse with things rare:
Look now upon another sight!
The calm stars, in their living skies:
And then, these surging cries,
This restless glare!

That starry music, starry fire,
High above all our noise and glare:
The image of our long desire,
The beauty, and the strength, are there.
And Plato's thought lives, true and clear,
In as august a sphere:
Perchance, far higher.

Glories

To Theodore Peters

Roses from Pæstan rosaries!
More goodly red and white was she:
Her red and white were harmonies,
Not matched upon a Pæstan tree.

Ivories blanched in Alban air!
She lies more purely blanched than you:
No Alban whiteness doth she wear,
But death's perfections of that hue.

Nay! now the rivalry is done,
Of red, and white, and whiter still:
She hath a glory from that sun,
Who falls not from Olympus hill.

Sortes Virgilianæ

To John Barlas

Lord of the Golden Branch, Virgil; and Cæsar's friend:
 Leader of pilgrim Dante! Yes: *things have their tears*.
 So sighed thy song, when down sad winds pierced to thine ears
 Wandering and immemorial sorrows without end.
And things of death touch hearts, that die: Yes: but joys blend,
 And glories, with our little life of human fears:
 Rome reigns, and Cæsar triumphs! Ah, the Golden Years,
 The Golden Years return: this also the gods send.

O men, who have endured an heavier burden yet!
 Hear you not happy airs, and voices augural?
 For you, in these last days by sure foreknowledge set,
 Looms no Italian shore, bright and imperial?
 Wounded and worn! What Virgil sang, doth God forget?
 Virgil, the melancholy, the majestic.

EDWARD MACCURDY

Roses of Pæstum

"Egypt in her pride had sent thee, Cæsar, winter roses as a rare gift. But as the sailor from Memphis came near to thy city he thought scorn of the garden of the Pharaohs, so beautiful was Spring and odorous Flora's grace, and the glory of our Pæstum country, so sweetly did the pathway blush with trailing garlands wherever his glance or step might fall in his wandering."

And Martial asks that Egypt should rather henceforth send grain and take roses, seeing that in these she must yield the palm to the Roman winter.

The Roman winter still has its eulogists—it is hard to overstate its perennial beauty; but the supply of Pæstum roses can no longer be accounted in its praise.

The glory of the Pæstum country is still a thing to wonder at. The city is set between the mountains and the sea. Behind it the wild glens wind steeply to the huge amphitheatre of the Apennines, whose jagged peaks strain upwards to the deep-blue dome of the Calabrian sky. To the north the Gulf of Salerno is broken in tiny bays, in which nestle Positano and Amalfi, and above the latter Ravello is seen gleaming proudly

on its height. A meadow lies between the city and the sea, and across the bay the eye rests on the islands of the Sirens, and Capri.

The city was founded by Greek colonists from Sybaris in about 600 B.C. It remained practically a Greek city after becoming subject to the native Lucanians, and we are told that the inhabitants were wont to assemble every year to lament their captivity and recall the memory of their greatness. Posidonia became Pæstum and flourished under Roman rule. Her legions took part in the Punic wars, but her famed arts were ever those of peace. Virgil as well as Martial tells of her flowery gardens, and of the roses that bloomed both in spring and autumn "*biferique Rosaria Pæsti*"; and whenever Roman poets singing of the rose were minded that she should be known of local habitation, it was for the most part in Pæstan gardens that they gathered her; so that the roses of Pæstum became known as emblems of her beauty. Life receded from the city in the latter days of the Empire, and finally the Saracens sacked and devastated it, and the Normans, a century later, under Robert Guiscard carried off all that they could carry of its sculpture to Salerno and Amalfi, there founding cathedrals with marble from its temples. The mouth of the river Silarus meanwhile had silted up, and the plain had become a marsh, stagnant and miasmal.

The city now is a solitude. A few fragments of the ancient walls and the lower part of one of the gates remain;—yet the little that is left of what the Romans built seems new, and, like the few modern houses of Pesto, seems to shrink away in timidity before the three Greek temples whose huge colonnades tower majestically to the horizon. They lie facing the sea and the sunset robed in the awful beauty of desolation and decay,—timeless monuments of an immemorial past. Of the three, the temple of Poseidon is at once the oldest, the largest, and the most complete.

"New Gods are crowned in the city"—or were in the years before the city became a solitude peopled only by marbles and memories. New temples of strange worship were set beside this temple of Poseidon; and from these, too, the flame of human veneration has passed, and the altars have been bared of sacrifice and votive offering, and they have passed away with the passing of the life which dwelt beneath their shadow. Immutable, the temple of the sea-god has been witness of the

coming and departing, and by its contrast with their transience it would seem that beneath the surges that murmur to the meadow, the god still lies in power, potent as of old to guard his sanctuary.

There is a fascination and a sense of content in the scene which is in itself a recognition of the supreme, the inevitable beauty with which nature has encompassed the desolate temples.

The sunlight is as a wand of enchantment wonder-working; the air quivers golden to the alchemy of its touch; the smitten facets of the marble gleam and glisten with hues iridescent. Wild flowers spring luxuriant from the crevices of the columns; lizards slumber on the stones; all around incessantly the dry *chirp chirp* of the cicalas; and in the meadow to seaward herds of oxen wrench the long coarse grasses. Sun-stepped nature covers the footprints of the past, yet her beauty hides not—rather enforces—that they are footprints and they are desolate. Cicalas sing where once was the music of many voices; acanthus now where once grew roses; and of the rose-gardens whereof the Roman poets sang no vestige remains.

They are in thought fair to dwell upon, and they call a fair picture before us, the long festoons of roses trailing around balconies or gardens. Nestling amid their fragrance, lovers would sit at nightfall and listen to some singer from Syracuse. Perhaps as the singing ceased they would wander together in the moonlight down the long colonnades and look over the sea to the isles of the Sirens dark and tremulous in the evening air; and stay awhile, silently, hearing the murmur of the stillest wave, the one pitying all those mariners who had been lured to death, the other thinking of that strange mastering music which had drawn all men unto it until Ulysses' ship passed by unheedingly and the singers perished and the rocks were silent, wondering, maybe, if the sea had memory and in its voice lived their song imperishable; and then they would turn and wander back among the roses and think no more upon death.

Fantasies—woven of dream! Imaginings—of days that are dead to memory! Yet the Greek city by the bay of Salerno must have witnessed many such scenes in the days of the roses' flowering.

As the ivy round the oak so legend twines its tendrils around history, clinging to and supported by its strength, yet chapleting it with leaves undying after that its sap has departed, dis-

daining or denying the touch of death. So when legend drawn by the grandeur of their deeds has twined her tendrils around the names of kings and warriors, her contest with death is not for their memory alone, she tells rather that they are not dead but fallen asleep, and that in the fulness of time they will awaken. So Arthur, "*Rex quondam Rexque futurus*" abides in Avilion to be healed of his wound, and "men say that he shall come again and he shall win the holy cross"; so Charlemagne and Barbarossa, sleeping in his mountain fastness—they will awaken, legends say, in the hour of need.

As with kings above their compeers in prowess exalted, so with the flower of flowers,

"Ut Rosa flos florum
Sic Arthurus rex regum,"

and the roses of Pæstum, the roses of Greek beauty growing on Italian soil, in Virgil "the rose twice-flowering", "*biferique Rosaria Pæsti*", passed not into memory when their gardens were forsaken. They were upgathered of the immortal spirit of beauty, and lay in slumber until the fullness of time of re-flowering, when in the valley of the Arno all the arts resurgent were one harmony of joy and thanksgiving.

To consider the second flowering of the roses, we must leave the Greek city, deserted and finally despoiled by the Normans, and pass to Pisa.

Pisa in the twelfth century was the mistress of the Tyrrhene Sea. Her supremacy extended along the coast from Spezia to the port of Rome. Her grandeur in its zenith is perhaps only comparable in its condition to that of Venice two centuries later. She took part in the Crusades and had great trade with the East. She had won from the Saracens Sardinia and the Balearic Isles, and had defeated their fleets off Tunis and Palermo.

Ever Ghibelline, ready to fight the Emperor's feuds as well as her own, she warred with all her neighbours and especially with the other maritime republics. "The mad little sea-falcon never caught sight of another water-bird on the wing but she must hawk at it"; and after the fall of the Hohenstaufen she was at last subdued on the sea by her inveterate and often defeated foe Genoa, at the battle of Meloria.

Her fleets returning in the days of her triumph, brought back spoil and art treasure: the Pandects of Justinian from Amalfi,

earth from Palestine that her dead might rest in her Campo Santo, marble sculpture from the East, from Sicily, and from various parts of the peninsula to adorn her cathedral, which she had built in memory of her victory over the Saracens off Palermo.

Among this sculpture was a sarcophagus with two scenes in bas-relief from the story of Phædra and Hippolytus, which for many centuries stood beside one of the doors of the cathedral. It there served as the tomb of Beatrice of Lorraine, the mother of the Countess Matilda of Tuscany who has been by some identified with the Matilda whom Dante saw beyond the stream of Lethe walking in a meadow singing and gathering flowers, and who became his guide through the Terrestrial Paradise.

The custom of using these sarcophagi as Christian tombs was not infrequent, and there are similar sculptured sarcophagi in the cathedrals of Amalfi and Salerno.

These, together with the numerous marble columns of atrium and campanile, were undoubtedly taken from Pæstum; and it is perhaps permissible—theorising where record can neither substantiate nor confute—to assign to the relief of Phædra and Hippolytus the same place of origin. The Pandects were in all probability not the only trophy which the Pisans carried away after their victory over Amalfi, and we know that sculptured reliefs from Pæstum were there ready to their hand.

The sarcophagus, whether from Pæstum or elsewhere, is carved in the classical Greek manner, and Vasari tell us that as it stood by the door of the cathedral it drew the attention of Niccola Pisano, who was working there under some Byzantine masters. “Niccola was attracted by the excellence of this work, in which he greatly delighted, and which he studied diligently, with the many other valuable sculptures of the relics around him, imitating the admirable manner of these works with so much success, that no long time had elapsed before he was esteemed the best sculptor of his time.”

There is nothing sensational about this statement, and its moderation may incline us to accept it without cavil on the much vexed question of Vasari's inaccuracies.

Niccola Pisano was destined to be the founder of a new school of sculpture, but he was then an apprentice, and like Cimabue in his youth, was studying his art under Byzantine masters, who were then the best exponents of the arts of design;

and this is invariably the way in which genius prepares itself for active service—there is no rupture in tradition, the old is assimilated and then the step forward is made.

He saw in the Greek reliefs a precision of touch, a feeling of dignity and beauty which surpassed anything that his Byzantine masters had attained to in their works.

Still working we presume with the Byzantines, he added a new teacher, and served a new apprenticeship to the work of this unknown Greek. Athena issued forth from the head of Zeus fully armed and equipped, but the votaries of her arts know no such perfection of birth—for them toil ever precedes achievement. So after studying the reliefs diligently, he began to try to copy bits of them, at first probably with no success at all, still he kept on, for he knew there was something to learn from this carving if he could only learn it; and his attempts at imitation grew a little bit like, and then more like, until finally he found he could carve heads quite like those on the sarcophagus if he wanted to, and vary them a bit if he didn't, although if he varied them the faces were still Greek and not Pisan, and they probably looked altogether nicer than the originals because they were not weather-stained or lacking any hands or noses through the mischances of time and travel.

When the Pisans saw what Niccola could do they employed him to make a pulpit for the Baptistery, and this he completed in 1260, being then about fifty-five years of age. It is perhaps the most beautiful work of its kind in Italy, and has for rival only Niccola's own subsequent work at Siena. It is hexagonal, built entirely of white marble, the angles resting on Corinthian pillars which alternately descend to the ground or are carried on the backs of lions; from their capitals spring trefoiled arches, and above these, on five of the sides of the hexagon, are bas-reliefs of the Nativity, the Adoration of the Kings, the Presentation in the Temple, the Crucifixion and the Last Judgment.

Dignified in conception, restrained in manner, antique in the stateliness of its beauty, it seems rather the work of one on whose ears echoes of the past have fallen so that he seeks to re-awaken and recreate her lost delight, than of one whose work was destined to be a guide and an ensample to future generations; and yet it would be hard to point to any statue or painting executed in the whole extent of Italy, from the Alpine valleys of Piedmont to the sun-steeped plains of Calabria, which can vie with this sculptured pulpit of Niccola Pisano,

standing now in the Baptistery of Pisa as it has stood for over six hundred years, in its claim to be considered as the first completed endeavour of nascent Italian art.

For in these bas-reliefs, five years before the birth of Dante, sixteen years before the birth of Giotto, were exemplified the principles which the genius of both was to illustrate—that the study of the antique was to win back the beauty of its ideal to the service of the present, that fidelity to nature—the spirits in the Antepurgatory perceiving from Dante's breath that he was alive, gathering round in wonder as the multitude flock round a herald to hear what news he brings: or the hind in the fresco at Assisi, who on hands and knees and with all the eagerness of thirst is drinking the water that springs from the rock; or the goat scratching his ear, in the bas-relief of the Nativity,—that this fidelity to nature, this truth in common things, was as an open sesame to win for the arts entrance in the minds of men, and that the first fruits were dedicate to the service of God.

Comparing Niccola's work with his models, we see that the *Phædra* of the sarcophagus has suggested the Madonna in the Adoration of the Kings, and that the high priest in the Presentation is the Bacchus of an antique sculptured vase in the Campo Santo. In these metamorphoses we may see a forecast of how the later exuberance of the quest for beauty was to blend unheedingly things incongruous—things pertaining to Christ and things pertaining to Diana—grouping reliefs of the story of the Fall and of Hercules and the Centaur around the same baptismal font; and they are a forecast, too, of how, when art was netted in the toils of her own magnificence, and the wings of aspiration no longer strained up to heaven, *Phædra* and Bacchus came back as witnesses of her abasement to leer and make revel among the ruins, tempting Josephs and Susannahs on the canvases of Bronzino and Biliverti.

Were it not for the resemblances and for the history attaching to them, we should not perhaps linger long to look at the Greek marbles in Pisa. They would be passed by almost unnoticed among the treasures of the Vatican or the Capitoline; but these for the most part the Roman earth still covered.

Two hundred years and more of unabated effort were to elapse, the impulse given by Niccola Pisano was to animate his successors, and to win new attainment of beauty and truth under Ghiberti and Donatello, and then in the fulness of time, in the dawn of the golden age of the Renaissance, the master

works of Greek sculpture which lay buried beneath Rome or in the ruins of the Campagna were uncovered, and to Michael Angelo, studying the Laocoön, the Apollo Belvedere, and the Dying Gladiator, something of their sublime mastery was revealed, even as Niccola Pisano had learnt his simpler lesson from the Phædra and Hippolytus.

Like spring's first harbingers, which, bursting the sod too early, are nipped by winter's chill, yet in their brief coming are a token and a promise, so the golden age of Pisa was a precursor of the glory of the Renaissance.

The sceptre of the arts passed from her while her fleets and armies were still potent, and Florence became the heir of her traditions, as at a later period of her sovereignty.

The immediate followers of Niccola Pisano had no succession among her children, and when the structure of the Campo Santo was completed by Giovanni Pisano in 1283 she was constrained to invite artists from Florence and Siena to paint the cloisters in fresco.

In Niccola's pulpit we see the transplanting of the roses of Greek beauty, the establishing of a rose-garden by the banks of the Arno, the fresh green of leaves budding, but it is in Florence that we must seek the second flowering, the bloom of the perfected rose.

Entering the gallery of the Uffizi, and passing down the Eastern and Southern Corridors amidst Byzantine and Tuscan Madonnas, antique reliefs and busts of Emperors, you reach the hall of Lorenzo Monaco, so named as containing the "Coronation of the Virgin" of Don Lorenzo, monk of the Camaldoline monastery of the Angeli, and forerunner of Fra Angelico in simplicity and grace.

There are also a tabernacle by Fra Angelico of Madonna and Saints surrounded as by a nimbus by angels playing musical instruments: a panel of saints by Gentile da Fabriano, and a few Quattrocento Florentine pictures, amongst them two by Botticelli—"The Adoration of the Magi", and "The Birth of Venus". The latter of these let us attempt to consider in detail. It represents Venus rising from the sea off the island of Cythera.

A pale green sea—faintly tremulous with wind-ripples. To the left of the picture, hovering in the air with long wings outspread, are two spirits symbolic of the winds. The cheeks of Eolus are distant, and his breath, visible as a pale shaft of light,

is impelling Venus to shore. Her feet are resting on the gold-prank'd edge of a scallop shell, and the waves are dancing before it as it moves onward. She is tall, fair, virginal, undraped, save for the clinging folds of her long, yellow hair. The mythological details might lead us to expect a nymph or nereid, soulless, elemental, looking out on mankind with something of that expression, half of mockery, half of delight, which Arnold Böcklin's nymphs possess—but the face is tender and pensive as ever was that of Madonna. But the tenderness of Madonna is tenderness of love revealed, arms encircling the child and eyes lit with the holy light of motherhood, and this is the tenderness of expectancy, the tenderness of dawn such as must have been upon the face of just-awakened Eve,

"Beneath her Maker's finger, when the fresh
First pulse of life shot brightening the snow,"

for Venus, elemental and a goddess, is like Eve coming to earth and vernal delight. It is the garden of earth where she is landing. The receding line of distance where the sea meets the shore is fretted with tiny bays, and verdant with sloping hills. On the right is a laurel grove, and before it a lady, symbolic of Spring, hastens to meet the goddess, holding in outstretched hands a red robe richly enwrought with daisies which gleam upon its folds in white emblazonry. The robe is fluttering in the breath of the wind that wafts the goddess to shore.

In the foreground to the left a few bulrushes are swaying. The stems of the laurels are sparkling with gold, and the sward gleams golden where Venus' feet will tread. Spring is clad in a white robe worked with cornflowers, a spray of olive lies lightly on her breast, and her waist is girdled with roses.

To the left of the picture there are many roses falling. Pale pink roses of hue scarce deeper than the lilled flesh of Venus, some upturned with the heart of the rose laid bare, some the winds have tilted over and they make a Narcissus' mirror of the sea, roses full blown and buds half-opened, they cling to the wings and streaming raiment of the winds, they lie upon their limbs, they flutter softly downwards, they are wafted to the shore, some hurrying joyously, wantonly, some dallying with the ripples of the air. A rain of roses, and the very air that attends their falling seems to murmur of it.

They are the roses of Pæstum coming back again; this is the

manner of their second flowering. For the delight of the antique world in the presentment of loveliness,—a delight

“not yet dead
But in old marbles ever beautiful”

slept prisoned in marble no longer, but issued forth in newness of life in the Renaissance, and it was in the pictures of Botticelli that it found expression at once most joyous and most complete. Mantegna is indeed in a sense more classical, but in Botticelli this delight is a living reality. For he was the only painter of Italy, who, as Ruskin says, “understood the thoughts of Heathens and Christians equally, and could in a measure paint both Aphrodite and the Madonna”. And understanding the thoughts of both, there is in him no attempt to blend things incongruous. To each their gifts are rendered—unto Cæsar and unto God. Myths from Politian by his art made palaces of enchantment of the villas of the Medici, and from Lucian’s lines he recreated the “Calumny” of Apelles. Sixtus IV sent for him to Rome, and in the Sistine Chapel he painted with Perugino, Pinturicchio, Signorelli, and others of his contemporaries, scenes from the lives of Moses and of Christ.

As all the greatest of artists, alike in painting and in poetry, when of an age he was of his own age—when local, then of his own city, Florence—when he needed bystanders, then these, as in the “Adoration of the Magi”, Florentines—his contemporaries and himself among them; but the Madonna of his “Magnificat” and alike seaborne Venus are neither Jewish nor Greek nor yet Florentine, but timeless according to the measure of his ability to paint the faiths that were in him, and to us in the measure of our faiths—realities.

In the later years of his life he gave up painting Venus and the Spring, and finally gave up the use of the brush altogether, though still for a time, as we shall see, drawing roses. After completing his work in the Sistine Chapel he returned to Florence, and there, says Vasari, “being whimsical and eccentric, he occupied himself with commenting on a certain part of Dante, illustrating the ‘Inferno’, and executing prints over which he wasted much time, and, neglecting his proper occupation, he did no work, and thereby caused infinite disorder to his affairs.” Yet despite Vasari not altogether idle, nor assuredly the less great of spirit in that he thus stood outside his art’s achievement and would fain “put to proof art alien to the

artist's" in utterance of his thought. Even so "Rafael made a century of sonnets", and "Dante once prepared to paint an angel". His rare utterance is as theirs extinguished. He was taunted, Vasari tells us, with his unsuitness, in that he "without a grain of learning, scarcely knowing how to read, had undertaken to make a commentary on Dante". Yet we would gladly, if we could, barter with time the writings of a good many of Dante's commentators for this same volume.

We are told that he afterwards became one of the followers of Savonarola, and as such totally abandoned the practice of his art and became a Piagnone (a mourning brother), and in his old age in poverty and a cripple he lived on the charity of Lorenzo de' Medici, and of others who had known him in the days of his prosperity.

Time, while robbing us of his commentary on Dante, has dealt with us more kindly as regards the illustrations. They relate not only to the "Inferno", as Vasari would lead one to suppose, but to the whole of the "Divine Comedy" with the exception of a few cantos, and have a unique interest as being the only surviving illustrations of Dante by an artist of the Renaissance. Michael Angelo is said to have made a similar book of drawings, which was lost at sea in a storm in the Gulf of Lyons.

One of these drawings seems reminiscent in certain likenesses and contrasts of the picture in the Uffizi.

The subject is Beatrice appearing to Dante in Canto XXX of the "Purgatorio".

Dante and Statius have reached the Terrestrial Paradise, and are walking beside the stream of Lethe conversing with Matelda in the meadow beyond. The mystical Procession of the Church approaching amid the forest heralded by gleaming light and melody has unfolded before them. The triumphal car of the Church drawn by the Gryphon has halted. The twenty-four elders have turned to face it. They are crowned with lilies and are bearing aloft the books of their testimony. One of them, Dante tells us, chants "*Veni Sponsa de Libano*", and the rest take up the strain, and a hundred angels' voices are heard singing "*Benedictus qui venis*", and "*Manibus o date lilia plenis*" as they scatter flowers about the car. Behind the elders are the bearers of the seven candlesticks, and the long tongues of flame lie in the air as bands of light, and between them rise the upward sweeping wings of the Gryphon. Around the car

the seven virtues are as maidens dancing, and behind it walk seven elders, their temples crowned with roses, among whom walks S. John in the ecstasy of sleep. In the car stands Beatrice,

"In white veil with olive wreathed
A virgin in my view appeared, beneath
Green mantle, robed in hue of living flame."

The car is the scallop shell; the elders and the virtues are the attendant spirits, and they too are ministrant upon a lady of love; but her brows are touched by the fadeless olive emblem of wisdom and peace.

The scallop shell is wafted by the winds to shore, but here the river divides, and it is we who must make the passage. Dante is standing with hands clasped together and eyes downcast. He has looked down in the depths of the river, but from thence his eyes recoil in shame seeing his own image, and seek rather the grasses at his feet; for it is the river of the forgetting of sin, and his eyes are heavy and laden with memories, and cannot as yet endure to meet the vision of the radiance. Beyond the river all around the car, flowers are falling. "*Manibus o date lilia plenis*"—(scatter ye lilies with hands unsparing)—by a strange but beautiful transition the words uttered by Anchises over the bier of the young Marcellus are sung by angels' voices as they scatter flowers upon the car of Beatrice. Not death this but life, says Botticelli in his drawing, nor alone the pale white of purity, but the fervour of love divine and eternal, and the flowers which the angels are scattering are not lilies alone, but also roses, roses—not of Pæstum but of Paradise.

Of the falling roses in the picture in the Uffizi of the "Birth of Venus" some will flutter to shore, and as they die the seed of beauty will break from the heart of the rose, and the wind will bear it to a soil where it may live. So the roses that were blown to shore on Eolus' breath have given the seeds of many roses; and changed a little by change of environment, they flowered for long in Italy, and some who have visited the garden of their second flowering have gathered the seed and carried it, so that it has flowered in northern climes and is still flowering. Yet withal, their beauty seems never so supreme as in this the first season of their second flowering in that perfect freshness of the just-awakened rose, and so Botticelli has painted them as spirits in attendance on Love, so that coming to earth she may be reconciled.

EVELYN DOUGLAS

FROM *The Palace of Pleasure*

Within, on couches rare, inlaid
 With rich mosaic blazonry
 In sandal-wood and ivory,
 Amid a rosy-tinted shade,
 And curtained with fair tapestry,
 Bright girls lay panting with their dreams,
 On whose globed eyes white eyelids weighed,
 Transparent waxen lotus-leaves,
 And on each black or amber braid
 Of their curled hair, with doubtful gleams,
 Like stars caught in a gauzy sky
 'Mid trammelling clouds by storms affrayed,
 (The meshes huntress Dian waves),
 The light of diamonds played.

A flesh-coloured pale glory drowned
 The cherubs on the painted roof;
 And, sea-green flowered with gold-shot woof,
 The damask hangings whispered round;
 And from recesses more aloof
 Soft viols aching with desire
 Prolonged a sad delicious sound,
 Voluptuous melancholy notes,
 That round the soul like silence wound;
 And statues, at whose sight the fire
 Of youth might blaze without reproof,
 Stood with eyes bent upon the ground,
 Goddesses with white breasts and throats,
 Maidens with zone unbound.

THEODORE WRATISLAW

To Salome at Saint James's

Princess of dancing and of mirth,
 Pleased with a trinket or a gown,
 Eternal as eternal earth,
 You dance the centuries down.

Yes! You, my plaything, slight and light,
 Capricious, petulant and proud,
 With whom I sit and sup to-night
 Among the tawdry crowd,

Are she whose swift and sandalled feet
And postured girlish beauty won
A pagan prize, for you unmeet,
The head of Baptist John.

And after ages, when you sit,
A princess less in birth than power,
Freed from the theatre's fume and heat
To kill an idle hour,

Here in the babbling room a-gleam
With scarlet lips and naked arms,
And such rich jewels as beseem
The painted damsel's charms,

Even now your tired and subtle face
Bears record of the wondrous time
When from your limbs' lascivious grace
Sprang forth your splendid crime.

And though none deem it true of those
Who watch you in our banal age
Like some stray fairy glide and pose
Upon a London stage,

Yet I to whom your swift caprice
Turns for the moment ardent eyes
Have seen the strength of love release
Your sleeping memories.

I too am servant to your glance,
I too am bent beneath your sway,
My wonder! My desire! who dance
Men's heads and hearts away.

Sweet arbitress of love and death,
Unchanging on time's changing sands,
You hold more lightly than a breath
The world between your hands!

OLIVE CUSTANCE

Blind Love

A long wet day: and now, the twilight hour
Fine, but not golden, delicately gray . . .
We pace the garden path
Talking: and faint between the words we say
Fall troubled silences of pleasant sound . .
I speak of love, and laugh!

The flowers stand drenched and bruised on either hand,
 Only the leaves shine softly and seem glad . . .
 And so the light grows less . . .
 We turn: I take your hand . . . your lips look sad,
 As though the rain had also hurt the flower
 Of your mouth's loveliness . . .

Full of rain crystals, the asparagus
 A jewelled tangle seems of strange green hair!
 You stand against it, Sweet,
 A pagan creature passionately fair,
 With your great eyes and wonderful white throat,
 Long limbs and small light feet!

You are so beautiful, so sorrowful!
 Wherefore, Beloved, none knows, not even I,
 "To you the world is kind"
 We say, and smile, when you desire to die:
 "Love will come soon and lead you to the light."
 You answer, "Love is blind!"

Peacocks. A Mood

In gorgeous plumage, azure, gold and green,
 They trample the pale flowers, and their shrill cry
 Troubles the garden's bright tranquillity!
 Proud birds of Beauty, splendid and serene,
 Spreading their brilliant fans, screen after screen
 Of burnished sapphire, gemmed with mimic suns—
 Strange magic eyes that, so the legend runs,
 Will bring misfortune to this fair demesne . . .

And my gay youth, that, vain and debonair,
 Sits in the sunshine—tired at last of play
 (A child, that finds the morning all too long),
 Tempts with its beauty that disastrous day
 When in the gathering darkness of despair
 Death shall strike dumb the laughing mouth of song.

RACHEL ANNAND TAYLOR

The Unicorns

In lands like faded arras-broideries
 Where dead green skies are veiled with golden trees,
 With golden trees, from whose frail branches young
 Star-tangled jasmine in great ropes is hung,—
 There, while the morning star is fluting low,
 The amazing silver Unicorns must go

Until the naked souls of maidens, white,
 Wondrous and sad, come thro' the chrysolite,
 Parting the golden boughs, the jasmine veil,
 To garland the Unicorns with roses pale,
 And ride them down the glades of smouldering gold,
 Ride, till the unearthly dew like sevenfold
 Fountains flash over them; for soon they hear
 The far hallali,—for he thunders near,
 Love, Love, the dreadful Hunter, and he tires
 The splendid Unicorns, the untamed Desires
 For some impossible peace where quietly
 Strange Psyche-magic of virginity
 Its unimagined flowers and fruits might bear
 At last,—some castled Mirabel moon-fair
 With cloistered lilies, carven ivory things,
 Some gold and jasmine throne, closed in with wings,

So in that wistful wood the wild souls fly,
 While on the strait white bed their bodies lie.

Treasure

Not mine the silver ride of the redeemer,
 Not mine the secret vision of the saint,
 Not mine the martyrdoms of Truth's dark dreamer
 Nor bitter beatitudes of Art. O quaint
 Undoing of youth's horoscope! No splendours
 Nor laurels, nor wisdom in a myrrhine bowl!
 Here is the treasure that the past surrenders,
 A spoil of roses coffered in the soul,—
 Much like another woman's! Rare perfumes
 And cleaving thorns, faded pathetic store
 Of kisses and sighs, would those heroic dooms
 I craved of old have yet enriched me more?
 I have not dwelt in Galilee nor Tyre
 Nor Athens. But I have my heart's desire.

The Inventory

To Her Friend

I love all sumptuous things and delicate,
 Ethereal matters richly paradised
 In Art's proud certitudes. I love the great
 Greek vases, carven ivory, subtilised

Arras of roses, Magians dyed on glass,
 Graven chalcedony and sardonyx,
 Nocturnes that through the nerves like fever pass,
 Arthurian kings, Love on the crucifix,
 All sweet mysterious verse, the Byzantine
 Gold chambers of Crivelli, marble that flowers
 In shy adoring angels, patterned vine
 And lotos, and emblazoned Books of Hours,—
*And you, whose smiling eyes to ironies
 Reduce both me and mine idolatries.*

Women of Tanagra

Have these forgotten they are toys of Death
 That in his sad aphelions of desire
 They still regret the joy that perisheth,
 And Spring's great reveries that exceed and tire,—
 Faintly accusing Love's unmercied yokes
 With almost wanton grace, the craft and art
 Of precious frailty that with subtle strokes
 Of sweetness finds the core of Passion's heart?
 They carry fans and mirrors, or make fast
 The mournful flute-like cadence of a veil.
 Slight fans that winnowed souls, mirrors that glassed
 The burning brooding wings which never fail!
 Still in such lovely vanities to-day
 The gods their secret wisdom hide away.

The Sum of Things

To Another Woman

Well! I am tired, who fared to divers ends,
 And you are not, who kept the beaten path;
 But mystic Vintagers have been my friends,
 Even Love and Death and Sin and Pride and Wrath.
 Wounded am I, you are immaculate;
 But great Adventurers were my starry guides:
 From God's Pavilion to the Flaming Gate
 Have I not ridden as an immortal rides?
 And your dry soul crumbles by dim degrees
 To final dust quite happily, it appears,
 While all the sweetness of her nectaries
 Can only stand within my heart like tears.
 O throbbing wounds, rich tears, and splendour spent,—
 Ye are all my spoil, and I am well content.

Art and Women

The triumph of Art compels few womenkind;
And these are yoked like slaves to Eros' car,—
No victors they! Yet ours the Dream behind,
Who are nearer to the gods than poets are.
For with the silver moons we wax and wane,
And with the roses love most woundingly,
And, wrought from flower to fruit with dim rich pain,
The Orchard of the Pomegranates are we.
For with Demeter still we seek the Spring,
With Dionysus tread the sacred Vine,
Our broken bodies still imagining
The mournful Mystery of the Bread and Wine.—
And Art, that fierce confessor of the flowers,
Desires the secret spice of those veiled hours.

The Beauty of Earth

The crested peacocks bear their gold-green moons
Under the cypresses. Where gloom and gleam
The secret spaces of the great lagunes,
Immaculate king-swans of Leda dream,
While Lotos lies jade-white amid his leaves
Jade-green. From bells and mazers of the flowers
Bride-odours float through all the gold-hung eves:
Great virgin-lilies rise like ivory towers,
And damask-roses too desirous die.
Strange rainbows break like music through the day:
And when the peace of jewels holds the sky,
Serenely down his emerald-paven way
Exquisite Hesperus goes violating
Through azure dusk, some lonely lovely thing.

Stars, doves and moths and pomegranates and grapes,
Figure Earth's arbour-cloths of sweet delight.
Oh! sumptuous colours, and most subtle shapes!
Oh! pageant-place and pleasaunce infinite!—
Yet warriors, wizards, kings assay in vain
The doors of these pavilions fair to win,
Imagined by the angels for the Twain
Whose ecstasy alone may enter in.

For Loved and Lover must in beauty meet
 For ever, Psyche white with white Eros
 Forget the anguish of their pilgrim feet
 Within this purple delicate parclose,
 While music, perfume, colour veil the kiss
 Whose only flame unseals God's mysteries.

FREDERIC MANNING

Kore

(To Mrs. W. N. Macmillan.)

Yea, she hath passed hereby, and blessed the sheaves,
 And the great garths, and stacks, and quiet farms,
 And all the tawny and the crimson leaves.
 Yea, she hath passed, with poppies in her arms,
 Under the star of dusk, through stealing mist,
 And blessed the earth, and gone, while no man wist.

With slow, reluctant feet, and weary eyes,
 And eyelids heavy with the coming sleep,
 With small breasts lifted up in stress of sighs,
 She passed, as shadows pass, among the sheep;
 While the earth dreamed, and only I was ware
 Of that faint fragrance blown from her soft hair.

The land lay steeped in peace of silent dreams;
 There was no sound amid the sacred boughs,
 Nor any mournful music in her streams:
 Only I saw the shadow on her brows,
 Only I knew her for the yearly slain,
 And wept; and weep until she come again.

Still Life

Pale gloves of fragrant ripeness, amber grapes
 And purple, on a silver dish; a glass
 Of wine, in which light glows, and fires to pass
 Staining the damask, and in dance escapes;
 Two Venice goblets wrought in graceful shapes;
 A bowl of velvet pansies, wherein mass
 Blues, mauves, and purples; plumes of meadow-grass;
 And one ripe pomegranate, that splits and gapes,
 Protruding ruby seeds: a feast for eyes
 Better than all those topaz, beryl fruits
 Aladdin saw and coveted: these call,
 To minds contented and in leisure wise,
 Visions of blossoming boughs, and mossy roots,
 And peaches ripening on a sunny wall.

RACHEL ANNAND TAYLOR

FROM *Leonardo the Florentine**The Spirit of Milan*

i

Leonardo came to Milan as an Athenian might have gone to a city like Miletus, or perhaps Antioch. He passed from a lively polity dreaming of Hellas in its own ironic and lovely fashion, and seeking for the Academe by way of Alexandria, to one that, more ancient in its civic history, had been shaped by the powers of Rome and Byzantium and Ravenna, and by the ever-burning creatures of the four-winged winds of the world, into something at once too deeply sophisticated and too frequently wounded to reply to the pagan pentecost of the Renaissance with a truly Hellenistic reaction. Magnificence and music, these were the things brought by Milan to the new altar served by the five great city-states of Italy. Magnificence and music, these had invested with amethyst all the great hours of her long history.

Whatever Milan had been, she was barbaric and splendid when Leonardo sought her courts like a new Citharædus, barbaric in her excess of pearl and gold, in her clouds of perfume, her rose-drift cupid-broidered palaces, her snow-drift incredible cathedral, her mythic pageantry of pleasure and power, barbaric like Grecian cities of old richly corrupting into strange colours in Asia and in Egypt, through sweet, spend-thrift, luxurious moods. So his secret pulses lost the rhythm of the Dorian mode, and, for all his intellectual resistances, subsided dreamily to the Lydian measure—even at times replying suddenly to an ominous beat more insistent. For, unrecognised by any, the throbbing of the Phrygian drums and flutes prevailed over the dear-bought music of the ducal chapel, and the rare inviolate liturgy of the Ambrosian basilica, when the devotees carried that image of the Virgin, *Idæa*, from church to church on Purification Day, and in the darkness of their souls remembered the shadowy lion-drawn chariot of Cybele, the goddess whom Leonardo adored and dreaded, with his reason trying to prove her reasonable, with his imagination revealing her as antinomian, dangerous, enchanting, almost as

if, indeed, he had by some elfin shift escaped the fate of spring-sacrifice, and knew too much, but dreaded to tell.

The history of Milan lay heavily upon her. When the Lombards came down on her over the Alps she was already ancient in her tale of Cæsarian glories and monstrous rapes. Through the ages called "dark", Milan remains, a dim flame of rose, a rumour of litanies and a tumult of spears and eagles. She had great traffic with kings and popes and emperors; she had spoken haughtily in the gate with many powers and principalities, and she had felt the clash of armies from all the ways of the world shiver in her beautiful breast. Within her walls the last Emperors of the West had kept their solemn, excessive court, throbbing under all its golden etiquette with a luxurious fever. Ambrose, "the royal priest", had been her bishop; Augustine, the darkly-burning lover among the saints, had been her rhetorician.

Milan is part of the agony of the most famous of earth's empires; one of the red wounds in her dying breast, one of the last rubies in her spoilt diadem. In the great amber-lighted hollow of time that lies between Constantine and Charlemagne the mighty cities of old lie signalling each to each as with tossing torches; and across all the hurtling and lightning of glories comes the breathing of their double flutes. Carthage, Rome, Ravenna, Byzantium, Milan, Antioch, Alexandria, pulse like the Pleiades through this great Twilight of the Gods. The torchlight is refracted and splintered into spectral blurs and comets and asteroids of colour—for colour is the communication of life: the melody is muted and distorted into an inaudible moaning that clears, articulate and sweet, into the crying of the litanies—for music is the art that rises with unbroken wings over the dissolution of mortal magnificences, lamenting, reconciling, prevailing.

Through this opaque twilight the adventurers ride headlong, wild horsemen of flamboyant chance. In desperate pride, lost fragments of the imperial cohorts gleam and vanish. Imperial children, pale ivory automata with painted eyes and gold-powdered hair, loosen a tall Easter lily with crimson stamens, when their tired hands remember some great last gesture. Wild

circles of blue-and-green charioteers sweep cæsars and augustas dethroned within their fiery eddies. Strange eunuchs, impassible and ironic, endure terrible victories and defeats. Barbarians, shaggy and horned with gold, appear on the walls of the sacred cities, half afraid of the beauty they ravish. Puissant figures uplift bright crosiers that flash terror like sceptres, while the shepherd's stole hardens into a mail of gems. Basilicas dimly mound themselves, couchant as sacred lions, in the dusk. Monasteries hide by the still waters, hostels for the sensitive and the weary and the god-stricken; with unconscious hands the monks lay the beautiful images of pagan philosophy and poetry to sleep in coffins of cypress and cedar. Canticles and liturgies arise on the wings of the morning to importune the Musician of the Spheres.

iii

The terrible bow of the Alps lay to the north of the Plain of Lombardy, the terrible bow that loosed the maddened arrow of an invasion, time and again, for the god of those awful, indifferent peaks had no compassion for either side of his dreadful defiles when, in huntsman's mood, he wound his starry taunting bugle. The far Apennines closed the east: on the west the Plain ran fair and fruitful to the Adriatic.

Of all the cities of the Plain, Milan stood first in power, in riches and in place of danger, to the assault of the eager and furious enemy. She was the Imperial City, sister to Rome, sister to Ravenna, watching the icy and phantasmal passes, the lifted Alpine gates of fear whose terrible pure indifference sent, not help, like human hills, but any spoiler strong enough to conquer. Because of these distant Alps she was the anvil of iron whereon great swords and superb armour were fashioned. But, because she was so far away, sunk in her fertile plains, she knew herself also as Mediolanum, in whose rich, persuasive earth all invaders were subdued sooner or later into her peculiar mood of the Latin soul, Mediolanum, where roads of east and west converged, for whom the rivers were persuaded to be taken in the net of her orchards, rare market of silk and spices, rare temple of good and evil, city of Venus rather than Ceres; and the threatening Alps seemed often merely faint fantasy of clouds on the uttermost horizon. Because only when

her soft humidities became crystal-clear could she see the lyric peak of Monte Rosa calling the Morning Star, she was also the may-city in the mayland—an amphora of delectable odours for gods and men. Drowsing in her great campagna, stretching westward to the Adriatic, built on a responsive moist earth that offered easily the rosy matter of her building and compassed her with a ravishing world of rich orchards and clear waters, she forgot how doubly desirable she seemed to the barbarians of the North, sweet spoil herself, sweet earnest of excessive sweetness. She was the key of Italy—and never key more beautifully wrought, like an iron flower: hers was the orchard of Italy, an orchard rare with the undersong of running water—and never orchard more red and golden, more soliciting with Hesperidean closes.

Being bound by her honour and her necessity to keep those Alpine passes, she made strong her towers, and kept wrought armour of gold and steel. But, being beautiful and delightful in the dance of Earth, she was dear to the gods, and her heart was sacred. She had been a holy temple-harlot in dove-murmurous courts before Ambrose, proud prefect and ecstatic scholar in virginity, drew her immaculate through the fountain of Christ, and poured her heart of molten tears into his liturgy. She had something stranger, at least, in her seething soul than Florence, whose mysticism was captured in a stringent symbolism of art, and intellectualised into bright parable by the imitation of the luminous myths of Plato. Milan had a vanishing reverie of Celtic romance coloured like white peacocks, of Roman rituals, Byzantine traditions stiff with purple gems, wild Gothic wonders white with wings, Saracenic legends, subtle spells from Araby, Egypt, and Syria, fierce moon-worships from water-gleaming Carthage, dark-bright Manichæan heresies from magical Madaura, city of Apuleius, dear to Augustine, Latin intensities of love and death, a complex of images, a conflict of colours, a spiral of diverse incense rising from the thuribles of strangely coifed and mitred censer-collets.

Powers, spiritual and temporal, for ever rending her asunder, seemed to disengage a forbidden sweetness. She had been the Magic Cauldron before she was the Very Rich and Holy Grail of Ambrose; she had been the loving-cup of a commune, the crowning-chalice of kings. She belonged to Our Lady of the Graces and to Our Lady of Life. Like all Lombardy, she had

been specially given to the mysterious Syrian god, Saint John the Baptist, and she was his Herodiad. She was the most medieval of the great cities of Italy—and the most imperial. She was pagan and Christian, sweet, immoral, furious, extreme in pleasure and penance. Emperors, prince-bishops, dukes, and leaders of revolt—all had changed rings with her.

Because of her heavy charge of perilous passes and roads that wound towards all the other great cities of Italy, in her secret heart that was passive and wanton and narcotic with pleasure, she fell in love with a dream of painted horsemen on her wall, and took a duke of armies to defend her. And sometimes he was archbishop as well as prince, for something irrationally sacred, as of the king-priest, clung to the worst tyrants of Milan, blunting, even in full Renaissance, the bright edge of a superb piece of tyrannicide, while fading from Lodovico, who had not the courage of his superstitions. For Galeazzo and Lodovico had their drifting destinies, because, after enduring a procession of fantastic, moody, and violent cavaliers, her people carried the great new Horseman on his steed through the cathedral doors to the very altar. So Francesco Sforza rode down the aisle, it seems, to many ends—one being that Leonardo the Florentine should weary his haughty heart and his fine hand in labouring ten years to deify him in an unparalleled bronze image—and all in vain.

iv

What are the pictures in her history? Her very name, "Mediolanum", is "sweet bastard Latin"—Latin turned dreamy by the Celt. Race on race kneaded out her Etruscan core—Insubri, Roman, Carthaginian, Goth, Lombard, Saxon, Hun, Frank, Saracen, tribes that claimed descent from a dagger in the desert. See the shadow of Hannibal, first conqueror of the Alps, pressing desperately for Rome. See the strong Diocletian, who neatly squared the circle of the world, fixed his capitals at Milan, Rome, Antioch, Carthage, and crowned his two Augusti, his two Cæsars, only to watch in the end, from his carven palace in Spoleto, his scheme dissolve in gold and scarlet, and many rival emperors raised up on the shields of the legions. In his reign, also, is born in Milan the beautiful Sebastian, white captain of cohorts, doomed to be the

prey of the archers, to be the victim of imperial love and wrath at Rome, and strangely to impose on Christian art the image of Adonis. Diocletian's Milan was a serenely domed and concentric vision of baths, aqueducts, temples and amphitheatres, all vanishing in smoke and fire, leaving only a line of disdainful pale pillars to be its lovely enigma and lone remembrancer. Constantine's mean face, hidden in the golden hood of a Christian legend, flashes into sight at moments, as he signs an edict that alters the world, though none comprehend that the true Galilean dies as well as the Olympian when the emperor lifts the labarum with a side-thought of Mithra. Again, the soldiers clash their shields against their knees to salute Julian as their emperor—Julian, a reluctant young scholar from Athens, new to the dress of war—Julian, most sincere and courageous of all apostates, whose ironic shade may walk again in the sun-worship of the Renaissance.

The first Valentinian, cruel though just, irritably strikes his sword through the magic of magic-loving places, Antioch and Byzantium as well as Milan, useless material weapon for the spidery stuff that closes up over the wounds, with soft obstinacy spinning itself strong again. His two bears live in his palace chambers, as horrible immediate justiciaries, even as in later days a Visconti shall use his hounds for executioners, for the soft masochistic air of the fair city breeds a lust of cruelty in her possessors.

Gratian, the beloved, is hunting too wildly in the parks, wrapped in Scythian furs, among his proud guard of Amal princes. In Milan, now a great capital of luxury and culture, that beautiful Arian, Justina, with her pretty child-emperor, the second Valentinian, tries to wrest a basilica from the superb Ambrose, who keeps it inviolate from her heresy, as easily as with one fine gesture, while his impassioned people sing their canticles, and her own Gothic tribunes refuse to break sanctuary, and her Levantine eunuchs carry threats and entreaties in vain. Gervasus and Protinus, the young martyrs, miraculously found in their graves, bleed to glorify the cause of Ambrose. Augustine, come from magical Madaura, and beautiful Carthage, and haughty Rome, is living in a house by the wall with his friend, the chaste Alypius, whose one weakness is that, like many another Christian, he overloves the gladiators in the circus, with Monica, who takes her little African love-feasts to the doors of the basilicas till she is

shocked to find them banned as pagan, and with others, including one woman who has no name, and who yet burns more sweetly and sadly in the *Confessions* than Monica herself—the mother of the rare child Adeodatus, whom God took at his name. That passionate Augustine, afraid of yielding to the Highest a soul merely “caught up to God by his beauty”, amid the lapsing waters and dreamy leaves of Cassisiacum incidentally concludes the Socratic tradition, while walking there under the chestnuts with his gay heathen pupil, Licentius, yet submits his soul to searching disciplines, till with great expense of tears, and lovely amatisto-coloured Latin, he comes to that crisis in the Milan garden when the child’s voice sings ethereal, “Tolle, lege”, and he moves at last to the Easter baptism of Ambrose. But in this same Milan, that most pagan Christian Ausonius had pondered the “mira omnia” of the city’s delicious luxury, and, musing in a flowery orchard, had seen Love crucified in a garden.

Theodosius, the magnificent and courtly emperor, does public penance at the basilica gates for blind brute massacre at Thessalonica. The last Emperors of the West live on behind the purple veil, while the thirty bright-helmed Silentarii, like figures charmed to silver, guard the “eternity” of these idols, served by pages and eunuchs. The pale child, Honorius, with painted eyes, indifferently plays with his doves as the mocking sumptuous wedding song of Claudian breathes through his flower-strewn palace chambers. Stilicho goes forth to grapple with Alaric, and the last of the Western emperors flees to Ravenna. The great Belisarius rides through, wrapt already in an incorruptible cloak of glory and grief, but his wake is disaster for Milan, for the enemies that hang behind him burn the city. Ataulphus, King of the Goths, dies here, and leaves the most imperial Galla Placidia to more of the violent chances and changes that work out her life in purple and scarlet. Alboin and his bearded Lombards, in their linen garments striped with colour, pass through to fair Pavia; and the sombre eyes of Rosamond behold Milan. Theodolinda, slim, sweet, golden, whom Love has given a sceptre to give again, with ecstatic eyes presses on her brows the Iron Crown, the Sacred Nail beaten and bound with gold. The monstrous rage of Attila crushes the city’s pride in his path, and his grotesque image is painted on its palace walls. Charlemagne’s half-mystical redemption ebbs over it. Emperor and Pope snatch at

it; the prince-bishops, backed by the people, defy both, till the Commune they have wrought turns on these, grown despots also. The Iron Crown is a magnet for the mighty. Otto the Great comes for the talisman and redeems the captive princess who sits spinning in the keep by Lake Garda. Otto the Third, too, will be crowned King of the Lombards, romantic Italy-drunken dreamer, sweetest and least fortunate of her northern lovers. An archbishop like Aribert is king-maker for Italy, till the folk break him they have adored. Princes and priests, Guelfs and Ghibellines, are grappling in many-crested confusion. But the dream of a Republic is in the heart's core of every great city. Milan remembers Ambrose, who led a commune against imperial powers, and the Car of the City moves red through the dark, bearing the Standard of the Saint, bearing the Cross and the Altar. Her republican coins are stamped with beauty, silver *fiorini*, golden *ambrogini*. But that paradoxical doom of nature which compels any free thing to feed on the freedom of others makes her a bitter neighbour to Pavia and Lodi, Monza, Verona, and Brescia; till the terrible Barbarossa overpowers her at last, and blinds and maims and crucifies her, shameful and abject, all but obliterated from the companionship of cities. For he broke her Standard, seized her relics, and extorted her life-symbol, her dear *carroccio*. That mortal pageant of surrender was indeed a passion-tide for Milan. The Iron Crown the conqueror took to Monza, and stole the magian dust in Saint Eustorgio for Cologne. And though the very sister-cities that had helped to destroy gathered round to restore, till she, still half-blinded, arose and led the famous Lombard League, and redeemed her *carroccio* with a Company of Death, the dream of the Commune had been mixed with despair. There are great passages still. The Saracen troops of Frederic II beseege her; his golden son, King Enzo, beautiful among his beautiful, exotic brethren, is taken in desperate single combat. The dreadful riders of the pale devil, Ezzelin, hover near. Henry of Luxembourg is crowned and betrayed here. But Milan, weary, turned to her dukes again, and not till the Risorgimento did she once more loosen her banners for liberty. The first perpetual lord of Milan appears in a crusading Visconti, archbishop and noble, who has taken the device of a slain Saracen for his own; and, with the burning serpent of the East, what magical bale and accursed power! With these perpetual lords the city renews its wealth and

luxury, its merchandise of Venice and the Orient; and the Humiliati, who had vowed themselves to penitence and the protection of God, become proud and luxurious.

The Visconti made a dynasty of violence, passion, madness, and the twin strange cunning that with cold hands holds the hot palm of madness, and some flashing, disconcerting genius—a fantastic race under a Saracenic curse. They are lords of most gilded festivals, great bridals and superb dowries. Some have wreaths of roses in their yellow hair, some are dark and heavy like monstrous spiders. They hunt with leopards; and carry an Ave like a crazy chime of heaven in their terrible names. There is sullen Bernabo, who literally gave his people to the “power of the dog”. Famous in the annals of pomp was the wedding of Violante to the English Lionel of Clarence, though the fabled wedding feast and wedding gifts preluded the early death of the bridegroom. And not only Petrarch, but Chaucer, knew the mayland. Surely the smiling may-poet went happily here on his diplomatic business, gazing at the dreamy tender women, so like his own Criseyde. There is the puissant Gian Galeazzo, fine dissembler, who dreamed of a crown, a great duke who imagined rich building, and loved scholars, and wrestled with rivers as well as with rivals, and who watched his foes go out before him, like a calm crowned basilisk, till the plague touched him unawares. Petrarch read his Cicero under the leaves beside his growing Certosa. His daughter, Valentina, *cette Lombarde grâce*, the pale witch, goes with legendary clothes all stitched with jewels, and a golden retinue, to her delicate dissolute love of Orleans, a fatal wedding for Italy. Giovanni Maria, the blood-maniac, for ten terrible years gluts his horrible fancies, till in blood he perishes; and his grave has the strange pathos of such roses as were laid on Nero’s. Filippo Maria, astute, indifferent, fearful, is a little like Louis XI with his astrologers and his hidden life in his keep. A master-plotter, a “duke of fantastical dark corners”, he spun his strong webs in his occult chambers, creeping hooded over the canals at night; murdered one wife and imprisoned another; bought, sold, and betrayed, till at last, after long plot and counter-plot, he died of supreme ennui, refusing to acknowledge an heir. Yet he had loved one woman; and her daughter, Bianca, beautiful and spirited, could read her Greek and Latin as well as wear her cuirass and helmet when the moment called for them; and her great bridal of Cremona grafted a fierce new

shoot on the tired dynasty. When the last Visconti perished, the confused city made a somnambulistic motion to become the Golden Republic of San Ambrogio again. She had remembered the royal priest, for it took a superb person like Ambrose to recognise even dimly the inevitable communism of the Gospel of Christ, the rare and ethereal anarchy implicit in a commandment of pure love and sacrifice; and he had moulded her, first to the community of sorrow with those antiphonies in which all the people, not the priests alone, on one wave rose and fell about the mercy-seat, and thereafter into a community of purpose that could defeat emperors. But those who have lived long in the ergastulum cannot remember the gestures of freedom in an hour. The armies march and counter-march. Encompassed with foes, she seeks a new Captain; and Francesco Sforza is rapt riding to the altar.

It is the strange, viper-bitten Visconti blood that prevails in Francesco's children, for all the wisdom and force of the great condottiere, all the gallantry and nobility of Bianca. What careful and splendid education could do to moderate the desires of Gian Galeazzo, to antidote Lodovico's stealth of fear, was done indeed; but the sons were at once princelier and more morbid than their father. Galeazzo Maria, all a Visconti, in splendour, craft, cruelty, superstition, with amazing moments of sweet miracle thrusting themselves through the red fantasy of his mind, dies by the daggers he invites; his son is a mere sickly child with a silly mother; and his brother, Lodovico, Duke of Bari, is the only duke that matters when Leonardo comes to Milan.

v

So much for Milan as a fortress-city. But it is the strange duality of her history that is most important to her impression. Not only was she a fortress-city, but from of old a sumptuous pleasure-city, lying like a rose among her streams and meadows, a little as Naucratis of old dwelt like a great flushed nymphæa on her Nile-green delta. Like that she was famous for perfumes, colours, flowers, beautiful women and strange gods. Like her and other cities of fame she trafficked in "merchandise of gold and silver and precious stones, and ivory, and cinnamon and spice, and frankincense and wine, and wheat, and merchandise

of horses and chariots and slaves and the souls of men". Milan is so rare and so helpless to the keepers of her enchanted castle that they wreak a sadist passion on her, and bruise her soft limbs with steel. The dubiety of her temper captures, disables and confuses, yet enriches, all those who dwell long within her walls. Their courage is sapped by strange terror, their will is relaxed or divided, their humanity is cankered with cruelty, their love is blinded with desire, their religion becomes a magical superstition. Her tyrants are of those who develop a Cæsarean madness. They invent the Quarisema, by which a man's death agony may last for forty days; but they imagine glorious building, and they have seized a great mastery of the waters even before Leonardo's advent. But there is a certain rich and dewy pathos in all the moods of this city that crystals naturally from the watered plain, from her orchards and her gardens, the kind of inconscient innocence deep-dwelling within all natural things, that redeems with strange turns her sinful ways. She had the gift of tears.

"Pardonnez-moi comme à l'Egyptienne!
Si, si, je suis heureuse, mais je suis triste.
Elle va pleurer aussi, j'ai pitié d'elle."

vi

So the dooms of emperors, prelates and dukes and furious invaders fall in solemn cadence on either side Lodovico's gilded stage, when Leonardo brings his starry figures there, a masque within a masque; and cast a pallor and a shadow upon the brocaded courtiers.

The great Captains had taken Milan and branded the keys on her soft breast, and built a castle to hold their odalisque. Remembering an ancient way of pleasure, she painted her eyes, and, like a temple-wanton, clothed with emeralds and twined with lotos, like a rose-pale unconscious Herodiad, she danced before them. But she was confused as she danced among tapers like great lilies, and music liturgical, for Ambrose had taught her the beauty of virginity, and Augustine dead had wandered back to lie near Pavia with a king at his feet, and Theodolinda had pressed the holy iron garland burning on her temples, and given her with all Lombardy to her strange lord and Leonardo's Saint John the Baptist. Catharists, patarini

and Umiliati had done penance within her walls, perfetti had given the "consolation" of the Spirit, fraticelli had perished for strange doctrines of love in the name of the Paraclete, and flagellants had broken moaning at her gates. So she was also a great Penitent, because she forgot the passes and the roads, and she forgot the voice of Ambrose.

"But evermore
She had the same red sin to purge,
Poor passionate keeper of the door."

For all that Ambrose, Dominic, Saint Peter Martyr and, in later times, Saint Carlo Borromeo could do, the sweet Manichæan despairing heart of Milan remained mystically confounded between good and evil. The great Captain, the Herodiad who could also be the Penitent, these had become the mystic forces in the spirit of Renaissance Milan—the Celtic, Byzantine, Latin, Syrian, Gothic spirit. Leonardo recognised her myth. With heroic wrestling he was to evoke the Apocalyptic Rider, the Arch-Captain, the great Duke, the ideal Lord of Armies adored by distracted communes in Renaissance Italy. He watched the Herodiad, from her creating type and antitype of the unearthly beauty that is dangerous, ecstatic and alone, whom only the strong, like himself, can endure through the Dance of the Seven Veils without losing a soul within the bright eddy of her mystery. He paints that beauty, stilled and dreaming, in the Virgin, in Saint Anne, in Saint John, in Dionysos, in Leda. Even last year the knot of throbbing Manichæan love came alive in the so-altered city of Milan. Not long since, Ida Rubenstein danced there the sacred dance of the Herodiad in the guise of the beautiful Sebastian who perished by Milan's Diocletian, and who is but a shift of the form of the god of the solstice, Saint John.

But the Gothic anguish of the Penitent, Leonardo cannot satisfy. He made the final pattern of *The Last Supper* in a place where the passing of miracle demanded it, but there is no poignancy in this chorale of betrayal. When the great picture lay unique on the corroding wall, the impression seems to have been almost as serene as that of a Sophoclean tragedy. He had never seen "Christ's blood stream in the firmament". He did not believe that it could. The starry image of Berenice's hair was more actual to him, and more life-giving to his mind. And yet it is in science, perhaps, that the piercing medieval note is

heard, when he unmask the pathos of the human body, and stresses the macabre note sometimes, though even then he has, pagan, more to say of its beauty.

No! The lamenting and religious note of Milan he does not know. Her penitent voice he never heard, for he was tone-deaf to that, though she "made sweet moan". Beatrice kneeling at Bianca's tomb for hours on her own death-day; Lodovico mourning alone in his black-hung room, vibrated with its agony. But Leonardo could not hear.

The unearthly child's voice again, that often smote pure through the history of Milan, with miraculous interposition calling Ambrose to his ivory Chair and Augustine to the Kiss of peace, sounding in the amazed soul of the Commune, and, as if overheard like a fluting angel, answered by some of the tyrants, also he did not hear. This note of heavenly candour seems almost to lift again from the parted lips of the young Bianca, who died while all her plotting kin loved her for love's sake only. Hoarsened with dread, the same warning, as from some other sphere, came on the lips of the mad friar who cried on the Piazza to Lodovico before Charles of France came stumbling: "Prince, prince, show him not the way." Leonardo was too busy—and he had lost the innocence of his ear to more subtle melodies.

Again, with those who helmed and mounted the Warrior, who clotted with gold the rubies on the Dancer's breast, and wrought the little stars of iron on the scourge of the Visconti princess who was a Penitent, whose labour and bitter dues built the immense fabric of pride, with the suppressed and over-taxed Commune, in fact, Leonardo had no sympathy at all.

The Manichæan metaphysic that lay implicit in the red meshes of the city, all beating heart and flickering crimson wings, soft, fluctuating, inarticulate, involved with natural things, Leonardo tried to analyse out, with his other experiments. But the sob in the heart of Milan, the waft of litanies and lilies, the sombre eyes of the Herodiad, the sacred iron within the golden ring, were problems in a kind of dynamic not to be solved by the most exquisitely drawn problems of the scientist, though they dwelt like dyes in the secret soul of the artist. Julian also had reasoned in this city, and reasoned his way back to the sun-god. Leonardo's multi-form speculations helped to maintain the beautiful equilibrium

of his brain; but they did little more than lead him to the same radiant conclusion. It is in his painting, of which so much has been lost and destroyed, that the rich trouble of Milan softly dissembles, though not destroys, the Florentine line of beauty.

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5. Books lost, defaced or injured in any way shall have to be replaced or its double