THE POETS' CORNER—V

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 15, 1888.)

Mr. Heywood's *Salome* seems to have thrilled the critics of the United States. From a collection of press notices prefixed to the volume we learn that *Putnam's Magazine* has found in it 'the simplicity and grace of naked Grecian statues,' and that Dr. Jos. G. Cogswell, LL.D., has declared that it will live to be appreciated 'as long as the English language endures.' Remembering that prophecy is the most gratuitous form of error, we will not attempt to argue with Dr. Jos. G. Cogswell, LL.D., but will content ourselves with protesting against such a detestable expression as 'naked Grecian statues.' If this be the literary style of the future the English language will not endure very long. As for the poem itself, the best that one can say of it is that it is a triumph of conscientious industry. From an artistic point of view it is a very commonplace production indeed, and we must protest against such blank verse as the following:

From the hour I saw her first, I was entranced,
Or embosomed in a charmed world, circumscribed
By its proper circumambient atmosphere,
Herself its centre, and wide pervading spirit.
The air all beauty of colour held dissolved,
And tints distilled as dew are shed by heaven.

Mr. Griffiths' *Sonnets and Other Poems* are very simple, which is a good thing, and very sentimental, which is a thing not quite so good. As a general rule, his verse is full of pretty echoes of other writers, but in one sonnet he makes a distinct attempt to be original and the result is extremely depressing.

Earth wears her grandest robe, by autumn spun,
Like some stout matron who of youth has run
The course, . . .

is the most dreadful simile we have ever come across even in poetry. Mr. Griffiths should beware of originality. Like beauty, it is a fatal gift.

Imitators of Mr. Browning are, unfortunately, common enough, but imitators of Mr. and Mrs. Browning combined are so very rare that we have read Mr. Francis Prevost's *Fires of Green Wood* with great interest. Here is a curious reproduction of the manner of *Aurora Leigh*:

But Spring! that part at least our unchaste eyes
Infer from some wind-blown philactery,
(It wears its breast bare also)—chestnut buds,
Pack'd in white wool as though sent here from heaven,
Stretching wild stems to reach each climbing lark
That shouts against the fading stars.

And here is a copy of Mr. Browning's mannerisms. We do not like it quite so well:

If another
Save all bother,
Hold that perhaps loaves grow like parsnips:
Call the baker
Heaven's care-taker,
Live, die; Death may show him where the farce nips.
Not I; truly
He may duly
Into church or church-day shunt God;
Chink his pocket,
Win your locket;—
Down we go together to confront God.

Yet, in spite of these ingenious caricatures there are some good poems, or perhaps we should say some good passages, in Mr. Prevost's volume. *The Whitening of the Thorn-tree*, for instance, opens admirably, and is, in some respects, a rather remarkable story. We have no doubt that some day Mr. Prevost will be able to study the great masters without stealing from them.

Mr. John Cameron Grant has christened himself 'England's Empire Poet,' and, lest we should have any doubts upon the subject, tells us that he 'dare not lie,' a statement which in a poet seems to show a great want of courage. Protection and Paper-Unionism are the gods of Mr. Grant's idolatry, and his verse is full of such fine fallacies and masterly misrepresentations that he should be made Laureate to the Primrose League at once. Such a stanza as—

Ask the ruined Sugar-worker if he loves the foreign beet—
Rather, one can hear him answer, would I see my children eat—

would thrill any Tory tea-party in the provinces, and it would be difficult for the advocates of Coercion to find a more appropriate or a more characteristic peroration for a stump speech than

We have not to do with justice, right depends on point of view,
The one question for our thought is, what's our neighbour going to do.

The hymn to the Union Jack, also, would make a capital leaflet for distribution in boroughs where the science of heraldry is absolutely unknown, and the sonnet on Mr. Gladstone is sure to be popular with all who admire violence and vulgarity in literature. It is quite worthy of Thersites at his best.

Mr. Evans's *Cæsar Borgia* is a very tedious tragedy. Some of the passages are in the true 'Ercles' vein,' like the following:

CÆSAR (starting up).
Help, Michelotto, help! Begone! Begone!
Fiends! torments! devils! Gandia! What, Gandia?
O turn those staring eyes away. See! See
He bleeds to death! O fly! Who are those fiends
That tug me by the throat? O! O! O! O! (Pauses.)

But, as a rule, the style is of a more commonplace character. The other poems in the volume are comparatively harmless, though it is sad to find Shakespeare's 'Bacchus with pink eyne' reappearing as 'pinky-eyed Silenus.'

The Cross and the Grail is a collection of poems on the subject of temperance. Compared to real poetry these verses are as 'water unto wine,' but no doubt this was the effect intended. The illustrations are quite dreadful, especially one of an angel appearing to a young man from Chicago who seems to be drinking brown sherry.

Juvenal in Piccadilly and *The Excellent Mystery* are two fierce social satires and, like most satires, they are the product of the corruption they pillory. The first is written on a very convenient principle. Blank spaces are left for the names of the victims and these the reader can fill up as he wishes.

Must—bluster,—give the lie,
—wear the night out,—sneer!

is an example of this anonymous method. It does not seem to us very effective. *The Excellent Mystery* is much better. It is full of clever epigrammatic lines, and its wit fully atones for its bitterness. It is hardly a poem to quote but it is certainly a poem to read.

The Chronicle of Mites is a mock-heroic poem about the inhabitants of a decaying cheese who speculate about the origin of their species and hold learned discussions upon the meaning of evolution and the Gospel according to Darwin. This cheese-epic

is a rather unsavoury production and the style is at times so monstrous and so realistic that the author should be called the Gorgon-Zola of literature.

(1) *Salome*. By J. C. Heywood. (Kegan Paul.)

(2) *Sonnets and Other Poems*. By William Griffiths. (Digby and Long.)

(3) *Fires of Green Wood*. By Francis Prevost. (Kegan Paul.)

(4) *Vanclin and Other Verses*. By John Cameron Grant. (E. W. Allen.)

(5) *Cæsar Borgia*. By W. Evans, M.A. (William Maxwell and Son.)

(6) *The Cross and the Grail*. (Women's Temperance Association, Chicago.)

(7) *Juvenal in Piccadilly*. By Oxoniensis. (Vizetelly and Co.)

(8) *The Excellent Mystery*: *A Matrimonial Satire*. By Lord Pimlico. (Vizetelly and Co.)

(9) *The Chronicle of Mites*. By James Aitchison. (Kegan Paul.)

VENUS OR VICTORY

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 24, 1888.)

There are certain problems in archæology that seem to possess a real romantic interest, and foremost among these is the question of the so-called Venus of Melos. Who is she, this marble mutilated goddess whom Gautier loved, to whom Heine bent his knee? What sculptor wrought her, and for what shrine? Whose hands walled her up in that rude niche where the Melian peasant found her? What symbol of her divinity did she carry? Was it apple of gold or shield of bronze? Where is her city and what was her name among gods and men? The last writer on this fascinating subject is Mr. Stillman, who in a most interesting book recently published in America, claims that the work of art in question is no sea-born and foam-born Aphrodite, but the very Victory Without Wings that once stood in the little chapel outside the gates of the Acropolis at Athens. So long ago as 1826, that is to say six years after the discovery of the statue, the Venus hypothesis was violently attacked by Millingen, and from that time to this the battle of the archæologists has never ceased. Mr. Stillman, who fights, of course, under Millingen's banner, points out that the statue is not of the Venus type at all, being far too heroic in character to correspond to the Greek conception of Aphrodite at any period of their artistic development, but that it agrees distinctly with certain well-known statues of Victory, such as the celebrated 'Victory of Brescia.' The latter is in bronze, is later, and has the wings, but the type is unmistakable, and though not a reproduction it is certainly a recollection of the

Melian statue. The representation of Victory on the coin of Agathocles is also obviously of the Melian type, and in the museum of Naples is a terra-cotta Victory in almost the identical action and drapery. As for Dumont d'Urville's statement that, when the statue was discovered, one hand held an apple and the other a fold of the drapery, the latter is obviously a mistake, and the whole evidence on the subject is so contradictory that no reliance can be placed on the statement made by the French Consul and the French naval officers, none of whom seems to have taken the trouble to ascertain whether the arm and hand now in the Louvre were really found in the same niche as the statue at all. At any rate, these fragments seem to be of extremely inferior workmanship, and they are so imperfect that they are quite worthless as data for measure or opinion. So far, Mr. Stillman is on old ground. His real artistic discovery is this. In working about the Acropolis of Athens, some years ago, he photographed among other sculptures the mutilated Victories in the Temple of Nikè Apteros, the 'Wingless Victory,' the little Ionic temple in which stood that statue of Victory of which it was said that '*the Athenians made her without wings that she might never leave Athens*.' Looking over the photographs afterwards, when the impression of the comparatively diminutive size had passed, he was struck with the close resemblance of the type to that of the Melian statue. Now, this resemblance is so striking that it cannot be questioned by any one who has an eye for form. There are the same large heroic proportions, the same ampleness of physical development, and the same treatment of drapery, and there is also that perfect spiritual kinship which, to any true antiquarian, is one of the most valuable modes of evidence. Now it is generally admitted on both sides that the Melian statue is probably Attic in its origin, and belongs certainly to the period between Phidias and Praxiteles, that is to say, to the age of Scopas, if it be not actually the work of Scopas himself; and as it is to Scopas that these bas-reliefs have been always attributed, the similarity of style can, on Mr. Stillman's hypothesis, be easily accounted for.

As regards the appearance of the statue in Melos, Mr. Stillman points out that Melos belonged to Athens as late as she had any Greek allegiance, and that it is probable that the statue was sent there for concealment on the occasion of some siege or invasion. When this took place, Mr. Stillman does not pretend to decide with any degree of certainty, but it is evident that it must have been subsequent to the establishment of the Roman hegemony, as the brickwork of the niche in which the statue was found is clearly Roman in character, and before the time of Pausanias and Pliny, as neither of these antiquaries mentions the statue. Accepting, then, the statue as that of the Victory Without Wings, Mr. Stillman agrees with Millingen in supposing that in her left hand she held a bronze shield, the lower rim of which rested on the left

knee where some marks of the kind are easily recognisable, while with her right hand she traced, or had just finished tracing, the names of the great heroes of Athens. Valentin's objection, that if this were so the left thigh would incline outwards so as to secure a balance, Mr. Stillman meets partly by the analogy of the Victory of Brescia and partly by the evidence of Nature herself; for he has had a model photographed in the same position as the statue and holding a shield in the manner he proposes in his restoration. The result is precisely the contrary to that which Valentin assumes. Of course, Mr. Stillman's solution of the whole matter must not be regarded as an absolutely scientific demonstration. It is simply an induction in which a kind of artistic instinct, not communicable or equally valuable to all people, has had the greatest part, but to this mode of interpretation archæologists as a class have been far too indifferent; and it is certain that in the present case it has given us a theory which is most fruitful and suggestive.

The little temple of Nikè Apteros has had, as Mr. Stillman reminds us, a destiny unique of its kind. Like the Parthenon, it was standing little more than two hundred years ago, but during the Turkish occupation it was razed, and its stones all built into the great bastion which covered the front of the Acropolis and blocked up the staircase to the Propylæa. It was dug out and restored, nearly every stone in its place, by two German architects during the reign of Otho, and it stands again just as Pausanias described it on the spot where old Ægeus watched for the return of Theseus from Crete. In the distance are Salamis and Ægina, and beyond the purple hills lies Marathon. If the Melian statue be indeed the Victory Without Wings, she had no unworthy shrine.

There are some other interesting essays in Mr. Stillman's book on the wonderful topographical knowledge of Ithaca displayed in the *Odyssey*, and discussions of this kind are always interesting as long as there is no attempt to represent Homer as the ordinary literary man; but the article on the Melian statue is by far the most important and the most delightful. Some people will, no doubt, regret the possibility of the disappearance of the old name, and as Venus not as Victory will still worship the stately goddess, but there are others who will be glad to see in her the image and ideal of that spiritual enthusiasm to which Athens owed her liberty, and by which alone can liberty be won.

On the Track of Ulysses; *together with an Excursion in Quest of the So-called Venus of Melos*. By W. J. Stillman. (Houghton, Mifflin and Co., Boston.)

LITERARY AND OTHER NOTES—V

(*Woman's World*, March 1888.)

The Princess Emily Ruete of Oman and Zanzibar, whose efforts to introduce women doctors into the East are so well known, has just published a most interesting account of her life, under the title of *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess*. The Princess is the daughter of the celebrated Sejid Saîd, Imam of Mesket and Sultan of Zanzibar, and her long residence in Germany has given her the opportunity of comparing Eastern with Western civilisation. She writes in a very simple and unaffected manner; and though she has many grievances against her brother, the present Sultan (who seems never to have forgiven her for her conversion to Christianity and her marriage with a German subject), she has too much tact, *esprit*, and good humour to trouble her readers with any dreary record of family quarrels and domestic differences. Her book throws a great deal of light on the question of the position of women in the East, and shows that much of what has been written on this subject is quite inaccurate. One of the most curious passages is that in which the Princess gives an account of her mother:

My mother was a Circassian by birth, who in early youth had been torn away from her home. Her father had been a farmer, and she had always lived peacefully with her parents and her little brother and sister. War broke out suddenly, and the country was overrun by marauding bands. On their approach, the family fled into an underground place, as my mother called it—she probably meant a cellar, which is not known in Zanzibar. Their place of refuge was, however, invaded by a merciless horde, the parents were slain, and the children carried off by three mounted Arnauts.

She came into my father's possession when quite a child, probably at the tender age of seven or eight years, as she cast her first tooth in our house. She was at once adopted as playmate by two of my sisters, her own age, with whom she was educated and brought up. Together with them she learnt to read, which raised her a good deal above her equals, who, as a rule, became members of our family at the age of sixteen or eighteen years, or older still, when they had outgrown whatever taste they might once have had for schooling. She could scarcely be called pretty; but she was tall and shapely, had black eyes, and hair down to her knees. Of a very gentle disposition, her greatest pleasure consisted in assisting other people, in looking after and nursing any sick person in the house; and I well remember her going about with her books from one patient to another, reading prayers to them.

She was in great favour with my father, who never refused her anything, though she interceded mostly for others; and when she came to see him, he always rose to meet her half-way—a distinction he conferred but very rarely. She was as kind and pious as she was modest, and in all her dealings frank and open. She had another daughter besides myself, who had died quite young. Her mental powers were not great, but she was very clever at needlework. She had always been a tender and loving mother to

me, but this did not hinder her from punishing me severely when she deemed it necessary.

She had many friends at Bet-il-Mtoni, which is rarely to be met with in an Arab harem. She had the most unshaken and firmest trust in God. When I was about five years old, I remember a fire breaking out in the stables close by, one night while my father was at his city residence. A false alarm spread over the house that we, too, were in imminent danger; upon which the good woman hastened to take me on her arm, and her big kurân (we pronounce the word thus) on the other, and hurried into the open air. On the rest of her possessions she set no value in this hour of danger.

Here is a description of Schesade, the Sultan's second legitimate wife:

She was a Persian Princess of entrancing beauty, and of inordinate extravagance. Her little retinue was composed of one hundred and fifty cavaliers, all Persians, who lived on the ground floor; with them she hunted and rode in the broad day—rather contrary to Arab notions. The Persian women are subjected to quite a Spartan training in bodily exercise; they enjoy great liberty, much more so than Arab women, but they are also more rude in mind and action.

Schesade is said to have carried on her extravagant style of life beyond bounds; her dresses, cut always after the Persian fashion, were literally covered with embroideries of pearls. A great many of these were picked up nearly every morning by the servants in her rooms, where she had dropped them from her garments, but the Princess would never take any of these precious jewels back again. She did not only drain my father's exchequer most wantonly, but violated many of our sacred laws; in fact, she had only married him for his high station and wealth, and had loved some one else all the time. Such a state of things could, of course, only end in a divorce; fortunately Schesade had no children of her own. There is a rumour still current among us that beautiful Schesade was observed, some years after this event, when my father carried on war in Persia, and had the good fortune of taking the fortress of Bender Abbâs on the Persian Gulf, heading her troops, and taking aim at the members of our family herself.

Another of the remarkable women mentioned by the Princess was her stepmother, Azze-bint-Zef, who seems to have completely ruled the Sultan, and to have settled all questions of home and foreign policy; while her great-aunt, the Princess Asche, was regent of the empire during the Sultan's minority, and was the heroine of the siege of Mesket. Of her the Princess gives the following account:

Dressed in man's clothes, she inspected the outposts herself at night, she watched and encouraged the soldiers in all exposed places, and was saved several times only by the speed of her horse in unforeseen attacks. One night she rode out, oppressed with care, having just received information that the enemy was about to attempt an entrance into the city by means of bribery that night, and with intent to massacre all; and now she went to convince herself of the loyalty of her troops. Very cautiously she rode up to a guard, requesting to speak to the 'Akîd' (the officer in charge), and did all in her power to seduce him from his duty by great offers of reward on the part of the besiegers. The indignation of the brave man, however, completely allayed her fears as to the fidelity of the troops, but the experiment nearly cost her her own life. The soldiers were about to massacre the supposed spy on the spot, and it required all her presence of mind to make good her escape.

The situation grew, however, to be very critical at Mesket. Famine at last broke out, and the people were well-nigh distracted, as no assistance or relief could be expected from without. It was therefore decided to attempt a last sortie in order to die at least with glory. There was just sufficient powder left for one more attack, but there was no more lead for either guns or muskets. In this emergency the regent ordered iron nails and pebbles to be used in place of balls. The guns were loaded with all the old iron and brass that could be collected, and she opened her treasury to have bullets made out of her own silver dollars. Every nerve was strained, and the sally succeeded beyond all hope. The enemy was completely taken by surprise and fled in all directions, leaving more than half their men dead and wounded on the field. Mesket was saved, and, delivered out of her deep distress, the brave woman knelt down on the battlefield and thanked God in fervent prayer.

From that time her Government was a peaceful one, and she ruled so wisely that she was able to transfer to her nephew, my father, an empire so unimpaired as to place him in a position to extend the empire by the conquest of Zanzibar. It is to my great-aunt, therefore, that we owe, and not to an inconsiderable degree, the acquisition of this second empire.

She, too, was an Eastern woman!

All through her book the Princess protests against the idea that Oriental women are degraded or oppressed, and in the following passage she points out how difficult it is for foreigners to get any real information on the subject:

The education of the children is left entirely to the mother, whether she be legitimate wife or purchased slave, and it constitutes her chief happiness. Some fashionable mothers in Europe shift this duty on to the nurse, and, by-and-by, on the governess,

and are quite satisfied with looking up their children, or receiving their visits, once a day. In France the child is sent to be nursed in the country, and left to the care of strangers. An Arab mother, on the other hand, looks continually after her children. She watches and nurses them with the greatest affection, and never leaves them as long as they may stand in need of her motherly care, for which she is rewarded by the fondest filial love.

If foreigners had more frequent opportunities to observe the cheerfulness, the exuberance of spirits even, of Eastern women, they would soon and more easily be convinced of the untruth of all those stories afloat about the degraded, oppressed, and listless state of their life. It is impossible to gain a true insight into the actual domesticity in a few moments' visit; and the conversation carried on, on those formal occasions, hardly deserves that name; there is barely more than the exchange of a few commonplace remarks—and it is questionable if even these have been correctly interpreted.

Notwithstanding his innate hospitality, the Arab has the greatest possible objection to having his home pried into by those of another land and creed. Whenever, therefore, a European lady called on us, the enormous circumference of her hoops (which were the fashion then, and took up the entire width of the stairs) was the first thing to strike us dumb with wonder; after which, the very meagre conversation generally confined itself on both sides to the mysteries of different costumes; and the lady retired as wise as she was when she came, after having been sprinkled over with attar of roses, and being the richer for some parting presents. It is true she had entered a harem; she had seen the much-pitied Oriental ladies (though only through their veils); she had with her own eyes seen our dresses, our jewellery, the nimbleness with which we sat down on the floor—and that was all. She could not boast of having seen more than any other foreign lady who had called before her. She is conducted upstairs and downstairs, and is watched all the time. Rarely she sees more than the reception-room, and more rarely still can she guess or find out who the veiled lady is with whom she conversed. In short, she has had no opportunity whatsoever of learning anything of domestic life, or the position of Eastern women.

No one who is interested in the social position of women in the East should fail to read these pleasantly-written memoirs. The Princess is herself a woman of high culture, and the story of her life is as instructive as history and as fascinating as fiction.

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Mrs. Oliphant's *Makers of Venice* is an admirable literary *pendant* to the same writer's charming book on Florence, though there is a wide difference between the beautiful

Tuscan city and the sea-city of the Adriatic. Florence, as Mrs. Oliphant points out, is a city full of memories of the great figures of the past. The traveller cannot pass along her streets without treading in the very traces of Dante, without stepping on soil made memorable by footprints never to be effaced. The greatness of the surroundings, the palaces, churches, and frowning mediæval castles in the midst of the city, are all thrown into the background by the greatness, the individuality, the living power and vigour of the men who are their originators, and at the same time their inspiring soul. But when we turn to Venice the effect is very different. We do not think of the makers of that marvellous city, but rather of what they made. The idealised image of Venice herself meets us everywhere. The mother is not overshadowed by the too great glory of any of her sons. In her records the city is everything—the republic, the worshipped ideal of a community in which every man for the common glory seems to have been willing to sink his own. We know that Dante stood within the red walls of the arsenal, and saw the galleys making and mending, and the pitch flaming up to heaven; Petrarch came to visit the great Mistress of the Sea, taking refuge there, 'in this city, true home of the human race,' from trouble, war and pestilence outside; and Byron, with his facile enthusiasms and fervent eloquence, made his home for a time in one of the stately, decaying palaces; but with these exceptions no great poet has ever associated himself with the life of Venice. She had architects, sculptors and painters, but no singer of her own. The arts through which she gave her message to the world were visible and imitative. Mrs. Oliphant, in her bright, picturesque style, tells the story of Venice pleasantly and well. Her account of the two Bellinis is especially charming; and the chapters on Titian and Tintoret are admirably written. She concludes her interesting and useful history with the following words, which are well worthy of quotation, though I must confess that the 'alien modernisms' trouble me not a little:

The critics of recent days have had much to say as to the deterioration of Venice in her new activity, and the introduction of alien modernisms, in the shape of steamboats and other new industrial agents, into her canals and lagoons. But in this adoption of every new development of power, Venice is only proving herself the most faithful representative of the vigorous republic of old. Whatever prejudice or angry love may say, we cannot doubt that the Michiels, the Dandolos, the Foscari, the great rulers who formed Venice, had steamboats existed in their day, serving their purpose better than their barges and peati, would have adopted them without hesitation, without a thought of what any critics might say. The wonderful new impulse which has made Italy a great power has justly put strength and life before those old traditions of beauty, which made her not only the 'woman country' of Europe, but a sort of Odalisque

trading upon her charms, rather than the nursing mother of a noble and independent nation. That in her recoil from that somewhat degrading position, she may here and there have proved too regardless of the claims of antiquity, we need not attempt to deny; the new spring of life in her is too genuine and great to keep her entirely free from this evident danger. But it is strange that any one who loves Italy, and sincerely rejoices in her amazing resurrection, should fail to recognise how venial is this fault.

Miss Mabel Robinson's last novel, *The Plan of Campaign*, is a very powerful study of modern political life. As a concession to humanity, each of the politicians is made to fall in love, and the charm of their various romances fully atones for the soundness of the author's theory of rent. Miss Robinson dissects, describes, and discourses with keen scientific insight and minute observation. Her style, though somewhat lacking in grace, is, at its best, simple and strong. Richard Talbot and Elinor Fetherston are admirably conceived and admirably drawn, and the whole account of the murder of Lord Roeglass is most dramatic.

A Year in Eden, by Harriet Waters Preston, is a chronicle of New England life, and is full of the elaborate subtlety of the American school of fiction. The Eden in question is the little village of Pierpont, and the Eve of this provincial paradise is a beautiful girl called Monza Middleton, a fascinating, fearless creature, who brings ruin and misery on all who love her. Miss Preston writes an admirable prose style, and the minor characters in the book are wonderfully lifelike and true.

The Englishwoman's Year-Book contains a really extraordinary amount of useful information on every subject connected with woman's work. In the census taken in 1831 (six years before the Queen ascended the Throne), no occupation whatever was specified as appertaining to women, except that of domestic service; but in the census of 1881, the number of occupations mentioned as followed by women is upwards of three hundred and thirty. The most popular occupations seem to be those of domestic service, school teaching, and dressmaking; the lowest numbers on the list are those of bankers, gardeners, and persons engaged in scientific pursuits. Besides these, the *Year-Book* makes mention of stockbroking and conveyancing as professions that women are beginning to adopt. The historical account of the literary work done by Englishwomen in this century, as given in the *Year-Book*, is curiously inadequate, and the list of women's magazines is not complete, but in all other respects the publication seems a most useful and excellent one.

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Wordsworth, in one of his interesting letters to Lady Beaumont, says that it is 'an awful truth that there neither is nor can be any genuine enjoyment of poetry among nineteen out of twenty of those persons who live or wish to live in the broad light of the world—among those who either are, or are striving to make themselves, people of consideration in society,' adding that the mission of poetry is 'to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, and feel, and, therefore, to become more actively and securely virtuous.' I am, however, rather disposed to think that the age in which we live is one that has a very genuine enjoyment of poetry, though we may no longer agree with Wordsworth's ideas on the subject of the poet's proper mission; and it is interesting to note that this enjoyment manifests itself by creation even more than by criticism. To realise the popularity of the great poets, one should turn to the minor poets and see whom they follow, what master they select, whose music they echo. At present, there seems to be a reaction in favour of Lord Tennyson, if we are to judge by *Rachel and Other Poems*, which is a rather remarkable little volume in its way. The poem that gives its title to the book is full of strong lines and good images; and, in spite of its Tennysonian echoes, there is something attractive in such verses as the following:

Day by day along the Orient faintly glows the tender dawn,
Day by day the pearly dewdrops tremble on the upland lawn:

Day by day the star of morning pales before the coming ray,
And the first faint streak of radiance brightens to the perfect day.

Day by day the rosebud gathers to itself, from earth and sky,
Fragrant stores and ampler beauty, lovelier form and deeper dye:

Day by day a richer crimson mantles in its glowing breast—
Every golden hour conferring some sweet grace that crowns the rest.

And thou canst not tell the moment when the day ascends her throne,
When the morning star hath vanished, and the rose is fully blown.

So each day fulfils its purpose, calm, unresting, strong, and sure,
Moving onward to completion, doth the work of God endure.

How unlike man's toil and hurry! how unlike the noise, the strife,
All the pain of incompleteness, all the weariness of life!

Ye look upward and take courage. He who leads the golden hours,
Feeds the birds, and clothes the lily, made these human hearts of ours:

Knows their need, and will supply it, manna falling day by day,
Bread from heaven, and food of angels, all along the desert way.

The Secretary of the International Technical College at Bedford has issued a most interesting prospectus of the aims and objects of the Institution. The College seems to be intended chiefly for ladies who have completed their ordinary course of English studies, and it will be divided into two departments, Educational and Industrial. In the latter, classes will be held for various decorative and technical arts, and for wood-carving, etching, and photography, as well as sick-nursing, dressmaking, cookery, physiology, poultry-rearing, and the cultivation of flowers. The curriculum certainly embraces a wonderful amount of subjects, and I have no doubt that the College will supply a real want.

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The Ladies' Employment Society has been so successful that it has moved to new premises in Park Street, Grosvenor Square, where there are some very pretty and useful things for sale. The children's smocks are quite charming, and seem very inexpensive. The subscription to the Society is one guinea a year, and a commission of five per cent. is charged on each thing sold.

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Miss May Morris, whose exquisite needle-work is well known, has just completed a pair of curtains for a house in Boston. They are amongst the most perfect specimens of modern embroidery that I have seen, and are from Miss Morris's own design. I am glad to hear that Miss Morris has determined to give lessons in embroidery. She has a thorough knowledge of the art, her sense of beauty is as rare as it is refined, and her power of design is quite remarkable.

Mrs. Jopling's life-classes for ladies have been such a success that a similar class has been started in Chelsea by Mr. Clegg Wilkinson at the Carlyle Studios, King's Road. Mr. Wilkinson (who is a very brilliant young painter) is strongly of opinion that life should be studied from life itself, and not from that abstract presentation of life which we find in Greek marbles—a position which I have always held very strongly myself.

(1) *Memoirs of an Arabian Princess*. By the Princess Emily Ruete of Oman and Zanzibar. (Ward and Downey.)

(2) *Makers of Venice*. By Mrs. Oliphant. (Macmillan and Co.)

(3) *The Plan of Campaign*. By Mabel Robinson. (Vizetelly and Co.)

(4) *A Year in Eden*. By Harriet Waters Preston. (Fisher Unwin.)

(5) *The Englishwoman's Year-Book*, 1888. (Hatchards.)

(6) *Rachel and Other Poems*. (Cornish Brothers.)

THE POETS' CORNER—VI

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 6, 1888.)

David Westren, by Mr. Alfred Hayes, is a long narrative poem in Tennysonian blank verse, a sort of serious novel set to music. It is somewhat lacking in actuality, and the picturesque style in which it is written rather contributes to this effect, lending the story beauty but robbing it of truth. Still, it is not without power, and cultured verse is certainly a pleasanter medium for story-telling than coarse and common prose. The hero of the poem is a young clergyman of the muscular Christian school:

A lover of good cheer; a bubbling source
Of jest and tale; a monarch of the gun;
A dreader tyrant of the darting trout
Than that bright bird whose azure lightning threads
The brooklet's bowery windings; the red fox
Did well to seek the boulder-strewn hill-side,
When Westren cheered her dappled foes; the otter
Had cause to rue the dawn when Westren's form
Loomed through the streaming bracken, to waylay
Her late return from plunder, the rough pack
Barking a jealous welcome round their friend.

One day he meets on the river a lovely girl who is angling, and helps her to land

A gallant fish, all flashing in the sun
In silver mail inlaid with scarlet gems,
His back thick-sprinkled as a leopard's hide
With rich brown spots, and belly of bright gold.

They naturally fall in love with each other and marry, and for many years David Westren leads a perfectly happy life. Suddenly calamity comes upon him, his wife and children die and he finds himself alone and desolate. Then begins his struggle. Like Job, he cries out against the injustice of things, and his own personal sorrow makes him realise the sorrow and misery of the world. But the answer that satisfied Job does not satisfy him. He finds no comfort in contemplating Leviathan:

As if we lacked reminding of brute force,
As if we never felt the clumsy hoof,
As if the bulk of twenty million whales
Were worth one pleading soul, or all the laws
That rule the lifeless suns could soothe the sense
Of outrage in a loving human heart!
Sublime? majestic? Ay, but when our trust
Totters, and faith is shattered to the base,
Grand words will not uprear it.

Mr. Hayes states the problem of life extremely well, but his solution is sadly inadequate both from a psychological and from a dramatic point of view. David Westren ultimately becomes a mild Unitarian, a sort of pastoral Stopford Brooke with leanings towards Positivism, and we leave him preaching platitudes to a village congregation. However, in spite of this commonplace conclusion there is a great deal in Mr. Hayes's poem that is strong and fine, and he undoubtedly possesses a fair ear for music and a remarkable faculty of poetical expression. Some of his descriptive touches of nature, such as

In meeting woods, whereon a film of mist
Slept like the bloom upon the purple grape,

are very graceful and suggestive, and he will probably make his mark in literature.

There is much that is fascinating in Mr. Rennell Rodd's last volume, *The Unknown Madonna and Other Poems*. Mr. Rodd looks at life with all the charming optimism of a young man, though he is quite conscious of the fact that a stray note of melancholy, here and there, has an artistic as well as a popular value; he has a keen sense of the pleasurableness of colour, and his verse is distinguished by a certain refinement and purity of outline; though not passionate he can play very prettily with the words of passion, and his emotions are quite healthy and quite harmless. *In Excelsis*, the most ambitious poem in the book, is somewhat too abstract and metaphysical, and such lines as

Lift thee o'er thy 'here' and 'now,'
Look beyond thine 'I' and 'thou,'

are excessively tedious. But when Mr. Rodd leaves the problem of the Unconditioned to take care of itself, and makes no attempt to solve the mysteries of the Ego and the non-Ego, he is very pleasant reading indeed. A *Mazurka of Chopin* is charming, in spite of the awkwardness of the fifth line, and so are the verses on Assisi, and those

on San Servolo at Venice. These last have all the brilliancy of a clever pastel. The prettiest thing in the whole volume is this little lyric on Spring:

Such blue of sky, so palely fair,
Such glow of earth, such lucid air!
Such purple on the mountain lines,
Such deep new verdure in the pines!
The live light strikes the broken towers,
The crocus bulbs burst into flowers,
The sap strikes up the black vine stock,
And the lizard wakes in the splintered rock,
And the wheat's young green peeps through the sod,
And the heart is touched with a thought of God;
The very silence seems to sing,
It must be Spring, it must be Spring!

We do not care for 'palely fair' in the first line, and the repetition of the word 'strikes' is not very felicitous, but the grace of movement and delicacy of touch are pleasing.

The Wind, by Mr. James Ross, is a rather gusty ode, written apparently without any definite scheme of metre, and not very impressive as it lacks both the strength of the blizzard and the sweetness of Zephyr. Here is the opening:

  The roaming, tentless wind
  No rest can ever find—
From east, and west, and south, and north
He is for ever driven forth!
  From the chill east
Where fierce hyænas seek their awful feast:
  From the warm west,
By beams of glitt'ring summer blest.

Nothing could be much worse than this, and if the line 'Where fierce hyænas seek their awful feast' is intended to frighten us, it entirely misses its effect. The ode is followed by some sonnets which are destined, we fear, to be *ludibria ventis*. Immortality, even in the nineteenth century, is not granted to those who rhyme 'awe' and 'war' together.

Mr. Isaac Sharp's *Saul of Tarsus* is an interesting, and, in some respects, a fine poem.

Saul of Tarsus, silently,
With a silent company,
To Damascus' gates drew nigh.

* * * * *

And his eyes, too, and his mien
Were, as are the eagles, keen;
All the man was aquiline—

are two strong, simple verses, and indeed the spirit of the whole poem is dignified and stately. The rest of the volume, however, is disappointing. Ordinary theology has long since converted its gold into lead, and words and phrases that once touched the heart of the world have become wearisome and meaningless through repetition. If Theology desires to move us, she must re-write her formulas.

There is something very pleasant in coming across a poet who can apostrophise Byron as

transcendent star
That gems the firmament of poesy,

and can speak of Longfellow as a 'mighty Titan.' Reckless panegyrics of this kind show a kindly nature and a good heart, and Mr. Mackenzie's *Highland Daydreams* could not possibly offend any one. It must be admitted that they are rather old-fashioned, but this is usually the case with natural spontaneous verse. It takes a great artist to be thoroughly modern. Nature is always a little behind the age.

The Story of the Cross, an attempt to versify the Gospel narratives, is a strange survival of the Tate and Brady school of poetry. Mr. Nash, who styles himself 'a humble soldier in the army of Faith,' expresses a hope that his book may 'invigorate devotional feeling, especially among the young, to whom verse is perhaps more attractive than to their elders,' but we should be sorry to think that people of any age could admire such a paraphrase as the following:

Foxes have holes, in which to slink for rest,
The birds of air find shelter in the nest;
But He, the Son of Man and Lord of all,
Has no abiding place His own to call.

It is a curious fact that the worst work is always done with the best intentions, and that people are never so trivial as when they take themselves very seriously.

(1) *David Westren*. By Alfred Hayes, M.A. New Coll., Oxon. (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers.)

(2) *The Unknown Madonna and Other Poems*. By Rennell Rodd. (David Stott.)

(3) *The Wind and Six Sonnets*. By James Ross. (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith.)

(4) *Saul of Tarsus*. By Isaac Sharp. (Kegan Paul.)

(5) *Highland Daydreams*. By George Mackenzie. (Inverness: Office of the *Northern Chronicle*.)

(6) *The Story of the Cross*. By Charles Nash. (Elliot Stock.)

M. CARO ON GEORGE SAND

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 14, 1888.)

The biography of a very great man from the pen of a very ladylike writer—this is the best description we can give of M. Caro's Life of George Sand. The late Professor of the Sorbonne could chatter charmingly about culture, and had all the fascinating insincerity of an accomplished phrase-maker; being an extremely superior person he had a great contempt for Democracy and its doings, but he was always popular with the Duchesses of the Faubourg, as there was nothing in history or in literature that he could not explain away for their edification; having never done anything remarkable he was naturally elected a member of the Academy, and he always remained loyal to the traditions of that thoroughly respectable and thoroughly pretentious institution. In fact, he was just the sort of man who should never have attempted to write a Life of George Sand or to interpret George Sand's genius. He was too feminine to appreciate the grandeur of that large womanly nature, too much of a *dilettante* to realise the masculine force of that strong and ardent mind. He never gets at the secret of George Sand, and never brings us near to her wonderful personality. He looks on her simply as a littérateur, as a writer of pretty stories of country life and of charming, if somewhat exaggerated, romances. But George Sand was much more than this. Beautiful as are such books as *Consuelo* and *Mauprat*, *François le Champi* and *La Mare au Diable*, yet in none of them is she adequately expressed, by none of them is she adequately revealed. As Mr. Matthew Arnold said, many years ago, 'We do not know George Sand unless we feel the spirit which goes through her work as a whole.' With this spirit, however, M. Caro has no sympathy. Madame Sand's doctrines are antediluvian, he tells us, her philosophy is quite dead and her ideas of social regeneration are Utopian, incoherent and absurd. The best thing for us to do is to forget these silly dreams and to read *Teverino* and *Le Secrétaire Intime*. Poor M.

Caro! This spirit, which he treats with such airy flippancy, is the very leaven of modern life. It is remoulding the world for us and fashioning our age anew. If it is antediluvian, it is so because the deluge is yet to come; if it is Utopian, then Utopia must be added to our geographies. To what curious straits M. Caro is driven by his violent prejudices may be estimated by the fact that he tries to class George Sand's novels with the old *Chansons de geste*, the stories of adventure characteristic of primitive literatures; whereas in using fiction as a vehicle of thought, and romance as a means of influencing the social ideals of her age, George Sand was merely carrying out the traditions of Voltaire and Rousseau, of Diderot and of Chateaubriand. The novel, says M. Caro, must be allied either to poetry or to science. That it has found in philosophy one of its strongest allies seems not to have occurred to him. In an English critic such a view might possibly be excusable. Our greatest novelists, such as Fielding, Scott and Thackeray cared little for the philosophy of their age. But coming, as it does, from a French critic, the statement seems to show a strange want of recognition of one of the most important elements of French fiction. Nor, even in the narrow limits that he has imposed upon himself, can M. Caro be said to be a very fortunate or felicitous critic. To take merely one instance out of many, he says nothing of George Sand's delightful treatment of art and the artist's life. And yet how exquisitely does she analyse each separate art and present it to us in its relation to life! In *Consuelo* she tells us of music; in *Horace* of authorship; in *Le Château des Désertes* of acting; in *Les Maîtres Mosaïstes* of mosaic work; in *Le Château de Pictordu* of portrait painting; and in *La Daniella* of the painting of landscape. What Mr. Ruskin and Mr. Browning have done for England she did for France. She invented an art literature. It is unnecessary, however, to discuss any of M. Caro's minor failings, for the whole effect of the book, so far as it attempts to portray for us the scope and character of George Sand's genius, is entirely spoiled by the false attitude assumed from the beginning, and though the dictum may seem to many harsh and exclusive, we cannot help feeling that an absolute incapacity for appreciating the spirit of a great writer is no qualification for writing a treatise on the subject.

As for Madame Sand's private life, which is so intimately connected with her art (for, like Goethe, she had to live her romances before she could write them), M. Caro says hardly anything about it. He passes it over with a modesty that almost makes one blush, and for fear of wounding the susceptibilities of those *grandes dames* whose passions M. Paul Bourget analyses with such subtlety, he transforms her mother, who was a typical French *grisette*, into 'a very amiable and *spirituelle* milliner'! It must be admitted that Joseph Surface himself could hardly show greater tact and delicacy,

though we ourselves must plead guilty to preferring Madame Sand's own description of her as an 'enfant du vieux pavé de Paris.'

As regards the English version, which is by M. Gustave Masson, it may be up to the intellectual requirements of the Harrow schoolboys, but it will hardly satisfy those who consider that accuracy, lucidity and ease are essential to a good translation. Its carelessness is absolutely astounding, and it is difficult to understand how a publisher like Mr. Routledge could have allowed such a piece of work to issue from his press. 'Il descend avec le sourire d'un Machiavel' appears as 'he descends into the smile of a Machiavelli'; George Sand's remark to Flaubert about literary style, 'tu la considères comme un but, elle n'est qu'un effet' is translated 'you consider it an end, it is merely *an effort*'; and such a simple phrase as 'ainsi le veut Festhe'tique du roman' is converted into 'so the æsthetes of the world would have it.' 'Il faudra relâcher mes Économies' is 'I will have to draw upon my savings,' not 'my economies will assuredly be relaxed'; 'cassures résineuses' is not 'cleavages full of rosin,' and 'Mme. Sand ne réussit que deux fois' is hardly 'Madame Sand was not twice successful.' 'Querelles d'école' does not mean 'school disputations'; 'ceux qui se font une sorte d'esthétique de l'indifférence absolue' is not 'those of which the æsthetics seem to be an absolute indifference'; 'chimère' should not be translated 'chimera,' nor 'lettres inéditées' 'inedited letters'; 'ridicules' means absurdities, not 'ridicules,' and 'qui pourra définir sa pensée?' is not 'who can clearly despise her thought?' M. Masson comes to grief over even such a simple sentence as 'elle s'étonna des fureurs qui accueillirent ce livre, ne comprenant pas que l'on haïsse un auteur à travers son œuvre,' which he translates 'she was surprised at the storm which greeted this book, *not understanding that the author is hated through his work*.' Then, passing over such phrases as 'substituted by religion' instead of 'replaced by religion,' and 'vulgarisation' where 'popularisation' is meant, we come to that most irritating form of translation, the literal word-for-word style. The stream 'excites itself by the declivity which it obeys' is one of M. Masson's finest achievements in this *genre*, and it is an admirable instance of the influence of schoolboys on their masters. However, it would be tedious to make a complete 'catalogue of slips,' so we will content ourselves by saying that M. Masson's translation is not merely quite unworthy of himself, but is also quite undeserved by the public. Nowadays, the public has its feelings.

George Sand. By the late Elmé Marie Caro. Translated by Gustave Masson, B.A., Assistant Master, Harrow School. 'Great French Writers' Series. (Routledge and Sons.)

THE POETS' CORNER—VII

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, October 24, 1888.)

Mr. Ian Hamilton's *Ballad of Hádji* is undeniably clever. Hádji is a wonderful Arab horse that a reckless hunter rides to death in the pursuit of a wild boar, and the moral of the poem—for there is a moral—seems to be that an absorbing passion is a very dangerous thing and blunts the human sympathies. In the course of the chase a little child is drowned, a Brahmin maiden murdered, and an aged peasant severely wounded, but the hunter cares for none of these things and will not hear of stopping to render any assistance. Some of the stanzas are very graceful, notably one beginning

Yes—like a bubble filled with smoke—
The curd-white moon upswimming broke
The vacancy of space;

but such lines as the following, which occur in the description of the fight with the boar—

I hung as close as keepsake locket
On maiden breast—but from its socket
He wrenched my bridle arm,

are dreadful, and 'his brains festooned the thorn' is not a very happy way of telling the reader how the boar died. All through the volume we find the same curious mixture of good and bad. To say that the sun kisses the earth 'with flame-moustachoed lip' is awkward and uncouth, and yet the poem in which the expression occurs has some pretty lines. Mr. Ian Hamilton should prune. Pruning, whether in the garden or in the study, is a most healthy and useful employment. The volume is nicely printed, but Mr. Strang's frontispiece is not a great success, and most of the tail-pieces seem to have been designed without any reference to the size of the page.

Mr. Catty dedicates his book to the memory of Wordsworth, Shelley, Coleridge and Keats—a somewhat pompous signboard for such very ordinary wine—and an inscription in golden letters on the cover informs us that his poems are 'addressed to the rising generation,' whom, he tells us elsewhere, he is anxious to initiate into the great comprehensive truth that 'Virtue is no other than self-interest, deeply understood.' In order to further this laudable aim he has written a very tedious blank verse poem which he calls *The Secret of Content*, but it certainly does not convey that secret to the reader. It is heavy, abstract and prosaic, and shows how intolerably dull a man can be who has the best intentions and the most earnest beliefs. In the rest of the volume, where Mr. Catty does not take himself quite so seriously, there are some

rather pleasing things. The sonnet on Shelley's room at University College would be admirable but for the unmusical character of the last line.

Green in the wizard arms
Of the foam-bearded Atlantic,
An isle of old enchantment,
A melancholy isle,
Enchanted and dreaming lies;
And there, by Shannon's flowing
In the moonlight, spectre-thin,
The spectre Erin sits.

Wail no more, lonely one, mother of exile wail no more,
Banshee of the world—no more!
Thy sorrows are the world's, thou art no more alone;
Thy wrongs the world's—

are the first and last stanzas of Mr. Todhunter's poem *The Banshee*. To throw away the natural grace of rhyme from a modern song is, as Mr. Swinburne once remarked, a wilful abdication of half the power and half the charm of verse, and we cannot say that Mr. Todhunter has given us much that consoles us for its loss. Part of his poem reads like a translation of an old Bardic song, part of it like rough material for poetry, and part of it like misshapen prose. It is an interesting specimen of poetic writing but it is not a perfect work of art. It is amorphous and inchoate, and the same must be said of the two other poems, *The Doom of the Children of Lir*, and *The Lamentation for the Sons of Turann*. Rhyme gives architecture as well as melody to song, and though the lovely lute-builded walls of Thebes may have risen up to unrhymed choral metres, we have had no modern Amphion to work such wonders for us. Such a verse as—

Five were the chiefs who challenged
By their deeds the Over-kingship,
Bov Derg, the Daghda's son, Ilbrac of Assaroe,
And Lir of the White Field in the plain of Emain Macha;
And after them stood up Midhir the proud, who reigned
Upon the hills of Bri,
Of Bri the loved of Liath, Bri of the broken heart;
And last was Angus Og; all these had many voices,
But for Bov Derg were most,

has, of course, an archæological interest, but has no artistic value at all. Indeed, from the point of view of art, the few little poems at the end of the volume are worth all the

ambitious pseudo-epics that Mr. Todhunter has tried to construct out of Celtic lore. A *Bacchic Day* is charming, and the sonnet on the open-air performance of *The Faithfull Shepherdesse* is most gracefully phrased and most happy in conception.

Mr. Peacock is an American poet, and Professor Thomas Danleigh Supplée, A.M., Ph.D., F.R.S., who has written a preface to his *Poems of the Plains and Songs of the Solitudes*, tells us that he is entitled to be called the Laureate of the West. Though a staunch Republican, Mr. Peacock, according to the enthusiastic Professor, is not ashamed of his ancestor King William of Holland, nor of his relatives Lord and Lady Peacock who, it seems, are natives of Scotland. He was brought up at Zanesville, Muskingum Co., Ohio, where his father edited the Zanesville *Aurora*, and he had an uncle who was 'a superior man' and edited the Wheeling *Intelligencer*. His poems seem to be extremely popular, and have been highly praised, the Professor informs us, by Victor Hugo, the *Saturday Review* and the *Commercial Advertiser*. The preface is the most amusing part of the book, but the poems also are worth studying. *The Maniac*, *The Bandit Chief*, and *The Outlaw* can hardly be called light reading, but we strongly recommend the poem on Chicago:

Chicago! great city of the West!
All that wealth, all that power invest;
Thou sprang like magic from the sand,
As touched by the magician's wand.

'Thou sprang' is slightly depressing, and the second line is rather obscure, but we should not measure by too high a standard the untutored utterances of artless nature. The opening lines of *The Vendetta* also deserve mention:

When stars are glowing through day's gloaming glow,
Reflecting from ocean's deep, mighty flow,
At twilight, when no grim shadows of night,
Like ghouls, have stalked in wake of the light.

The first line is certainly a masterpiece, and, indeed, the whole volume is full of gems of this kind. The Professor remarks in his elaborate preface that Mr. Peacock 'frequently rises to the sublime,' and the two passages quoted above show how keenly critical is his taste in these matters and how well the poet deserves his panegyric.

Mr. Alexander Skene Smith's *Holiday Recreations and Other Poems* is heralded by a preface for which Principal Cairns is responsible. Principal Cairns claims that the life-story enshrined in Mr. Smith's poems shows the wide diffusion of native fire and literary culture in all parts of Scotland, 'happily under higher auspices than those of

mere poetic impulse.' This is hardly a very felicitous way of introducing a poet, nor can we say that Mr. Smith's poems are distinguished by either fire or culture. He has a placid, pleasant way of writing, and, indeed, his verses cannot do any harm, though he really should not publish such attempts at metrical versions of the Psalms as the following:

A septuagenarian
  We frequently may see;
An octogenarian
  If one should live to be,
He is a burden to himself
  With weariness and woe
And soon he dies, and off he flies,
  And leaveth all below.

The 'literary culture' that produced these lines is, we fear, not of a very high order.

'I study Poetry simply as a fine art by which I may exercise my intellect and elevate my taste,' wrote the late Mr. George Morine many years ago to a friend, and the little posthumous volume that now lies before us contains the record of his quiet literary life. One of the sonnets, that entitled *Sunset*, appeared in Mr. Waddington's anthology, about ten years after Mr. Morine's death, but this is the first time that his collected poems have been published. They are often distinguished by a grave and chastened beauty of style, and their solemn cadences have something of the 'grand manner' about them. The editor, Mr. Wilton, to whom Mr. Morine bequeathed his manuscripts, seems to have performed his task with great tact and judgment, and we hope that this little book will meet with the recognition that it deserves.

(1) *The Ballad of Hádji and Other Poems*. By Ian Hamilton. (Kegan Paul.)

(2) *Poems in the Modern Spirit*, *with The Secret of Content*. By Charles Catty. (Walter Scott.)

(3) *The Banshee and Other Poems*. By John Todhunter. (Kegan Paul.)

(4) *Poems of the Plain and Songs of the Solitudes*. By Thomas Bower Peacock. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

(5) *Holiday Recreations and Other Poems*. By Alexander Skene Smith. (Chapman and Hall.)

(6) *Poems*. By George Morine. (Bell and Son.)

A FASCINATING BOOK

(*Woman's World*, November 1888.)

Mr. Alan Cole's carefully-edited translation of M. Lefébure's history of *Embroidery and Lace* is one of the most fascinating books that has appeared on this delightful subject. M. Lefébure is one of the administrators of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs at Paris, besides being a lace manufacturer; and his work has not merely an important historical value, but as a handbook of technical instruction it will be found of the greatest service by all needle-women. Indeed, as the translator himself points out, M. Lefébure's book suggests the question whether it is not rather by the needle and the bobbin, than by the brush, the graver or the chisel, that the influence of woman should assert itself in the arts. In Europe, at any rate, woman is sovereign in the domain of art-needle-work, and few men would care to dispute with her the right of using those delicate implements so intimately associated with the dexterity of her nimble and slender fingers; nor is there any reason why the productions of embroidery should not, as Mr. Alan Cole suggests, be placed on the same level with those of painting, engraving and sculpture, though there must always be a great difference between those purely decorative arts that glorify their own material and the more imaginative arts in which the material is, as it were, annihilated, and absorbed into the creation of a new form. In the beautifying of modern houses it certainly must be admitted—indeed, it should be more generally recognised than it is—that rich embroidery on hangings and curtains, *portières*, couches and the like, produces a far more decorative and far more artistic effect than can be gained from our somewhat wearisome English practice of covering the walls with pictures and engravings; and the almost complete disappearance of embroidery from dress has robbed modern costume of one of the chief elements of grace and fancy.

That, however, a great improvement has taken place in English embroidery during the last ten or fifteen years cannot, I think, be denied. It is shown, not merely in the work of individual artists, such as Mrs. Holiday, Miss May Morris and others, but also in the admirable productions of the South Kensington School of Embroidery (the best—indeed, the only really good—school that South Kensington has produced). It is pleasant to note, on turning over the leaves of M. Lefébure's book, that in this we are merely carrying out certain old traditions of Early English art. In the seventh century, St. Ethelreda, first abbess of the Monastery of Ely, made an offering to St. Cuthbert of a sacred ornament she had worked with gold and precious stones, and the cope and maniple of St. Cuthbert, which are preserved at Durham, are considered to be specimens of *opus Anglicanum*. In the year 800, the Bishop of Durham allotted the income of a farm of two hundred acres for life to an embroideress named Eanswitha,

in consideration of her keeping in repair the vestments of the clergy in his diocese. The battle standard of King Alfred was embroidered by Danish princesses; and the Anglo-Saxon Gudric gave Alcuid a piece of land, on condition that she instructed his daughter in needle-work. Queen Mathilda bequeathed to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Caen a tunic embroidered at Winchester by the wife of one Alderet; and when William presented himself to the English nobles, after the Battle of Hastings, he wore a mantle covered with Anglo-Saxon embroideries, which is probably, M. Lefébure suggests, the same as that mentioned in the inventory of the Bayeux Cathedral, where, after the entry relating to the *broderie à telle* (representing the conquest of England), two mantles are described—one of King William, 'all of gold, powdered with crosses and blossoms of gold, and edged along the lower border with an orphrey of figures.' The most splendid example of the *opus Anglicanum* now in existence is, of course, the Syon cope at the South Kensington Museum; but English work seems to have been celebrated all over the Continent. Pope Innocent IV. so admired the splendid vestments worn by the English clergy in 1246, that he ordered similar articles from Cistercian monasteries in England. St. Dunstan, the artistic English monk, was known as a designer for embroideries; and the stole of St. Thomas à Becket is still preserved in the cathedral at Sens, and shows us the interlaced scroll-forms used by Anglo-Saxon MS. illuminators.

How far this modern artistic revival of rich and delicate embroidery will bear fruit depends, of course, almost entirely on the energy and study that women are ready to devote to it; but I think that it must be admitted that all our decorative arts in Europe at present have, at least, this element of strength—that they are in immediate relationship with the decorative arts of Asia. Wherever we find in European history a revival of decorative art, it has, I fancy, nearly always been due to Oriental influence and contact with Oriental nations. Our own keenly intellectual art has more than once been ready to sacrifice real decorative beauty either to imitative presentation or to ideal motive. It has taken upon itself the burden of expression, and has sought to interpret the secrets of thought and passion. In its marvellous truth of presentation it has found its strength, and yet its weakness is there also. It is never with impunity that an art seeks to mirror life. If Truth has her revenge upon those who do not follow her, she is often pitiless to her worshippers. In Byzantium the two arts met—Greek art, with its intellectual sense of form, and its quick sympathy with humanity; Oriental art, with its gorgeous materialism, its frank rejection of imitation, its wonderful secrets of craft and colour, its splendid textures, its rare metals and jewels, its marvellous and priceless traditions. They had, indeed, met before, but in Byzantium they were married; and the sacred tree of the Persians, the palm of Zoroaster, was embroidered

on the hem of the garments of the Western world. Even the Iconoclasts, the Philistines of theological history, who, in one of those strange outbursts of rage against Beauty that seem to occur only amongst European nations, rose up against the wonder and magnificence of the new art, served merely to distribute its secrets more widely; and in the *Liber Pontificalis*, written in 687 by Athanasius, the librarian, we read of an influx into Rome of gorgeous embroideries, the work of men who had arrived from Constantinople and from Greece. The triumph of the Mussulman gave the decorative art of Europe a new departure—that very principle of their religion that forbade the actual representation of any object in nature being of the greatest artistic service to them, though it was not, of course, strictly carried out. The Saracens introduced into Sicily the art of weaving silken and golden fabrics; and from Sicily the manufacture of fine stuffs spread to the North of Italy, and became localised in Genoa, Florence, Venice, and other towns. A still greater art-movement took place in Spain under the Moors and Saracens, who brought over workmen from Persia to make beautiful things for them. M. Lefébure tells us of Persian embroidery penetrating as far as Andalusia; and Almeria, like Palermo, had its Hotel des Tiraz, which rivalled the Hôtel des Tiraz at Bagdad, *tiraz* being the generic name for ornamental tissues and costumes made with them. Spangles (those pretty little discs of gold, silver, or polished steel, used in certain embroidery for dainty glinting effects) were a Saracenic invention; and Arabic letters often took the place of letters in the Roman characters for use in inscriptions upon embroidered robes and Middle Age tapestries, their decorative value being so much greater. The book of crafts by Etienne Boileau, provost of the merchants in 1258-1268, contains a curious enumeration of the different craft-guilds of Paris, among which we find 'the tapiciers, or makers of the *tapis sarrasinois* (or Saracen cloths), who say that their craft is for the service only of churches, or great men like kings and counts'; and, indeed, even in our own day, nearly all our words descriptive of decorative textures and decorative methods point to an Oriental origin. What the inroads of the Mohammedans did for Sicily and Spain, the return of the Crusaders did for the other countries of Europe. The nobles who left for Palestine clad in armour, came back in the rich stuffs of the East; and their costumes, pouches (*aumônières sarra-sinoises*), and caparisons excited the admiration of the needle-workers of the West. Matthew Paris says that at the sacking of Antioch, in 1098, gold, silver and priceless costumes were so equally distributed among the Crusaders, that many who the night before were famishing and imploring relief, suddenly found themselves overwhelmed with wealth; and Robert de Clair tells us of the wonderful fêtes that followed the capture of Constantinople. The thirteenth century, as M. Lefébure points out, was conspicuous for an increased demand in the West for embroidery. Many Crusaders made offerings to churches of plunder from

Palestine; and St. Louis, on his return from the first Crusade, offered thanks at St. Denis to God for mercies bestowed on him during his six years' absence and travel, and presented some richly-embroidered stuffs to be used on great occasions as coverings to the reliquaries containing the relics of holy martyrs. European embroidery, having thus become possessed of new materials and wonderful methods, developed on its own intellectual and imitative lines, inclining, as it went on, to the purely pictorial, and seeking to rival painting, and to produce landscapes and figure-subjects with elaborate perspective and subtle aerial effects. A fresh Oriental influence, however, came through the Dutch and the Portuguese, and the famous *Compagnie des Grandes Indes*; and M. Lefébure gives an illustration of a door-hanging now in the Cluny Museum, where we find the French *fleurs-de-lys* intermixed with Indian ornament. The hangings of Madame de Maintenon's room at Fontainebleau, which were embroidered at St. Cyr, represent Chinese scenery upon a jonquil-yellow ground.

Clothes were sent out ready cut to the East to be embroidered, and many of the delightful coats of the period of Louis XV. and Louis XVI. owe their dainty decoration to the needles of Chinese artists. In our own day the influence of the East is strongly marked. Persia has sent us her carpets for patterns, and Cashmere her lovely shawls, and India her dainty muslins finely worked with gold thread palmates, and stitched over with iridescent beetles' wings. We are beginning now to dye by Oriental methods, and the silk robes of China and Japan have taught us new wonders of colour-combination, and new subtleties of delicate design. Whether we have yet learned to make a wise use of what we have acquired is less certain. If books produce an effect, this book of M. Lefébure should certainly make us study with still deeper interest the whole question of embroidery, and by those who already work with their needles it will be found full of most fertile suggestion and most admirable advice.

Even to read of the marvellous works of embroidery that were fashioned in bygone ages is pleasant. Time has kept a few fragments of Greek embroidery of the fourth century B.C. for us. One is figured in M. Lefébure's book—a chain-stitch embroidery of yellow flax upon a mulberry-coloured worsted material, with graceful spirals and palmetto-patterns: and another, a tapestried cloth powdered with ducks, was reproduced in the *Woman's World* some months ago for an article by Mr. Alan Cole. {334a} Now and then we find in the tomb of some dead Egyptian a piece of delicate work. In the treasury at Ratisbon is preserved a specimen of Byzantine embroidery on which the Emperor Constantine is depicted riding on a white palfrey, and receiving homage from the East and West. Metz has a red silk cope wrought with great eagles, the gift of Charlemagne, and Bayeux the needle-wrought epic of Queen

Matilda. But where is the great crocus-coloured robe, wrought for Athena, on which the gods fought against the giants? Where is the huge velarium that Nero stretched across the Colosseum at Rome, on which was represented the starry sky, and Apollo driving a chariot drawn by steeds? How one would like to see the curious table-napkins wrought for Heliogabalus, on which were displayed all the dainties and viands that could be wanted for a feast; or the mortuary-cloth of King Chilperic, with its three hundred golden bees; or the fantastic robes that excited the indignation of the Bishop of Pontus, and were embroidered with 'lions, panthers, bears, dogs, forests, rocks, hunters—all, in fact, that painters can copy from nature.' Charles of Orleans had a coat, on the sleeves of which were embroidered the verses of a song beginning '*Madame, je suis tout joyeux*,' the musical accompaniment of the words being wrought in gold thread, and each note, of square shape in those days, formed with four pearls. {334b} The room prepared in the palace at Rheims for the use of Queen Joan of Burgundy was decorated with 'thirteen hundred and twenty-one *papegauts* (parrots) made in broidery and blazoned with the King's arms, and five hundred and sixty-one butterflies, whose wings were similarly ornamented with the Queen's arms—the whole worked in fine gold.' Catherine de Medicis had a mourning-bed made for her 'of black velvet embroidered with pearls and powdered with crescents and suns.' Its curtains were of damask, 'with leafy wreaths and garlands figured upon a gold and silver ground, and fringed along the edges with broideries of pearls,' and it stood in a room hung with rows of the Queen's devices in cut black velvet on cloth of silver. Louis XIV. had gold-embroidered caryatides fifteen feet high in his apartment. The state-bed of Sobieski, King of Poland, was made of Smyrna gold brocade embroidered in turquoises and pearls, with verses from the Koran; its supports were of silver-gilt, beautifully chased and profusely set with enamelled and jewelled medallions. He had taken it from the Turkish camp before Vienna, and the standard of Mahomet had stood under it. The Duchess de la Ferté wore a dress of reddish-brown velvet, the skirt of which, adjusted in graceful folds, was held up by big butterflies made of Dresden china; the front was a *tablier* of cloth of silver, upon which was embroidered an orchestra of musicians arranged in a pyramidal group, consisting of a series of six ranks of performers, with beautiful instruments wrought in raised needle-work. 'Into the night go one and all,' as Mr. Henley sings in his charming *Ballade of Dead Actors*.

Many of the facts related by M. Lefébure about the embroiderers' guilds are also extremely interesting. Etienne Boileau, in his book of crafts, to which I have already alluded, tells us that a member of the guild was prohibited from using gold of less value than 'eight sous (about 6s.) the skein; he was bound to use the best silk, and

never to mix thread with silk, because that made the work false and bad.' The test or trial piece prescribed for a worker who was the son of a master-embroiderer was 'a single figure, a sixth of the natural size, to be shaded in gold'; whilst one not the son of a master was required to produce 'a complete incident with many figures.' The book of crafts also mentions 'cutters-out and stencillers and illuminators' amongst those employed in the industry of embroidery. In 1551 the Parisian Corporation of Embroiderers issued a notice that 'for the future, the colouring in representations of nude figures and faces should be done in three or four gradations of carnation-dyed silk, and not, as formerly, in white silks.' During the fifteenth century every household of any position retained the services of an embroiderer by the year. The preparation of colours also, whether for painting or for dyeing threads and textile fabrics, was a matter which, M. Lefébure points out, received close attention from the artists of the Middle Ages. Many undertook long journeys to obtain the more famous recipes, which they filed, subsequently adding to and correcting them as experience dictated. Nor were great artists above making and supplying designs for embroidery. Raphael made designs for Francis I., and Boucher for Louis XV.; and in the Ambras collection at Vienna is a superb set of sacerdotal robes from designs by the brothers Van Eyck and their pupils. Early in the sixteenth century books of embroidery designs were produced, and their success was so great that in a few years French, German, Italian, Flemish, and English publishers spread broadcast books of design made by their best engravers. In the same century, in order to give the designers opportunity of studying directly from nature, Jean Robin opened a garden with conservatories, in which he cultivated strange varieties of plants then but little known in our latitudes. The rich brocades and brocadelles of the time are characterised by the introduction of large flowery patterns, with pomegranates and other fruits with fine foliage.

The second part of M. Lefébure's book is devoted to the history of lace, and though some may not find it quite as interesting as the earlier portion it will more than repay perusal; and those who still work in this delicate and fanciful art will find many valuable suggestions in it, as well as a large number of exceedingly beautiful designs. Compared to embroidery, lace seems comparatively modern. M. Lefébure and Mr. Alan Cole tell us that there is no reliable or documentary evidence to prove the existence of lace before the fifteenth century. Of course in the East, light tissues, such as gauzes, muslins, and nets, were made at very early times, and were used as veils and scarfs after the manner of subsequent laces, and women enriched them with some sort of embroidery, or varied the openness of them by here and there drawing out threads. The threads of fringes seem also to have been plaited and knotted together, and the borders of one of the many fashions of Roman toga were of

open reticulated weaving. The Egyptian Museum at the Louvre has a curious network embellished with glass beads; and the monk Reginald, who took part in opening the tomb of St. Cuthbert at Durham in the twelfth century, writes that the Saint's shroud had a fringe of linen threads an inch long, surmounted by a border, 'worked upon the threads,' with representations of birds and pairs of beasts, there being between each such pair a branching tree, a survival of the palm of Zoroaster, to which I have before alluded. Our authors, however, do not in these examples recognise lace, the production of which involves more refined and artistic methods, and postulates a combination of skill and varied execution carried to a higher degree of perfection. Lace, as we know it, seems to have had its origin in the habit of embroidering linen. White embroidery on linen has, M. Lefébure remarks, a cold and monotonous aspect; that with coloured threads is brighter and gayer in effect, but is apt to fade in frequent washing; but white embroidery relieved by open spaces in, or shapes cut from, the linen ground, is possessed of an entirely new charm; and from a sense of this the birth may be traced of an art in the result of which happy contrasts are effected between ornamental details of close texture and others of open-work.

Soon, also, was suggested the idea that, instead of laboriously withdrawing threads from stout linen, it would be more convenient to introduce a needle-made pattern into an open network ground, which was called a *lacis*. Of this kind of embroidery many specimens are extant. The Cluny Museum possesses a linen cap said to have belonged to Charles V.; and an alb of linen drawn-thread work, supposed to have been made by Anne of Bohemia (1527), is preserved in the cathedral at Prague. Catherine de Medicis had a bed draped with squares of *réseuil*, or *lacis*, and it is recorded that 'the girls and servants of her household consumed much time in making squares of *réseuil*.' The interesting pattern-books for open-ground embroidery, of which the first was published in 1527 by Pierre Quinty, of Cologne, supply us with the means of tracing the stages in the transition from white thread embroidery to needle-point lace. We meet in them with a style of needle-work which differs from embroidery in not being wrought upon a stuff foundation. It is, in fact, true lace, done, as it were, 'in the air,' both ground and pattern being entirely produced by the lace-maker.

The elaborate use of lace in costume was, of course, largely stimulated by the fashion of wearing ruffs, and their companion cuffs or sleeves. Catherine de Medicis induced one Frederic Vinciolo to come from Italy and make ruffs and gadrooned collars, the fashion of which she started in France; and Henry III. was so punctilious over his ruffs that he would iron and goffer his cuffs and collars himself rather than see their pleats limp and out of shape. The pattern-books also gave a great impulse to the art. M. Lefébure mentions German books with patterns of eagles, heraldic emblems, hunting

scenes, and plants and leaves belonging to Northern vegetation; and Italian books, in which the *motifs* consist of oleander blossoms, and elegant wreaths and scrolls, landscapes with mythological scenes, and hunting episodes, less realistic than the Northern ones, in which appear fauns, and nymphs or *amorini* shooting arrows. With regard to these patterns, M. Lefébure notices a curious fact. The oldest painting in which lace is depicted is that of a lady, by Carpaccio, who died about 1523. The cuffs of the lady are edged with a narrow lace, the pattern of which reappears in Vecellio's *Corona*, a book not published until 1591. This particular pattern was, therefore, in use at least eighty years before it got into circulation with other published patterns.

It was not, however, till the seventeenth century that lace acquired a really independent character and individuality, and M. Duplessis states that the production of the more noteworthy of early laces owes more to the influence of men than to that of women. The reign of Louis XIV. witnessed the production of the most stately needle-point laces, the transformation of Venetian point, and the growth of *Points d'Alençon*, *d'Argentan*, *de Bruxelles* and *d'Angleterre*.

The king, aided by Colbert, determined to make France the centre, if possible, for lace manufacture, sending for this purpose both to Venice and to Flanders for workers. The studio of the Gobelins supplied designs. The dandies had their huge rabatos or bands falling from beneath the chin over the breast, and great prelates, like Bossuet and Fénelon, wore their wonderful albs and rochets. It is related of a collar made at Venice for Louis XIV. that the lace-workers, being unable to find sufficiently fine horse-hair, employed some of their own hairs instead, in order to secure that marvellous delicacy of work which they aimed at producing.

In the eighteenth century, Venice, finding that laces of lighter texture were sought after, set herself to make rose-point; and at the Court of Louis XV. the choice of lace was regulated by still more elaborate etiquette. The Revolution, however, ruined many of the manufactures. Alençon survived, and Napoleon encouraged it, and endeavoured to renew the old rules about the necessity of wearing point-lace at Court receptions. A wonderful piece of lace, powdered over with devices of bees, and costing 40,000 francs, was ordered. It was begun for the Empress Josephine, but in the course of its making her escutcheons were replaced by those of Marie Louise.

M. Lefébure concludes his interesting history by stating very clearly his attitude towards machine-made lace. 'It would be an obvious loss to art,' he says, 'should the making of lace by hand become extinct, for machinery, as skilfully devised as possible, cannot do what the hand does.' It can give us 'the results of processes, not

the creations of artistic handicraft.' Art is absent 'where formal calculation pretends to supersede emotion'; it is absent 'where no trace can be detected of intelligence guiding handicraft, whose hesitancies even possess peculiar charm . . . cheapness is never commendable in respect of things which are not absolute necessities; it lowers artistic standard.' These are admirable remarks, and with them we take leave of this fascinating book, with its delightful illustrations, its charming anecdotes, its excellent advice. Mr. Alan Cole deserves the thanks of all who are interested in art for bringing this book before the public in so attractive and so inexpensive a form.

Embroidery and Lace: *Their Manufacture and History from the Remotest Antiquity to the Present Day*. Translated and enlarged by Alan S. Cole from the French of Ernest Lefébure. (Grevel and Co.)

THE POETS' CORNER—VIII

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, November 16, 1888.)

A few years ago some of our minor poets tried to set Science to music, to write sonnets on the survival of the fittest and odes to Natural Selection. Socialism, and the sympathy with those who are unfit, seem, if we may judge from Miss Nesbit's remarkable volume, to be the new theme of song, the fresh subject-matter for poetry. The change has some advantages. Scientific laws are at once too abstract and too clearly defined, and even the visible arts have not yet been able to translate into any symbols of beauty the discoveries of modern science. At the Arts and Crafts Exhibition we find the cosmogony of Moses, not the cosmogony of Darwin. To Mr. Burne-Jones Man is still a fallen angel, not a greater ape. Poverty and misery, upon the other hand, are terribly concrete things. We find their incarnation everywhere and, as we are discussing a matter of art, we have no hesitation in saying that they are not devoid of picturesqueness. The etcher or the painter finds in them 'a subject made to his hand,' and the poet has admirable opportunities of drawing weird and dramatic contrasts between the purple of the rich and the rags of the poor. From Miss Nesbit's book comes not merely the voice of sympathy but also the cry of revolution:

This is our vengeance day. Our masters made fat with our fasting
Shall fall before us like corn when the sickle for harvest is strong:
Old wrongs shall give might to our arm, remembrance of wrongs shall make lasting
The graves we will dig for our tyrants we bore with too much and too long.

The poem from which we take this stanza is remarkably vigorous, and the only consolation that we can offer to the timid and the Tories is that as long as so much strength is employed in blowing the trumpet, the sword, so far as Miss Nesbit is

concerned, will probably remain sheathed. Personally, and looking at the matter from a purely artistic point of view, we prefer Miss Nesbit's gentler moments. Her eye for Nature is peculiarly keen. She has always an exquisite sense of colour and sometimes a most delicate ear for music. Many of her poems, such as *The Moat House*, *Absolution*, and *The Singing of the Magnificat* are true works of art, and *Vies Manquées* is a little gem of song, with its dainty dancing measure, its delicate and wilful fancy and the sharp poignant note of passion that suddenly strikes across it, marring its light laughter and lending its beauty a terrible and tragic meaning.

From the sonnets we take this at random:

Not Spring—too lavish of her bud and leaf—
  But Autumn with sad eyes and brows austere,
  When fields are bare, and woods are brown and sere,
And leaden skies weep their enchantless grief.
Spring is so much too bright, since Spring is brief,
  And in our hearts is Autumn all the year,
  Least sad when the wide pastures are most drear
And fields grieve most—robbed of the last gold sheaf.

These too, the opening stanzas of *The Last Envoy*, are charming:

The Wind, that through the silent woodland blows
O'er rippling corn and dreaming pastures goes
  Straight to the garden where the heart of Spring
Faints in the heart of Summer's earliest rose.

Dimpling the meadow's grassy green and grey,
By furze that yellows all the common way,
  Gathering the gladness of the common broom,
And too persistent fragrance of the may—

Gathering whatever is of sweet and dear,
The wandering wind has passed away from here,
  Has passed to where within your garden waits
The concentrated sweetness of the year.

But Miss Nesbit is not to be judged by mere extracts. Her work is too rich and too full for that.

Mr. Foster is an American poet who has read Hawthorne, which is wise of him, and imitated Longfellow, which is not quite so commendable. His *Rebecca the Witch* is a

story of old Salem, written in the metre of *Hiawatha*, with a few rhymes thrown in, and conceived in the spirit of the author of *The Scarlet Letter*. The combination is not very satisfactory, but the poem, as a piece of fiction, has many elements of interest. Mr. Foster seems to be quite popular in America. The *Chicago Times* finds his fancies 'very playful and sunny,' and the *Indianapolis Journal* speaks of his 'tender and appreciative style.' He is certainly a clever story-teller, and *The Noah's Ark* (which 'somehow had escaped the sheriff's hand') is bright and amusing, and its pathos, like the pathos of a melodrama, is a purely picturesque element not intended to be taken too seriously. We cannot, however, recommend the definitely comic poems. They are very depressing.

Mr. John Renton Denning dedicates his book to the Duke of Connaught, who is Colonel-in-Chief of the Rifle Brigade, in which regiment Mr. Denning was once himself a private soldier. His poems show an ardent love of Keats and a profligate luxuriance of adjectives:

And I will build a bower for thee, sweet,
A verdurous shelter from the noonday heat,
Thick rustling ivy, broad and green, and shining,
With honeysuckle creeping up and twining
Its nectared sweetness round thee; violets
And daisies with their fringèd coronets
And the white bells of tiny valley lilies,
And golden-leaved narcissi—daffodillies
Shall grow around thy dwelling—luscious fare
Of fruit on which the sun has laughed;

this is the immature manner of *Endymion* with a vengeance and is not to be encouraged. Still, Mr. Denning is not always so anxious to reproduce the faults of his master. Sometimes he writes with wonderful grace and charm. *Sylvia*, for instance, is an exceedingly pretty poem, and *The Exile* has many powerful and picturesque lines. Mr. Denning should make a selection of his poems and publish them in better type and on better paper. The 'get-up' of his volume, to use the slang phrase of our young poets, is very bad indeed, and reflects no credit on the press of the Education Society of Bombay.

The best poem in Mr. Joseph McKim's little book is, undoubtedly, *William the Silent*. It is written in the spirited Macaulay style:

Awake, awake, ye burghers brave! shout, shout for joy and sing!
With thirty thousand at his back comes forth your hero King.

Now shake for ever from your necks the servile yoke of Spain,
And raise your arms and end for aye false Alva's cruel reign.
Ho! Maestricht, Liège, Brussels fair! pour forth your warriors brave,
And join your hands with him who comes your hearths and homes to save.

Some people like this style.

Mrs. Horace Dobell, who has arrived at her seventeenth volume of poetry, seems very angry with everybody, and writes poems to *A Human Toad* with lurid and mysterious footnotes such as—'Yet some one, *not* a friend of --- *did*! on a certain occasion of a glib utterance of calumnies, by ---! at Hampstead.' Here indeed is a Soul's Tragedy.

'In many cases I have deliberately employed alliteration, believing that the music of a line is intensified thereby,' says Mr. Kelly in the preface to his poems, and there is certainly no reason why Mr. Kelly should not employ this 'artful aid.' Alliteration is one of the many secrets of English poetry, and as long as it is kept a secret it is admirable. Mr. Kelly, it must be admitted, uses it with becoming modesty and reserve and never suffers it to trammel the white feet of his bright and buoyant muse. His volume is, in many ways, extremely interesting. Most minor poets are at their best in sonnets, but with him it is not so. His sonnets are too narrative, too diffuse, and too lyrical. They lack concentration, and concentration is the very essence of a sonnet. His longer poems, on the other hand, have many good qualities. We do not care for *Psychossolles*, which is elaborately commonplace, but *The Flight of Calliope* has many charming passages. It is a pity that Mr. Kelly has included the poems written before the age of nineteen. Youth is rarely original.

Andiatoroctè is the title of a volume of poems by the Rev. Clarence Walworth, of Albany, N.Y. It is a word borrowed from the Indians, and should, we think, be returned to them as soon as possible. The most curious poem of the book is called *Scenes at the Holy Home*:

Jesus and Joseph at work! Hurra!
Sight never to see again,
A prentice Deity plies the saw,
While the Master ploughs with the plane.

Poems of this kind were popular in the Middle Ages when the cathedrals of every Christian country served as its theatres. They are anachronisms now, and it is odd that they should come to us from the United States. In matters of this kind we should have some protection.

(1) *Lays and Legends*. By E. Nesbit. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

(2) *Rebecca the Witch and Other Tales*. By David Skaats Foster. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

(3) *Poems and Songs*. By John Renton Denning. (Bombay: Education Society's Press.)

(4) *Poems*. By Joseph McKim. (Kegan Paul.)

(5) *In the Watches of the Night*. Poems in eighteen volumes. By Mrs. Horace Dobell. Vol. xvii. (Remington and Co.)

(6) *Poems*. By James Kelly. (Glasgow: Reid and Coghill.)

(7) *Andiatoroctè*. By the Rev. Clarence A. Walworth. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

A NOTE ON SOME MODERN POETS

(*Woman's World*, December 1888.)

'If I were king,' says Mr. Henley, in one of his most modest rondeaus,

'Art should aspire, yet ugliness be dear;
Beauty, the shaft, should speed with wit for feather;
And love, sweet love, should never fall to sere,
If I were king.'

And these lines contain, if not the best criticism of his own work, certainly a very complete statement of his aim and motive as a poet. His little *Book of Verses* reveals to us an artist who is seeking to find new methods of expression and has not merely a delicate sense of beauty and a brilliant, fantastic wit, but a real passion also for what is horrible, ugly, or grotesque. No doubt, everything that is worthy of existence is worthy also of art—at least, one would like to think so—but while echo or mirror can repeat for us a beautiful thing, to render artistically a thing that is ugly requires the most exquisite alchemy of form, the most subtle magic of transformation. To me there is more of the cry of Marsyas than of the singing of Apollo in the earlier poems of Mr. Henley's volume, *In Hospital*: *Rhymes and Rhythms*, as he calls them. But it is impossible to deny their power. Some of them are like bright, vivid pastels; others like charcoal drawings, with dull blacks and murky whites; others like etchings with deeply-bitten lines, and abrupt contrasts, and clever colour-suggestions. In fact, they are like anything and everything, except perfected poems—that they certainly are not. They are still in the twilight. They are preludes, experiments, inspired jottings in a note-book, and should be heralded by a design of 'Genius Making Sketches.' Rhyme gives architecture as well as melody to verse; it gives that delightful sense of limitation which in all the arts is so pleasurable, and is, indeed, one of the secrets of perfection; it will whisper, as a French critic has said, 'things unexpected and charming, things

with strange and remote relations to each other,' and bind them together in indissoluble bonds of beauty; and in his constant rejection of rhyme, Mr. Henley seems to me to have abdicated half his power. He is a *roi en exil* who has thrown away some of the strings of his lute; a poet who has forgotten the fairest part of his kingdom.

However, all work criticises itself. Here is one of Mr. Henley's inspired jottings. According to the temperament of the reader, it will serve either as a model or as the reverse:

As with varnish red and glistening
  Dripped his hair; his feet were rigid;
  Raised, he settled stiffly sideways:
  You could see the hurts were spinal.

He had fallen from an engine,
  And been dragged along the metals.
  It was hopeless, and they knew it;
  So they covered him, and left him.

As he lay, by fits half sentient,
  Inarticulately moaning,
  With his stockinged feet protruded
  Sharp and awkward from the blankets,

To his bed there came a woman,
  Stood and looked and sighed a little,
  And departed without speaking,
  As himself a few hours after.

I was told she was his sweetheart.
  They were on the eve of marriage.
  She was quiet as a statue,
  But her lip was gray and writhen.

In this poem, the rhythm and the music, such as it is, are obvious—perhaps a little too obvious. In the following I see nothing but ingeniously printed prose. It is a description—and a very accurate one—of a scene in a hospital ward. The medical students are supposed to be crowding round the doctor. What I quote is only a fragment, but the poem itself is a fragment:

So shows the ring
Seen, from behind, round a conjuror
Doing his pitch in the street.
High shoulders, low shoulders, broad shoulders, narrow ones,
Round, square, and angular, serry and shove;
While from within a voice,
Gravely and weightily fluent,
Sounds; and then ceases; and suddenly
(Look at the stress of the shoulders!)
Out of a quiver of silence,
Over the hiss of the spray,
Comes a low cry, and the sound
Of breath quick intaken through teeth
Clenched in resolve. And the master
Breaks from the crowd, and goes,
Wiping his hands,
To the next bed, with his pupils
Flocking and whispering behind him.

Now one can see.
Case Number One
Sits (rather pale) with his bedclothes
Stripped up, and showing his foot
(Alas, for God's image!)
Swaddled in wet white lint
Brilliantly hideous with red.

Théophile Gautier once said that Flaubert's style was meant to be read, and his own style to be looked at. Mr. Henley's unrhymed rhythms form very dainty designs, from a typographical point of view. From the point of view of literature, they are a series of vivid, concentrated impressions, with a keen grip of fact, a terrible actuality, and an almost masterly power of picturesque presentation. But the poetic form—what of that?

Well, let us pass to the later poems, to the rondels and rondeaus, the sonnets and quatorzains, the echoes and the ballades. How brilliant and fanciful this is! The Toyokuni colour-print that suggested it could not be more delightful. It seems to have kept all the wilful fantastic charm of the original:

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 flirted fan,
Against the plum-tree's bloomy snow . . .
I loved you once in old Japan!

ENVOY.

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!

This rondel, too—how light it is, and graceful!—

We'll to the woods and gather may
Fresh from the footprints of the rain.
We'll to the woods, at every vein
To drink the spirit of the day.

The winds of spring are out at play,
The needs of spring in heart and brain.
We'll to the woods and gather may
Fresh from the footprints of the rain.

The world's too near her end, you say?
Hark to the blackbird's mad refrain!
It waits for her, the vast Inane?
Then, girls, to help her on the way
We'll to the woods and gather may.

There are fine verses, also, scattered through this little book; some of them very strong, as—

Out of the night that covers me,
  Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
  For my unconquerable soul.

It matters not how strait the gate,
  How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
  I am the captain of my soul.

Others with a true touch of romance, as—

Or ever the knightly years were gone
  With the old world to the grave,
I was a king in Babylon,
  And you were a Christian slave.

And here and there we come across such felicitous phrases as—

    In the sand
The gold prow-griffin claws a hold,

or—

    The spires
Shine and are changed,

and many other graceful or fanciful lines, even 'the green sky's minor thirds' being perfectly right in its place, and a very refreshing bit of affectation in a volume where there is so much that is natural.

However, Mr. Henley is not to be judged by samples. Indeed, the most attractive thing in the book is no single poem that is in it, but the strong humane personality that stands behind both flawless and faulty work alike, and looks out through many masks, some of them beautiful, and some grotesque, and not a few misshapen. In the case with most of our modern poets, when we have analysed them down to an adjective, we can go no further, or we care to go no further; but with this book it is different. Through these reeds and pipes blows the very breath of life. It seems as if one could put one's hand upon the singer's heart and count its pulsations. There is something wholesome, virile and sane about the man's soul. Anybody can be reasonable, but to be sane is not common; and sane poets are as rare as blue lilies, though they may not be quite so delightful.

Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow,
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow;
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare,
And we can conquer, though we may not share
In the rich quiet of the afterglow,
    What is to come,

is the concluding stanza of the last rondeau—indeed, of the last poem in the collection, and the high, serene temper displayed in these lines serves at once as keynote and keystone to the book. The very lightness and slightness of so much of the work, its careless moods and casual fancies, seem to suggest a nature that is not primarily interested in art—a nature, like Sordello's, passionately enamoured of life, one to which lyre and lute are things of less importance. From this mere joy of living, this frank delight in experience for its own sake, this lofty indifference, and momentary unregretted ardours, come all the faults and all the beauties of the volume. But there is this difference between them—the faults are deliberate, and the result of much study; the beauties have the air of fascinating impromptus. Mr. Henley's healthy, if sometimes misapplied, confidence in the myriad suggestions of life gives him his charm. He is made to sing along the highways, not to sit down and write. If he took himself more seriously, his work would become trivial.

* * * * *

Mr. William Sharp takes himself very seriously and has written a preface to his *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy*, which is, on the whole, the most interesting part of his volume. We are all, it seems, far too cultured, and lack robustness. 'There are those amongst us,' says Mr. Sharp, 'who would prefer a dexterously-turned triolet to such apparently uncouth measures as *Thomas the*

Rhymer, or the ballad of *Clerk Saunders*: who would rather listen to the drawing-room music of the Villanelle than to the wild harp-playing by the mill-dams o' Binnorie, or the sough of the night-wind o'er drumly Annan water.' Such an expression as 'the drawing-room music of the Villanelle' is not very happy, and I cannot imagine any one with the smallest pretensions to culture preferring a dexterously turned triolet to a fine imaginative ballad, as it is only the Philistine who ever dreams of comparing works of art that are absolutely different in motive, in treatment, and in form. If English Poetry is in danger—and, according to Mr. Sharp, the poor nymph is in a very critical state—what she has to fear is not the fascination of dainty metre or delicate form, but the predominance of the intellectual spirit over the spirit of beauty. Lord Tennyson dethroned Wordsworth as a literary influence, and later on Mr. Swinburne filled all the mountain valleys with echoes of his own song. The influence to-day is that of Mr. Browning. And as for the triolets, and the rondels, and the careful study of metrical subtleties, these things are merely the signs of a desire for perfection in small things and of the recognition of poetry as an art. They have had certainly one good result—they have made our minor poets readable, and have not left us entirely at the mercy of geniuses.

But, says Mr. Sharp, every one is far too literary; even Rossetti is too literary. What we want is simplicity and directness of utterance; these should be the dominant characteristics of poetry. Well, is that quite so certain? Are simplicity and directness of utterance absolute essentials for poetry? I think not. They may be admirable for the drama, admirable for all those imitative forms of literature that claim to mirror life in its externals and its accidents, admirable for quiet narrative, admirable in their place; but their place is not everywhere. Poetry has many modes of music; she does not blow through one pipe alone. Directness of utterance is good, but so is the subtle recasting of thought into a new and delightful form. Simplicity is good, but complexity, mystery, strangeness, symbolism, obscurity even, these have their value. Indeed, properly speaking, there is no such thing as Style; there are merely styles, that is all.

One cannot help feeling also that everything that Mr. Sharp says in his preface was said at the beginning of the century by Wordsworth, only where Wordsworth called us back to nature, Mr. Sharp invites us to woo romance. Romance, he tells us, is 'in the air.' A new romantic movement is imminent; 'I anticipate,' he says, 'that many of our poets, especially those of the youngest generation, will shortly turn towards the "ballad" as a poetic vehicle: and that the next year or two will see much romantic poetry.'

The ballad! Well, Mr. Andrew Lang, some months ago, signed the death-warrant of the ballade, and—though I hope that in this respect Mr. Lang resembles the Queen

in *Alice in Wonderland*, whose bloodthirsty orders were by general consent never carried into execution—it must be admitted that the number of ballades given to us by some of our poets was, perhaps, a little excessive. But the ballad? *Sir Patrick Spens*, *Clerk Saunders*, *Thomas the Rhymer*—are these to be our archetypes, our models, the sources of our inspiration? They are certainly great imaginative poems. In Chatterton's *Ballad of Charity*, Coleridge's *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, the *La Belle Dame sans Merci* of Keats, the *Sister Helen* of Rossetti, we can see what marvellous works of art the spirit of old romance may fashion. But to preach a spirit is one thing, to propose a form is another. It is true that Mr. Sharp warns the rising generation against imitation. A ballad, he reminds them, does not necessarily denote a poem in quatrains and in antique language. But his own poems, as I think will be seen later, are, in their way, warnings, and show the danger of suggesting any definite 'poetic vehicle.' And, further, are simplicity and directness of utterance really the dominant characteristics of these old imaginative ballads that Mr. Sharp so enthusiastically, and, in some particulars, so wisely praises? It does not seem to me to be so. We are always apt to think that the voices which sang at the dawn of poetry were simpler, fresher, and more natural than ours, and that the world which the early poets looked at, and through which they walked, had a kind of poetical quality of its own, and could pass, almost without changing, into song. The snow lies thick now upon Olympus, and its scarped sides are bleak and barren, but once, we fancy, the white feet of the Muses brushed the dew from the anemones in the morning, and at evening came Apollo to sing to the shepherds in the vale. But in this we are merely lending to other ages what we desire, or think we desire, for our own. Our historical sense is at fault. Every century that produces poetry is, so far, an artificial century, and the work that seems to us the most natural and simple product of its time is probably the result of the most deliberate and self-conscious effort. For Nature is always behind the age. It takes a great artist to be thoroughly modern.

Let us turn to the poems, which have really only the preface to blame for their somewhat late appearance. The best is undoubtedly *The Weird of Michael Scott*, and these stanzas are a fair example of its power:

Then Michael Scott laughed long and loud:
'Whan shone the mune ahint yon cloud
  I speered the towers that saw my birth—
Lang, lang, sall wait my cauld grey shroud,
  Lang cauld and weet my bed o' earth!'

But as by Stair he rode full speed
His horse began to pant and bleed;

‘Win hame, win hame, my bonnie mare,
Win hame if thou wouldst rest and feed,
Win hame, we’re nigh the House of Stair!’

But, with a shrill heart-bursten yell
The white horse stumbled, plunged, and fell,
And loud a summoning voice arose,
‘Is’t White-Horse Death that rides frae Hell,
Or Michael Scott that hereby goes?’

‘Ah, Laird of Stair, I ken ye weel!
Avaunt, or I your saul sall steal,
An’ send ye howling through the wood
A wild man-wolf—aye, ye maun reel
An’ cry upon your Holy Rood!’

There is a good deal of vigour, no doubt, in these lines; but one cannot help asking whether this is to be the common tongue of the future Renaissance of Romance. Are we all to talk Scotch, and to speak of the moon as the ‘mune,’ and the soul as the ‘saul’? I hope not. And yet if this Renaissance is to be a vital, living thing, it must have its linguistic side. Just as the spiritual development of music, and the artistic development of painting, have always been accompanied, if not occasioned, by the discovery of some new instrument or some fresh medium, so, in the case of any important literary movement, half of its strength resides in its language. If it does not bring with it a rich and novel mode of expression, it is doomed either to sterility or to imitation. Dialect, archaisms and the like, will not do. Take, for instance, another poem of Mr. Sharp’s, a poem which he calls *The Deith-Tide*:

The weet saut wind is blawing
Upon the misty shore:
As, like a stormy snawing,
The deid go streaming o’er:—
The wan drown’d deid sail wildly
Frae out each drumly wave:
It’s O and O for the weary sea,
And O for a quiet grave.

This is simply a very clever *pastiche*, nothing more, and our language is not likely to be permanently enriched by such words as ‘weet,’ ‘saut,’ ‘blawing,’ and ‘snawing.’ Even ‘drumly,’ an adjective of which Mr. Sharp is so fond that he uses it both in prose and verse, seems to me to be hardly an adequate basis for a new romantic movement.

However, Mr. Sharp does not always write in dialect. *The Son of Allan* can be read without any difficulty, and *Phantasy* can be read with pleasure. They are both very charming poems in their way, and none the less charming because the cadences of the one recall *Sister Helen*, and the motive of the other reminds us of *La Belle Dame sans Merci*. But those who wish thoroughly to enjoy Mr. Sharp's poems should not read his preface; just as those who approve of the preface should avoid reading the poems. I cannot help saying that I think the preface a great mistake. The work that follows it is quite inadequate, and there seems little use in heralding a dawn that rose long ago, and proclaiming a Renaissance whose first-fruits, if we are to judge them by any high standard of perfection, are of so ordinary a character.

* * * * *

Miss Mary Robinson has also written a preface to her little volume, *Poems*, *Ballads*, *and a Garden Play*, but the preface is not very serious, and does not propose any drastic change or any immediate revolution in English literature. Miss Robinson's poems have always the charm of delicate music and graceful expression; but they are, perhaps, weakest where they try to be strong, and certainly least satisfying where they seek to satisfy. Her fanciful flower-crowned Muse, with her tripping steps and pretty, wilful ways, should not write Antiphons to the Unknowable, or try to grapple with abstract intellectual problems. Hers is not the hand to unveil mysteries, nor hers the strength for the solving of secrets. She should never leave her garden, and as for her wandering out into the desert to ask the Sphinx questions, that should be sternly forbidden to her. Dürer's *Melancolia*, that serves as the frontispiece to this dainty book, looks sadly out of place. Her seat is with the sibyls, not with the nymphs. What has she to do with shepherdesses piping about Darwinism and 'The Eternal Mind'?

However, if the *Songs of the Inner Life* are not very successful, the *Spring Songs* are delightful. They follow each other like wind-blown petals, and make one feel how much more charming flower is than fruit, apple-blossom than apple. There are some artistic temperaments that should never come to maturity, that should always remain in the region of promise and should dread autumn with its harvesting more than winter with its frosts. Such seems to me the temperament that this volume reveals. The first poem of the second series, *La Belle au Bois Dormant*, is worth all the more serious and thoughtful work, and has far more chance of being remembered. It is not always to high aim and lofty ambition that the prize is given. If Daphne had gone to meet Apollo, she would never have known what laurels are.

From these fascinating spring lyrics and idylls we pass to the romantic ballads. One artistic faculty Miss Robinson certainly possesses—the faculty of imitation. There is an element of imitation in all the arts; it is to be found in literature as much as in painting, and the danger of valuing it too little is almost as great as the danger of setting too high a value upon it. To catch, by dainty mimicry, the very mood and manner of antique work, and yet to retain that touch of modern passion without which the old form would be dull and empty; to win from long-silent lips some faint echo of their music, and to add to it a music of one's own; to take the mode and fashion of a bygone age, and to experiment with it, and search curiously for its possibilities; there is a pleasure in all this. It is a kind of literary acting, and has something of the charm of the art of the stage-player. And how well, on the whole, Miss Robinson does it! Here is the opening of the ballad of Rudel:

There was in all the world of France
  No singer half so sweet:
The first note of his viol brought
  A crowd into the street.

He stepped as young, and bright, and glad
  As Angel Gabriel.
And only when we heard him sing
  Our eyes forgot Rudel.

And as he sat in Avignon,
  With princes at their wine,
In all that lusty company
  Was none so fresh and fine.

His kirtle's of the Arras-blue,
  His cap of pearls and green;
His golden curls fall tumbling round
  The fairest face I've seen.

How Gautier would have liked this from the same poem!—

Hew the timbers of sandal-wood,
  And planks of ivory;
Rear up the shining masts of gold,
  And let us put to sea.

Sew the sails with a silken thread
  That all are silken too;

Sew them with scarlet pomegranates
  Upon a sheet of blue.

Rig the ship with a rope of gold
  And let us put to sea.
And now, good-bye to good Marseilles,
  And hey for Tripoli!

The ballad of the Duke of Gueldres's wedding is very clever:

'O welcome, Mary Harcourt,
  Thrice welcome, lady mine;
There's not a knight in all the world
  Shall be as true as thine.

'There's venison in the aumbry, Mary,
  There's claret in the vat;
Come in, and breakfast in the hall
  Where once my mother sat!'

O red, red is the wine that flows,
  And sweet the minstrel's play,
But white is Mary Harcourt
  Upon her wedding-day.

O many are the wedding guests
  That sit on either side;
But pale below her crimson flowers
  And homesick is the bride.

Miss Robinson's critical sense is at once too sound and too subtle to allow her to think that any great Renaissance of Romance will necessarily follow from the adoption of the ballad-form in poetry; but her work in this style is very pretty and charming, and *The Tower of St. Maur*, which tells of the father who built up his little son in the wall of his castle in order that the foundations should stand sure, is admirable in its way. The few touches of archaism in language that she introduces are quite sufficient for their purpose, and though she fully appreciates the importance of the Celtic spirit in literature, she does not consider it necessary to talk of 'blawing' and 'snawing.' As for the garden play, *Our Lady of the Broken Heart*, as it is called, the bright, birdlike snatches of song that break in here and there—as the singing does in *Pippa Passes*—form a very welcome relief to the somewhat ordinary movement of the blank verse, and suggest to us again where Miss Robinson's real power lies. Not a poet in the true

creative sense, she is still a very perfect artist in poetry, using language as one might use a very precious material, and producing her best work by the rejection of the great themes and large intellectual motives that belong to fuller and richer song. When she essays such themes, she certainly fails. Her instrument is the reed, not the lyre. Only those should sing of Death whose song is stronger than Death is.

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The collected poems of the author of *John Halifax*, *Gentleman*, have a pathetic interest as the artistic record of a very gracious and comely life. They bring us back to the days when Philip Bourke Marston was young—'Philip, my King,' as she called him in the pretty poem of that name; to the days of the Great Exhibition, with the universal piping about peace; to those later terrible Crimean days, when Alma and Balaclava were words on the lips of our poets; and to days when Leonora was considered a very romantic name.

Leonora, Leonora,
How the word rolls—Leonora.
Lion-like in full-mouthed sound,
Marching o'er the metric ground,
With a tawny tread sublime.
So your name moves, Leonora,
Down my desert rhyme.

Mrs. Craik's best poems are, on the whole, those that are written in blank verse; and these, though not prosaic, remind one that prose was her true medium of expression. But some of the rhymed poems have considerable merit. These may serve as examples of Mrs. Craik's style:

A SKETCH

Dost thou thus love me, O thou all beloved,
In whose large store the very meanest coin
Would out-buy my whole wealth? Yet here thou comest
Like a kind heiress from her purple and down
Uprising, who for pity cannot sleep,
But goes forth to the stranger at her gate—
The beggared stranger at her beauteous gate—
And clothes and feeds; scarce blest till she has blest.

But dost thou love me, O thou pure of heart,
Whose very looks are prayers? What couldst thou see

In this forsaken pool by the yew-wood's side,
To sit down at its bank, and dip thy hand,
Saying, 'It is so clear!'—and lo! ere long,
Its blackness caught the shimmer of thy wings,
Its slimes slid downward from thy stainless palm,
Its depths grew still, that there thy form might rise.

THE NOVICE

It is near morning. Ere the next night fall
  I shall be made the bride of heaven. Then home
  To my still marriage-chamber I shall come,
And spouseless, childless, watch the slow years crawl.

These lips will never meet a softer touch
  Than the stone crucifix I kiss; no child
  Will clasp this neck. Ah, virgin-mother mild,
Thy painted bliss will mock me overmuch.

This is the last time I shall twist the hair
  My mother's hand wreathed, till in dust she lay:
  The name, her name given on my baptism day,
This is the last time I shall ever bear.

O weary world, O heavy life, farewell!
  Like a tired child that creeps into the dark
  To sob itself asleep, where none will mark,—
So creep I to my silent convent cell.

Friends, lovers whom I loved not, kindly hearts
  Who grieve that I should enter this still door,
  Grieve not. Closing behind me evermore,
Me from all anguish, as all joy, it parts.

The volume chronicles the moods of a sweet and thoughtful nature, and though many things in it may seem somewhat old-fashioned, it is still very pleasant to read, and has a faint perfume of withered rose-leaves about it.

(1) *A Book of Verses*. By William Ernest Henley. (David Nutt.)

(2) *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy*. By William Sharp. (Walter Scott.)

(3) *Poems*, *Ballads*, *and a Garden Play*. By A. Mary F. Robinson. (Fisher Unwin.)

(4) *Poems*. By the Author of *John Halifax, Gentleman*. (Macmillan and Co.)

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD'S LAST VOLUME

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, December 11, 1888.)

Writers of poetical prose are rarely good poets. They may crowd their page with gorgeous epithet and resplendent phrase, may pile Pelions of adjectives upon Ossas of descriptions, may abandon themselves to highly coloured diction and rich luxuriance of imagery, but if their verse lacks the true rhythmical life of verse, if their method is devoid of the self-restraint of the real artist, all their efforts are of very little avail. 'Asiatic' prose is possibly useful for journalistic purposes, but 'Asiatic' poetry is not to be encouraged. Indeed, poetry may be said to need far more self-restraint than prose. Its conditions are more exquisite. It produces its effects by more subtle means. It must not be allowed to degenerate into mere rhetoric or mere eloquence. It is, in one sense, the most self-conscious of all the arts, as it is never a means to an end but always an end in itself. Sir Edwin Arnold has a very picturesque or, perhaps we should say, a very pictorial style. He knows India better than any living Englishman knows it, and Hindoostanee better than any English writer should know it. If his descriptions lack distinction, they have at least the merit of being true, and when he does not interlard his pages with an interminable and intolerable series of foreign words he is pleasant enough. But he is not a poet. He is simply a poetical writer—that is all.

However, poetical writers have their uses, and there is a good deal in Sir Edwin Arnold's last volume that will repay perusal. The scene of the story is placed in a mosque attached to the monument of the Taj-Mahal, and a group composed of a learned Mirza, two singing girls with their attendant, and an Englishman, is supposed to pass the night there reading the chapter of Sa'di upon 'Love,' and conversing upon that theme with accompaniments of music and dancing. The Englishman is, of course, Sir Edwin Arnold himself:

> lover of India,
> Too much her lover! for his heart lived there
> How far soever wandered thence his feet.

Lady Dufferin appears as

Lady Duffreen, the mighty Queen's Vice-queen!

which is really one of the most dreadful blank-verse lines that we have come across for some time past. M. Renan is 'a priest of Frangestan,' who writes in 'glittering French'; Lord Tennyson is

One we honour for his songs—
Greater than Sa'di's self—

and the Darwinians appear as the 'Mollahs of the West,' who

hold Adam's sons
Sprung of the sea-slug.

All this is excellent fooling in its way, a kind of play-acting in literature; but the best parts of the book are the descriptions of the Taj itself, which are extremely elaborate, and the various translations from Sa'di with which the volume is interspersed. The great monument Shah Jahan built for Arjamand is

Instinct with loveliness—not masonry!
Not architecture! as all others are,
But the proud passion of an Emperor's love
Wrought into living stone, which gleams and soars
With body of beauty shrining soul and thought,
Insomuch that it haps as when some face
Divinely fair unveils before our eyes—
Some woman beautiful unspeakably—
And the blood quickens, and the spirit leaps,
And will to worship bends the half-yielded knees,
Which breath forgets to breathe: so is the Taj;
You see it with the heart, before the eyes
Have scope to gaze. All white! snow white! cloud white!

We cannot say much in praise of the sixth line:

Insomuch that it haps as when some face:

it is curiously awkward and unmusical. But this passage from Sa'di is remarkable:

When Earth, bewildered, shook in earthquake-throes,
With mountain-roots He bound her borders close;
Turkis and ruby in her rocks He stored,
And on her green branch hung His crimson rose.

He shapes dull seed to fair imaginings;
Who paints with moisture as He painteth things?
  Look! from the cloud He sheds one drop on ocean,
As from the Father's loins one drop He brings;—

And out of that He forms a peerless pearl,
And, out of this, a cypress boy or girl;
  Utterly wotting all their innermosts,
For all to Him is visible! Uncurl

Your cold coils, Snakes! Creep forth, ye thrifty Ants!
Handless and strengthless He provides your wants
  Who from the 'Is not' planned the 'Is to be,'
And Life in non-existent void implants.

Sir Edwin Arnold suffers, of course, from the inevitable comparison that one cannot help making between his work and the work of Edward Fitzgerald, and certainly Fitzgerald could never have written such a line as 'utterly wotting all their innermosts,' but it is interesting to read almost any translation of those wonderful Oriental poets with their strange blending of philosophy and sensuousness, of simple parable or fable and obscure mystic utterance. What we regret most in Sir Edwin Arnold's book is his habit of writing in what really amounts to a sort of 'pigeon English.' When we are told that 'Lady Duffreen, the mighty Queen's Vice-queen,' paces among the *charpoys* of the ward 'no whit afraid of *sitla*, or of *tap*'; when the Mirza explains—

  âg lejao!
To light the kallians for the Saheb and me,

and the attendant obeys with '*Achcha*! *Achcha*!' when we are invited to listen to 'the *Vina* and the drum' and told about *ekkas*, *Byrâgis*, *hamals* and *Tamboora*, all that we can say is that to such *ghazals* we are not prepared to say either *Shamash* or *Afrîn*. In English poetry we do not want

  chatkis for the toes,
Jasams for elbow-bands, and gote and har,
Bala and mala.

This is not local colour; it is a sort of local discoloration. It does not add anything to the vividness of the scene. It does not bring the Orient more clearly before us. It is simply an inconvenience to the reader and a mistake on the part of the writer. It may be difficult for a poet to find English synonyms for Asiatic expressions, but even if it were impossible it is none the less a poet's duty to find them. We are sorry that a

scholar and a man of culture like Sir Edwin Arnold should have been guilty of what is really an act of treason against our literature. But for this error, his book, though not in any sense a work of genius or even of high artistic merit, would still have been of some enduring value. As it is, Sir Edwin Arnold has translated Sa'di and some one must translate Sir Edwin Arnold.

With Sa'di in the Garden; *or The Book of Love*. By Sir Edwin Arnold, M.A., K.C.I.E., Author of *The Light of Asia*, *etc*. (Trübner and Co.)

AUSTRALIAN POETS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, December 14, 1888.)

Mr. Sladen dedicates his anthology (or, perhaps, we should say his herbarium) of Australian song to Mr. Edmund Gosse, 'whose exquisite critical faculty is,' he tells us, 'as conspicuous in his poems as in his lectures on poetry.' After so graceful a compliment Mr. Gosse must certainly deliver a series of discourses upon Antipodean art before the Cambridge undergraduates, who will, no doubt, be very much interested on hearing about Gordon, Kendall and Domett, to say nothing of the extraordinary collection of mediocrities whom Mr. Sladen has somewhat ruthlessly dragged from their modest and well-merited obscurity. Gordon, however, is very badly represented in Mr. Sladen's book, the only three specimens of his work that are included being an unrevised fragment, his *Valedictory Poem* and *An Exile's Farewell*. The latter is, of course, touching, but then the commonplace always touches, and it is a great pity that Mr. Sladen was unable to come to any financial arrangement with the holders of Gordon's copyright. The loss to the volume that now lies before us is quite irreparable. Through Gordon Australia found her first fine utterance in song.

Still, there are some other singers here well worth studying, and it is interesting to read about poets who lie under the shadow of the gum-tree, gather wattle blossoms and buddawong and sarsaparilla for their loves, and wander through the glades of Mount Baw-baw listening to the careless raptures of the mopoke. To them November is

> The wonder with the golden wings,
> Who lays one hand in Summer's, one in Spring's:

January is full of 'breaths of myrrh, and subtle hints of rose-lands';

> She is the warm, live month of lustre—she
> Makes glad the land and lulls the strong sad sea;

while February is 'the true Demeter,' and

With rich warm vine-blood splashed from heel to knee,
Comes radiant through the yellow woodlands.

Each month, as it passes, calls for new praise and for music different from our own. July is a 'lady, born in wind and rain'; in August

Across the range, by every scarred black fell,
Strong Winter blows his horn of wild farewell;

while October is 'the queen of all the year,' the 'lady of the yellow hair,' who strays 'with blossom-trammelled feet' across the 'haughty-featured hills,' and brings the Spring with her. We must certainly try to accustom ourselves to the mopoke and the sarsaparilla plant, and to make the gum-tree and the buddawong as dear to us as the olives and the narcissi of white Colonus. After all, the Muses are great travellers, and the same foot that stirred the Cumnor cowslips may some day brush the fallen gold of the wattle blossoms and tread delicately over the tawny bush-grass.

Mr. Sladen has, of course, a great belief in the possibilities of Australian poetry. There are in Australia, he tells us, far more writers capable of producing good work than has been assumed. It is only natural, he adds, that this should be so, 'for Australia has one of those delightful climates conducive to rest in the open air. The middle of the day is so hot that it is really more healthful to lounge about than to take stronger exercise.' Well, lounging in the open air is not a bad school for poets, but it largely depends on the lounger. What strikes one on reading over Mr. Sladen's collection is the depressing provinciality of mood and manner in almost every writer. Page follows page, and we find nothing but echoes without music, reflections without beauty, second-rate magazine verses and third-rate verses for Colonial newspapers. Poe seems to have had some influence—at least, there are several parodies of his method—and one or two writers have read Mr. Swinburne; but, on the whole, we have artless Nature in her most irritating form. Of course Australia is young, younger even than America whose youth is now one of her oldest and most hallowed traditions, but the entire want of originality of treatment is curious. And yet not so curious, perhaps, after all. Youth is rarely original.

There are, however, some exceptions. Henry Clarence Kendall had a true poetic gift. The series of poems on the Austral months, from which we have already quoted, is full of beautiful things; Landor's *Rose Aylmer* is a classic in its way, but Kendall's *Rose Lorraine* is in parts not unworthy to be mentioned after it; and the poem entitled *Beyond Kerguelen* has a marvellous music about it, a wonderful rhythm of words and a real richness of utterance. Some of the lines are strangely powerful,

and, indeed, in spite of its exaggerated alliteration, or perhaps in consequence of it, the whole poem is a most remarkable work of art.

Down in the South, by the waste without sail on it—
  Far from the zone of the blossom and tree—
Lieth, with winter and whirlwind and wail on it,
  Ghost of a land by the ghost of a sea.
Weird is the mist from the summit to base of it;
  Sun of its heaven is wizened and grey;
Phantom of light is the light on the face of it—
  Never is night on it, never is day!
Here is the shore without flower or bird on it;
  Here is no litany sweet of the springs—
Only the haughty, harsh thunder is heard on it,
  Only the storm, with a roar in its wings!

Back in the dawn of this beautiful sphere, on it—
  Land of the dolorous, desolate face—
Beamed the blue day; and the beautiful year on it
  Fostered the leaf and the blossom of grace.
Grand were the lights of its midsummer noon on it—
  Mornings of majesty shone on its seas;
Glitter of star and the glory of moon on it
  Fell, in the march of the musical breeze.
Valleys and hills, with the whisper of wing in them,
  Dells of the daffodil—spaces impearled,
Flowered and flashed with the splendour of spring in them,
  Back in the morn of this wonderful world.

Mr. Sladen speaks of Alfred Domett as 'the author of one of the great poems of a century in which Shelley and Keats, Byron and Scott, Wordsworth and Tennyson have all flourished,' but the extracts he gives from *Ranolf and Amohia* hardly substantiate this claim, although the song of the Tree-God in the fourth book is clever but exasperating.

A Midsummer's Noon, by Charles Harpur, 'the grey forefather of Australian poetry,' is pretty and graceful, and Thomas Henry's *Wood-Notes* and Miss Veel's *Saturday Night* are worth reading; but, on the whole, the Australian poets are extremely dull and prosaic. There seem to be no sirens in the New World. As for Mr. Sladen himself, he has done his work very conscientiously. Indeed, in one instance he almost re-writes

an entire poem in consequence of the manuscript having reached him in a mutilated condition.

A pleasant land is the land of dreams
  At the back of the shining air!
It hath sunnier skies and sheenier streams,
  And gardens than Earth's more fair,

is the first verse of this lucubration, and Mr. Sladen informs us with justifiable pride that the parts printed in italics are from his own pen! This is certainly editing with a vengeance, and we cannot help saying that it reflects more credit on Mr. Sladen's good nature than on his critical or his poetical powers. The appearance, also, in a volume of 'poems produced in Australia,' of selections from Horne's *Orion* cannot be defended, especially as we are given no specimen of the poetry Horne wrote during the time that he actually was in Australia, where he held the office of 'Warden of the Blue Mountains'—a position which, as far as the title goes, is the loveliest ever given to any poet, and would have suited Wordsworth admirably: Wordsworth, that is to say, at his best, for he not infrequently wrote like the Distributor of Stamps. However, Mr. Sladen has shown great energy in the compilation of this bulky volume which, though it does not contain much that is of any artistic value, has a certain historical interest, especially for those who care to study the conditions of intellectual life in the colonies of a great empire. The biographical notices of the enormous crowd of verse-makers which is included in this volume are chiefly from the pen of Mr. Patchett Martin. Some of them are not very satisfactory. 'Formerly of West Australia, now residing at Boston, U.S. Has published several volumes of poetry,' is a ludicrously inadequate account of such a man as John Boyle O'Reilly, while in 'poet, essayist, critic, and journalist, one of the most prominent figures in literary London,' few will recognise the industrious Mr. William Sharp.

Still, on the whole, we should be grateful for a volume that has given us specimens of Kendall's work, and perhaps Mr. Sladen will some day produce an anthology of Australian poetry, not a herbarium of Australian verse. His present book has many good qualities, but it is almost unreadable.

Australian Poets, 1788-1888. Edited by Douglas B. W. Sladen, B.A. Oxon. (Griffith, Farran and Co.)

SOME LITERARY NOTES—I

(*Woman's World*, January 1889.)

In a recent article on *English Poetesses*, {374} I ventured to suggest that our women of letters should turn their attention somewhat more to prose and somewhat less to poetry. Women seem to me to possess just what our literature wants—a light touch, a delicate hand, a graceful mode of treatment, and an unstudied felicity of phrase. We want some one who will do for our prose what Madame de Sévigné did for the prose of France. George Eliot's style was far too cumbrous, and Charlotte Brontë's too exaggerated. However, one must not forget that amongst the women of England there have been some charming letter-writers, and certainly no book can be more delightful reading than Mrs. Ross's *Three Generations of English Women*, which has recently appeared. The three Englishwomen whose memoirs and correspondence Mrs. Ross has so admirably edited are Mrs. John Taylor, Mrs. Sarah Austin, and Lady Duff Gordon, all of them remarkable personalities, and two of them women of brilliant wit and European reputation. Mrs. Taylor belonged to that great Norwich family about whom the Duke of Sussex remarked that they reversed the ordinary saying that it takes nine tailors to make a man, and was for many years one of the most distinguished figures in the famous society of her native town. Her only daughter married John Austin, the great authority on jurisprudence, and her *salon* in Paris was the centre of the intellect and culture of her day. Lucie Duff Gordon, the only child of John and Sarah Austin, inherited the talents of her parents. A beauty, a *femme d'esprit*, a traveller, and clever writer, she charmed and fascinated her age, and her premature death in Egypt was really a loss to our literature. It is to her daughter that we owe this delightful volume of memoirs.

First we are introduced to Mrs. Ross's great-grandmother, Mrs. Taylor, who 'was called, by her intimate friends, "Madame Roland of Norwich," from her likeness to the portraits of the handsome and unfortunate Frenchwoman.' We hear of her darning her boy's grey worsted stockings while holding her own with Southey and Brougham, and dancing round the Tree of Liberty with Dr. Parr when the news of the fall of the Bastille was first known. Amongst her friends were Sir James Mackintosh, the most popular man of the day, 'to whom Madame de Staël wrote, "Il n'y a pas de société sans vous." "C'est très ennuyeux de dîner sans vous; la société ne va pas quand vous n'êtes pas là";' Sir James Smith, the botanist; Crabb Robinson; the Gurneys; Mrs. Barbauld; Dr. Alderson and his charming daughter, Amelia Opie; and many other well-known people. Her letters are extremely sensible and thoughtful. 'Nothing at present,' she says in one of them, 'suits my taste so well as Susan's Latin lessons, and her philosophical old master . . . When we get to Cicero's discussions on the nature of the soul, or Virgil's fine descriptions, my mind is filled up. Life is either a dull round of eating, drinking, and sleeping, or a spark of ethereal fire just kindled. . . . The

character of girls must depend upon their reading as much as upon the company they keep. Besides the intrinsic pleasure to be derived from solid knowledge, a woman ought to consider it as her best resource against poverty.' This is a somewhat caustic aphorism: 'A romantic woman is a troublesome friend, as she expects you to be as imprudent as herself, and is mortified at what she calls coldness and insensibility.' And this is admirable: 'The art of life is not to estrange oneself from society, and yet not to pay too dear for it.' This, too, is good: 'Vanity, like curiosity, is wanted as a stimulus to exertion; indolence would certainly get the better of us if it were not for these two powerful principles'; and there is a keen touch of humour in the following: 'Nothing is so gratifying as the idea that virtue and philanthropy are becoming fashionable.' Dr. James Martineau, in a letter to Mrs. Ross, gives us a pleasant picture of the old lady returning from market 'weighted by her huge basket, with the shank of a leg of mutton thrust out to betray its contents,' and talking divinely about philosophy, poets, politics, and every intellectual topic of the day. She was a woman of admirable good sense, a type of Roman matron, and quite as careful as were the Roman matrons to keep up the purity of her native tongue.

Mrs. Taylor, however, was more or less limited to Norwich. Mrs. Austin was for the world. In London, Paris, and Germany, she ruled and dominated society, loved by every one who knew her. 'She is "My best and brightest" to Lord Jeffrey; "Dear, fair and wise" to Sydney Smith; "My great ally" to Sir James Stephen; "Sunlight through waste weltering chaos" to Thomas Carlyle (while he needed her aid); "La petite mère du genre humain" to Michael Chevalier; "Liebes Mütterlein" to John Stuart Mill; and "My own Professorin" to Charles Buller, to whom she taught German, as well as to the sons of Mr. James Mill.' Jeremy Bentham, when on his deathbed, gave her a ring with his portrait and some of his hair let in behind. 'There, my dear,' he said, 'it is the only ring I ever gave a woman.' She corresponded with Guizot, Barthelemy de St. Hilaire, the Grotes, Dr. Whewell, the Master of Trinity, Nassau Senior, the Duchesse d'Orléans, Victor Cousin, and many other distinguished people. Her translation of Ranke's *History of the Popes* is admirable; indeed, all her literary work was thoroughly well done, and her edition of her husband's *Province of Jurisprudence* deserves the very highest praise. Two people more unlike than herself and her husband it would have been difficult to find. He was habitually grave and despondent; she was brilliantly handsome, fond of society, in which she shone, and 'with an almost superabundance of energy and animal spirits,' Mrs. Ross tells us. She married him because she thought him perfect, but he never produced the work of which he was worthy, and of which she knew him to be worthy. Her estimate of him in the preface to the *Jurisprudence* is wonderfully striking and simple. 'He was never sanguine. He was

intolerant of any imperfection. He was always under the control of severe love of truth. He lived and died a poor man.' She was terribly disappointed in him, but she loved him. Some years after his death, she wrote to M. Guizot:

In the intervals of my study of his works I read his letters to me—forty-five years of love-letters, the last as tender and passionate as the first. And how full of noble sentiments! The midday of our lives was clouded and stormy, full of cares and disappointments; but the sunset was bright and serene—as bright as the morning, and more serene. Now it is night with me, and must remain so till the dawn of another day. I am always alone—that is, I live with him.

The most interesting letters in the book are certainly those to M. Guizot, with whom she maintained the closest intellectual friendship; but there is hardly one of them that does not contain something clever, or thoughtful, or witty, while those addressed to her, in turn, are very interesting. Carlyle writes her letters full of lamentations, the wail of a Titan in pain, superbly exaggerated for literary effect.

Literature, one's sole craft and staff of life, lies broken in abeyance; what room for music amid the braying of innumerable jackasses, the howling of innumerable hyænas whetting the tooth to eat them up? Alas for it! it is a sick disjointed time; neither shall we ever mend it; at best let us hope to mend ourselves. I declare I sometimes think of throwing down the Pen altogether as a worthless weapon; and leading out a colony of these poor starving Drudges to the waste places of their old Mother Earth, when for sweat of their brow bread will rise for them; it were perhaps the worthiest service that at this moment could be rendered our old world to throw open for it the doors of the New. Thither must they come at last, 'bursts of eloquence' will do nothing; men are starving and will try many things before they die. But poor I, ach Gott! I am no Hengist or Alaric; only a writer of Articles in bad prose; stick to thy last, O Tutor; the Pen is not worthless, it is omnipotent to those who have Faith.

Henri Beyle (Stendhal), the great, I am often tempted to think the greatest of French novelists, writes her a charming letter about *nuances*. 'It seems to me,' he says, 'that except when they read Shakespeare, Byron, or Sterne, no Englishman understands "*nuances*"; we adore them. A fool says to a woman, "I love you"; the words mean nothing, he might as well say "Olli Batachor"; it is the *nuance* which gives force to the meaning.' In 1839 Mrs. Austin writes to Victor Cousin: 'I have seen young Gladstone, a distinguished Tory who wants to re-establish education based on the Church in quite a Catholic form'; and we find her corresponding with Mr. Gladstone on the subject of education. 'If you are strong enough to provide motives and checks,' she says to him, 'you may do two blessed acts—reform your clergy and teach your people. As it is, how

few of them conceive what it is to teach a people'! Mr. Gladstone replies at great length, and in many letters, from which we may quote this passage:

You are for pressing and urging the people to their profit against their inclination: so am I. You set little value upon all merely technical instruction, upon all that fails to touch the inner nature of man: so do I. And here I find ground of union broad and deep-laid . . .

I more than doubt whether your idea, namely that of raising man to social sufficiency and morality, can be accomplished, except through the ancient religion of Christ; . . . or whether, the principles of eclecticism are legitimately applicable to the Gospel; or whether, if we find ourselves in a state of incapacity to work through the Church, we can remedy the defect by the adoption of principles contrary to hers . . .

But indeed I am most unfit to pursue the subject; private circumstances of no common interest are upon me, as I have become very recently engaged to Miss Glynne, and I hope your recollections will enable you in some degree to excuse me.

Lord Jeffrey has a very curious and suggestive letter on popular education, in which he denies, or at least doubts, the effect of this education on morals. He, however, supports it on the ground 'that it will increase the enjoyment of individuals,' which is certainly a very sensible claim. Humboldt writes to her about an old Indian language which was preserved by a parrot, the tribe who spoke it having been exterminated, and about 'young Darwin,' who had just published his first book. Here are some extracts from her own letters:

I heard from Lord Lansdowne two or three days ago. . . . I think he is ce que nous avons de mieux. He wants only the energy that great ambition gives. He says, 'We shall have a parliament of railway kings' . . . what can be worse than that?—The deification of money by a whole people. As Lord Brougham says, we have no right to give ourselves pharisaical airs. I must give you a story sent to me. Mrs. Hudson, the railway queen, was shown a bust of Marcus Aurelius at Lord Westminster's, on which she said, 'I suppose that is not the present Marquis.' To goûter this, you must know that the extreme vulgar (hackney coachmen, etc.) in England pronounce 'marquis' very like 'Marcus.'

Dec, 11th.—Went to Savigny's. Nobody was there but W. Grimm and his wife and a few men. Grimm told me he had received two volumes of Norwegian fairy-tales, and that they were delightful. Talking of them, I said, 'Your children appear to be the happiest in the world; they live in the midst of fairytales.' 'Ah,' said he, 'I must tell you about that. When we were at Göttingen, somebody spoke to my little son about his

father's Mährchen. He had read them, but never thought of their being mine. He came running to me, and said with an offended air, "Father, they say you wrote those fairy-tales; surely you never invented such silly rubbish?" He thought it below my dignity.'

Savigny told a Volksmährchen too:

'St. Anselm was grown old and infirm, and lay on the ground among thorns and thistles. Der liebe Gott said to him, "You are very badly lodged there; why don't you build yourself a house?" "Before I take the trouble," said Anselm, "I should like to know how long I have to live." "About thirty years," said Der liebe Gott. "Oh, for so short a time," replied he, "it's not worth while," and turned himself round among the thistles.'

Dr. Franck told me a story of which I had never heard before. Voltaire had for some reason or other taken a grudge against the prophet Habakkuk, and affected to find in him things he never wrote. Somebody took the Bible and began to demonstrate to him that he was mistaken. 'C'est égal,' he said, impatiently, 'Habakkuk était capable de tout!'

Oct. 30, 1853.

I am not in love with the Richtung (tendency) of our modern novelists. There is abundance of talent; but writing a pretty, graceful, touching, yet pleasing story is the last thing our writers nowadays think of. Their novels are party pamphlets on political or social questions, like Sybil, or Alton Locke, or Mary Barton, or Uncle Tom; or they are the most minute and painful dissections of the least agreeable and beautiful parts of our nature, like those of Miss Brontë—Jane Eyre and Villette; or they are a kind of martyrology, like Mrs. Marsh's Emilia Wyndham, which makes you almost doubt whether any torments the heroine would have earned by being naughty could exceed those she incurred by her virtue.

Where, oh! where is the charming, humane, gentle spirit that dictated the Vicar of Wakefield—the spirit which Goethe so justly calls versöhnend (reconciling), with all the weaknesses and woes of humanity? . . . Have you read Thackeray's Esmond? It is a curious and very successful attempt to imitate the style of our old novelists. . . . Which of Mrs. Gore's novels are translated? They are very clever, lively, worldly, bitter, disagreeable, and entertaining. . . . Miss Austen's—are they translated? They are not new, and are Dutch paintings of every-day people—very clever, very true, very unæsthetic, but amusing. I have not seen Ruth, by Mrs. Gaskell. I hear it much admired—and blamed. It is one of the many proofs of the desire women now have to

friser questionable topics, and to poser insoluble moral problems. George Sand has turned their heads in that direction. I think a few broad scenes or hearty jokes à la Fielding were very harmless in comparison. They confounded nothing. . . .

The Heir of Redcliffe I have not read. . . . I am not worthy of superhuman flights of virtue—in a novel. I want to see how people act and suffer who are as good-for-nothing as I am myself. Then I have the sinful pretension to be amused, whereas all our novelists want to reform us, and to show us what a hideous place this world is: Ma foi, je ne le sais que trap, without their help.

The Head of the Family has some merits . . . But there is too much affliction and misery and frenzy. The heroine is one of those creatures now so common (in novels), who remind me of a poor bird tied to a stake (as was once the cruel sport of boys) to be 'shyed' at (i.e. pelted) till it died; only our gentle lady-writers at the end of all untie the poor battered bird, and assure us that it is never the worse for all the blows it has had—nay, the better—and that now, with its broken wings and torn feathers and bruised body, it is going to be quite happy. No, fair ladies, you know that it is not so—resigned, if you please, but make me no shams of happiness out of such wrecks.

In politics Mrs. Austin was a philosophical Tory. Radicalism she detested, and she and most of her friends seem to have regarded it as moribund. 'The Radical party is evidently effete,' she writes to M. Victor Cousin; the probable 'leader of the Tory party' is Mr. Gladstone. 'The people must be instructed, must be guided, must be, in short, governed,' she writes elsewhere; and in a letter to Dr. Whewell, she says that the state of things in France fills 'me with the deepest anxiety on one point,—the point on which the permanency of our institutions and our salvation as a nation turn. Are our higher classes able to keep the lead of the rest? If they are, we are safe; if not, I agree with my poor dear Charles Buller—*our* turn must come. Now Cambridge and Oxford must really look to this.' The belief in the power of the Universities to stem the current of democracy is charming. She grew to regard Carlyle as 'one of the dissolvents of the age—as mischievous as his extravagances will let him be'; speaks of Kingsley and Maurice as 'pernicious'; and talks of John Stuart Mill as a 'demagogue.' She was no *doctrinaire*. 'One ounce of education demanded is worth a pound imposed. It is no use to give the meat before you give the hunger.' She was delighted at a letter of St. Hilaire's, in which he said, 'We have a system and no results; you have results and no system.' Yet she had a deep sympathy with the wants of the people. She was horrified at something Babbage told her of the population of some of the manufacturing towns who are *worked out* before they attain to thirty years of age. 'But I am persuaded that the remedy will not, cannot come from the people,' she adds. Many of her letters are concerned with the question of the higher education of women. She discusses

Buckle's lecture on 'The Influence of Women upon the Progress of Knowledge,' admits to M. Guizot that women's intellectual life is largely coloured by the emotions, but adds: 'One is not precisely a fool because one's opinions are greatly influenced by one's affections. The opinions of men are often influenced by worse things.' Dr. Whewell consults her about lecturing women on Plato, being slightly afraid lest people should think it ridiculous; Comte writes her elaborate letters on the relation of women to progress; and Mr. Gladstone promises that Mrs. Gladstone will carry out at Hawarden the suggestions contained in one of her pamphlets. She was always very practical, and never lost her admiration for plain sewing.

All through the book we come across interesting and amusing things. She gets St. Hilaire to order a large, sensible bonnet for her in Paris, which was at once christened the 'Aristotelian,' and was supposed to be the only useful bonnet in England. Grote has to leave Paris after the *coup d'état*, he tells her, because he cannot bear to see the establishment of a Greek tyrant. Alfred de Vigny, Macaulay, John Stirling, Southey, Alexis de Tocqueville, Hallam, and Jean Jacques Ampère all contribute to these pleasant pages. She seems to have inspired the warmest feelings of friendship in those who knew her. Guizot writes to her: 'Madame de Staël used to say that the best thing in the world was a serious Frenchman. I turn the compliment, and say that the best thing in the world is an affectionate Englishman. How much more an Englishwoman! Given equal qualities, a woman is always more charming than a man.'

Lucie Austin, afterwards Lady Duff Gordon, was born in 1821. Her chief playfellow was John Stuart Mill, and Jeremy Bentham's garden was her playground. She was a lovely, romantic child, who was always wanting the flowers to talk to her, and used to invent the most wonderful stories about animals, of whom she was passionately fond. In 1834 Mrs. Austin decided on leaving England, and Sydney Smith wrote his immortal letter to the little girl:

Lucie, Lucie, my dear child, don't tear your frock: tearing frocks is not of itself a proof of genius. But write as your mother writes, act as your mother acts: be frank, loyal, affectionate, simple, honest, and then integrity or laceration of frock is of little import. And Lucie, dear child, mind your arithmetic. You know in the first sum of yours I ever saw there was a mistake. You had carried two (as a cab is licensed to do), and you ought, dear Lucie, to have carried but one. Is this a trifle? What would life be without arithmetic but a scene of horrors? You are going to Boulogne, the city of debts, peopled by men who have never understood arithmetic. By the time you return, I shall probably have received my first paralytic stroke, and shall have lost all recollection of you. Therefore I now give you my parting advice—don't marry anybody

who has not a tolerable understanding and a thousand a year. And God bless you, dear child.

At Boulogne she sat next Heine at *table d'hôte*. 'He heard me speak German to my mother, and soon began to talk to me, and then said, "When you go back to England, you can tell your friends that you have seen Heinrich Heine." I replied, "And who is Heinrich Heine?" He laughed heartily and took no offence at my ignorance; and we used to lounge on the end of the pier together, where he told me stories in which fish, mermaids, water-sprites and a very funny old French fiddler with a poodle were mixed up in the most fanciful manner, sometimes humorous, and very often pathetic, especially when the water-sprites brought him greetings from the "Nord See." He was . . . so kind to me and so sarcastic to every one else.' Twenty years afterwards the little girl whose 'braune Augen' Heine had celebrated in his charming poem *Wenn ich an deinem Hause*, used to go and see the dying poet in Paris. 'It does one good,' he said to her, 'to see a woman who does not carry about a broken heart, to be mended by all sorts of men, like the women here, who do not see that a total want of heart is their real failing.' On another occasion he said to her: 'I have now made peace with the whole world, and at last also with God, who sends thee to me as a beautiful angel of death: I shall certainly soon die.' Lady Duff Gordon said to him: 'Poor Poet, do you still retain such splendid illusions, that you transform a travelling Englishwoman into Azrael? That used not to be the case, for you always disliked us.' He answered: 'Yes, I do not know what possessed me to dislike the English, . . . it really was only petulance; I never hated them, indeed, I never knew them. I was only once in England, but knew no one, and found London very dreary, and the people and the streets odious. But England has revenged herself well; she has sent me most excellent friends—thyself and Milnes, that good Milnes.'

There are delightful letters from Dicky Doyle here, with the most amusing drawings, one of the present Sir Robert Peel as he made his maiden speech in the House being excellent; and the various descriptions of Hassan's performances are extremely amusing. Hassan was a black boy, who had been turned away by his master because he was going blind, and was found by Lady Duff Gordon one night sitting on her doorstep. She took care of him, and had him cured, and he seems to have been a constant source of delight to every one. On one occasion, 'when Prince Louis Napoleon (the late Emperor of the French) came in unexpectedly, he gravely said: "Please, my Lady, I ran out and bought twopenny worth of sprats for the Prince, and for the honour of the house."' Here is an amusing letter from Mrs. Norton:

MY DEAR LUCIE,—We have never thanked you for the red Pots, which no early Christian should be without, and which add that finishing stroke to the splendour of

our demesne, which was supposed to depend on a roc's egg, in less intelligent times. We have now a warm Pompeian appearance, and the constant contemplation of these classical objects favours the beauty of the facial line; for what can be deduced from the great fact, apparent in all the states of antiquity, that straight noses were the ancient custom, but the logical assumption that the constant habit of turning up the nose at unsightly objects—such as the National Gallery and other offensive and obtrusive things—has produced the modern divergence from the true and proper line of profile? I rejoice to think that we ourselves are exempt. I attribute this to our love of Pompeian Pots (on account of the beauty and distinction of this Pot's shape I spell it with a big P), which has kept us straight in a world of crookedness. The pursuit of profiles under difficulties—how much more rare than a pursuit of knowledge! Talk of setting good examples before our children! Bah! let us set good Pompeian Pots before our children, and when they grow up they will not depart from them.

Lady Duff Gordon's *Letters from the Cape*, and her brilliant translation of *The Amber Witch*, are, of course, well known. The latter book was, with Lady Wilde's translation of *Sidonia the Sorceress*, my favourite romantic reading when a boy. Her letters from Egypt are wonderfully vivid and picturesque. Here is an interesting bit of art criticism:

Sheykh Yoosuf laughed so heartily over a print in an illustrated paper from a picture of Hilton's of Rebekah at the well, with the old 'wekeel' of 'Sidi Ibraheem' (Abraham's chief servant) kneeling before the girl he was sent to fetch, like an old fool without his turban, and Rebekah and the other girls in queer fancy dresses, and the camels with snouts like pigs. 'If the painter could not go into "Es Sham" to see how the Arab really look,' said Sheykh Yoosuf, 'why did he not paint a well in England, with girls like English peasants—at least it would have looked natural to English people? and the wekeel would not seem so like a madman if he had taken off a hat!' I cordially agree with Yoosuf's art criticism. Fancy pictures of Eastern things are hopelessly absurd.

Mrs. Ross has certainly produced a most fascinating volume, and her book is one of the books of the season. It is edited with tact and judgment.

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Caroline, by Lady Lindsay, is certainly Lady Lindsay's best work. It is written in a very clever modern style, and is as full of *esprit* and wit as it is of subtle psychological insight. Caroline is an heiress, who, coming downstairs at a Continental hotel, falls into the arms of a charming, penniless young man. The hero of the novel is the young man's friend, Lord Lexamont, who makes the 'great renunciation,' and succeeds in being fine without being priggish, and Quixotic without being ridiculous. Miss Ffoulkes, the elderly spinster, is a capital character, and, indeed, the whole book is

cleverly written. It has also the advantage of being in only one volume. The influence of Mudie on literature, the baneful influence of the circulating library, is clearly on the wane. The gain to literature is incalculable. English novels were becoming very tedious with their three volumes of padding—at least, the second volume was always padding—and extremely indigestible. A reckless punster once remarked to me, *apropos* of English novels, that 'the proof of the padding is in the eating,' and certainly English fiction has been very heavy—heavy with the best intentions. Lady Lindsay's book is a sign that better things are in store for us. She is brief and bright.

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What are the best books to give as Christmas presents to good girls who are always pretty, or to pretty girls who are occasionally good? People are so fond of giving away what they do not want themselves, that charity is largely on the increase. But with this kind of charity I have not much sympathy. If one gives away a book, it should be a charming book—so charming, that one regrets having given it, and would not take it back. Looking over the Christmas books sent to me by various publishers, I find that these are the best and the most pleasing: *Gleanings from the 'Graphic*,' by Randolph Caldecott, a most fascinating volume full of sketches that have real wit and humour of line, and are not simply dependent on what the French call the *légende*, the literary explanation; *Meg's Friend*, by Alice Corkran, one of our most delicate and graceful prose-writers in the sphere of fiction, and one whose work has the rare artistic qualities of refinement and simplicity; *Under False Colours*, by Sarah Doudney, an excellent story; *The Fisherman's Daughter*, by Florence Montgomery, the author of *Misunderstood*, a tale with real charm of idea and treatment; *Under a Cloud*, by the author of *The Atelier du Lys*, and quite worthy of its author; *The Third Miss St. Quentin*, by Mrs. Molesworth, and *A Christmas Posy* from the same fascinating pen, and with delightful illustrations by Walter Crane. Miss Rosa Mulholland's *Giannetta* and Miss Agnes Giberne's *Ralph Hardcastle's Will* are also admirable books for presents, and the bound volume of *Atalanta* has much that is delightful both in art and in literature.

The prettiest, indeed the most beautiful, book from an artistic point of view is undoubtedly Mr. Walter Crane's *Flora's Feast*. It is an imaginative Masque of Flowers, and as lovely in colour as it is exquisite in design. It shows us the whole pomp and pageant of the year, the Snowdrops like white-crested knights, the little naked Crocus kneeling to catch the sunlight in his golden chalice, the Daffodils blowing their trumpets like young hunters, the Anemones with their wind-blown raiment, the green-kirtled Marsh-marigolds, and the 'Lady-smocks all silver-white,' tripping over the meadows like Arcadian milk-maids. Buttercups are here, and the white-plumed Thorn

in spiky armour, and the Crown-imperial borne in stately procession, and red-bannered Tulips, and Hyacinths with their spring bells, and Chaucer's Daisy—

small and sweet,
Si douce est la Marguerite.

Gorgeous Peonies, and Columbines 'that drew the car of Venus,' and the Rose with her lover, and the stately white-vestured Lilies, and wide staring Ox-eyes, and scarlet Poppies pass before us. There are Primroses and Corncockles, Chrysanthemums in robes of rich brocade, Sunflowers and tall Hollyhocks, and pale Christmas Roses. The designs for the Daffodils, the wild Roses, the Convolvulus, and the Hollyhock are admirable, and would be beautiful in embroidery or in any precious material. Indeed, any one who wishes to find beautiful designs cannot do better than get the book. It is, in its way, a little masterpiece, and its grace and fancy, and beauty of line and colour, cannot be over-estimated. The Greeks gave human form to wood and stream, and saw Nature best in Naiad or in Dryad. Mr. Crane, with something of Gothic fantasy, has caught the Greek feeling, the love of personification, the passion for representing things under the conditions of the human form. The flowers are to him so many knights and ladies, page-boys or shepherd-boys, divine nymphs or simple girls, and in their fair bodies or fanciful raiment one can see the flower's very form and absolute essence, so that one loves their artistic truth no less than their artistic beauty. This book contains some of the best work Mr. Crane has ever done. His art is never so successful as when it is entirely remote from life. The slightest touch of actuality seems to kill it. It lives, or should live, in a world of its own fashioning. It is decorative in its complete subordination of fact to beauty of effect, in the grandeur of its curves and lines, in its entirely imaginative treatment. Almost every page of this book gives a suggestion for some rich tapestry, some fine screen, some painted *cassone*, some carving in wood or ivory.

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From Messrs. Hildesheimer and Faulkner I have received a large collection of Christmas cards and illustrated books. One of the latter, an *édition de luxe* of Sheridan's *Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen*, is very cleverly illustrated by Miss Alice Havers and Mr. Ernest Wilson. It seems to me, however, that there is a danger of modern illustration becoming too pictorial. What we need is good book-ornament, decorative ornament that will go with type and printing, and give to each page a harmony and unity of effect. Merely dotting a page with reproductions of water-colour drawings will not do. It is true that Japanese art, which is essentially decorative, is pictorial also. But the Japanese have the most wonderful delicacy of touch, and with

a science so subtle that it gives the effect of exquisite accident, they can by mere placing make an undecorated space decorative. There is also an intimate connection between their art and their handwriting or printed characters. They both go together, and show the same feeling for form and line. Our aim should be to discover some mode of illustration that will harmonise with the shapes of our letters. At present there is a discord between our pictorial illustrations and our unpictorial type. The former are too essentially imitative in character, and often disturb a page instead of decorating it. However, I suppose we must regard most of these Christmas books merely as books of pictures, with a running accompaniment of explanatory text. As the text, as a rule, consists of poetry, this is putting the poet in a very subordinate position; but the poetry in the books of this kind is not, as a rule, of a very high order of excellence.

(1) *Three Generations of English Women. Memoirs and Correspondence of Susannah Taylor, Sarah Austin, and Lady Duff Gordon*. By Janet Ross, Author of *Italian Sketches*, *Land of Manfred*, *etc*. (Fisher Unwin.)

(2) *Caroline*. By Lady Lindsay. (Bentley and Son.)

(3) *Gleanings from the 'Graphic.'* By Randolph Caldecott. (Routledge and Sons.)

(4) *Meg's Friend*. By Alice Corkran. (Blackie and Sons.)

(5) *Under False Colours*. By Sarah Doudney. (Blackie and Sons.)

(6) *The Fisherman's Daughter*. By Florence Montgomery. (Hatchards.)

(7) *Under a Cloud*. By the Author of *The Atelier du Lys*. (Hatchards.)

(8) *The Third Miss St. Quentin*. By Mrs. Molesworth. (Hatchards.)

(9) *A Christmas Posy*. By Mrs. Molesworth. Illustrated by Walter Crane. (Hatchards.)

(10) *Giannetta. A Girl's Story of Herself*. By Rosa Mulholland. (Blackie and Sons.)

(11) *Ralph Hardcastle's Will*. By Agnes Giberne. (Hatchards.)

(12) *Flora's Feast. A Masque of Flowers*. Penned and Pictured by Walter Crane. (Cassell and Co.)

(13) *Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen*. By Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Illustrated by Alice Havers and Ernest Wilson. (Hildesheimer and Faulkner.)

POETRY AND PRISON

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, January 3, 1889.)

Prison has had an admirable effect on Mr. Wilfrid Blunt as a poet. The *Love Sonnets of Proteus*, in spite of their clever Musset-like modernities and their swift brilliant wit, were but affected or fantastic at best. They were simply the records of passing moods and moments, of which some were sad and others sweet, and not a few shameful. Their subject was not of high or serious import. They contained much that was wilful and weak. *In Vinculis*, upon the other hand, is a book that stirs one by its fine sincerity of purpose, its lofty and impassioned thought, its depth and ardour of intense feeling. 'Imprisonment,' says Mr. Blunt in his preface, 'is a reality of discipline most useful to the modern soul, lapped as it is in physical sloth and self-indulgence. Like a sickness or a spiritual retreat it purifies and ennobles; and the soul emerges from it stronger and more self-contained.' To him, certainly, it has been a mode of purification. The opening sonnets, composed in the bleak cell of Galway Gaol, and written down on the fly-leaves of the prisoner's prayer-book, are full of things nobly conceived and nobly uttered, and show that though Mr. Balfour may enforce 'plain living' by his prison regulations, he cannot prevent 'high thinking' or in any way limit or constrain the freedom of a man's soul. They are, of course, intensely personal in expression. They could not fail to be so. But the personality that they reveal has nothing petty or ignoble about it. The petulant cry of the shallow egoist which was the chief characteristic of the *Love Sonnets of Proteus* is not to be found here. In its place we have wild grief and terrible scorn, fierce rage and flame-like passion. Such a sonnet as the following comes out of the very fire of heart and brain:

God knows, 'twas not with a fore-reasoned plan
  I left the easeful dwellings of my peace,
And sought this combat with ungodly Man,
  And ceaseless still through years that do not cease
  Have warred with Powers and Principalities.
My natural soul, ere yet these strifes began,
  Was as a sister diligent to please
And loving all, and most the human clan.

God knows it. And He knows how the world's tears
  Touched me. And He is witness of my wrath,
How it was kindled against murderers
  Who slew for gold, and how upon their path
I met them. Since which day the World in arms
Strikes at my life with angers and alarms.

And this sonnet has all the strange strength of that despair which is but the prelude to a larger hope:

I thought to do a deed of chivalry,
  An act of worth, which haply in her sight
Who was my mistress should recorded be
  And of the nations. And, when thus the fight
  Faltered and men once bold with faces white
Turned this and that way in excuse to flee,
  I only stood, and by the foeman's might
Was overborne and mangled cruelly.

Then crawled I to her feet, in whose dear cause
  I made this venture, and 'Behold,' I said,
'How I am wounded for thee in these wars.'
  But she, 'Poor cripple, would'st thou I should wed
A limbless trunk?' and laughing turned from me.
Yet she was fair, and her name 'Liberty.'

The sonnet beginning

A prison is a convent without God—
  Poverty, Chastity, Obedience
Its precepts are:

is very fine; and this, written just after entering the gaol, is powerful:

Naked I came into the world of pleasure,
  And naked come I to this house of pain.
Here at the gate I lay down my life's treasure,
  My pride, my garments and my name with men.
  The world and I henceforth shall be as twain,
No sound of me shall pierce for good or ill
  These walls of grief. Nor shall I hear the vain
Laughter and tears of those who love me still.

Within, what new life waits me! Little ease,
  Cold lying, hunger, nights of wakefulness,
Harsh orders given, no voice to soothe or please,
  Poor thieves for friends, for books rules meaningless;
This is the grave—nay, hell. Yet, Lord of Might,
Still in Thy light my spirit shall see light.

But, indeed, all the sonnets are worth reading, and *The Canon of Aughrim*, the longest poem in the book, is a most masterly and dramatic description of the tragic life of the

Irish peasant. Literature is not much indebted to Mr. Balfour for his sophistical *Defence of Philosophic Doubt* which is one of the dullest books we know, but it must be admitted that by sending Mr. Blunt to gaol he has converted a clever rhymer into an earnest and deep-thinking poet. The narrow confines of the prison cell seem to suit the 'sonnet's scanty plot of ground,' and an unjust imprisonment for a noble cause strengthens as well as deepens the nature.

In Vinculis. By Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Author of *The Wind and the Whirlwind*, *The Love Sonnets of Proteus*, *etc. etc*. (Kegan Paul.)

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO WALT WHITMAN

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, January 25, 1889.)

'No one will get at my verses who insists upon viewing them as a literary performance . . . or as aiming mainly toward art and æstheticism.' '*Leaves of Grass* . . . has mainly been the outcropping of my own emotional and other personal nature—an attempt, from first to last, to put *a Person*, a human being (myself, in the latter half of the Nineteenth Century in America,) freely, fully and truly on record. I could not find any similar personal record in current literature that satisfied me.' In these words Walt Whitman gives us the true attitude we should adopt towards his work, having, indeed, a much saner view of the value and meaning of that work than either his eloquent admirers or noisy detractors can boast of possessing. His last book, *November Boughs*, as he calls it, published in the winter of the old man's life, reveals to us, not indeed a soul's tragedy, for its last note is one of joy and hope, and noble and unshaken faith in all that is fine and worthy of such faith, but certainly the drama of a human soul, and puts on record with a simplicity that has in it both sweetness and strength the record of his spiritual development, and of the aim and motive both of the manner and the matter of his work. His strange mode of expression is shown in these pages to have been the result of deliberate and self-conscious choice. The 'barbaric yawp' which he sent over 'the roofs of the world' so many years ago, and which wrung from Mr. Swinburne's lip such lofty panegyric in song and such loud clamorous censure in prose, appears here in what will be to many an entirely new light. For in his very rejection of art Walt Whitman is an artist. He tried to produce a certain effect by certain means and he succeeded. There is much method in what many have termed his madness, too much method, indeed, some may be tempted to fancy.

In the story of his life, as he tells it to us, we find him at the age of sixteen beginning a definite and philosophical study of literature:

Summers and falls, I used to go off, sometimes for a week at a stretch, down in the country, or to Long Island's seashores—there, in the presence of outdoor influences, I went over thoroughly the Old and New Testaments, and absorb'd (probably to better advantage for me than in any library or indoor room—it makes such difference where you read) Shakspere, Ossian, the best translated versions I could get of Homer, Eschylus, Sophocles, the old German Nibelungen, the ancient Hindoo poems, and one or two other masterpieces, Dante's among them. As it happened, I read the latter mostly in an old wood. The Iliad . . . I read first thoroughly on the peninsula of Orient, northeast end of Long Island, in a sheltered hollow of rock and sand, with the sea on each side. (I have wonder'd since why I was not overwhelmed by those mighty masters. Likely because I read them, as described, in the full presence of Nature, under the sun, with the far-spreading landscape and vistas, or the sea rolling in.)

Edgar Allan Poe's amusing bit of dogmatism that, for our occasions and our day, 'there can be no such thing as a long poem,' fascinated him. 'The same thought had been haunting my mind before,' he said, 'but Poe's argument . . . work'd the sum out, and proved it to me,' and the English translation of the Bible seems to have suggested to him the possibility of a poetic form which, while retaining the spirit of poetry, would still be free from the trammels of rhyme and of a definite metrical system. Having thus, to a certain degree, settled upon what one might call the 'technique' of Whitmanism, he began to brood upon the nature of that spirit which was to give life to the strange form. The central point of the poetry of the future seemed to him to be necessarily 'an identical body and soul, a personality,' in fact, which personality, he tells us frankly, 'after many considerations and ponderings I deliberately settled should be myself.' However, for the true creation and revealing of this personality, at first only dimly felt, a new stimulus was needed. This came from the Civil War. After describing the many dreams and passions of his boyhood and early manhood, he goes on to say:

These, however, and much more might have gone on and come to naught (almost positively would have come to naught,) if a sudden, vast, terrible, direct and indirect stimulus for new and national declamatory expression had not been given to me. It is certain, I say, that although I had made a start before, only from the occurrence of the Secession War, and what it show'd me as by flashes of lightning, with the emotional depths it sounded and arous'd (of course, I don't mean in my own heart only, I saw it just as plainly in others, in millions)—that only from the strong flare and provocation of that war's sights and scenes the final reasons-for-being of an autochthonic and passionate song definitely came forth.

I went down to the war fields of Virginia . . . lived thenceforward in camp—saw great battles and the days and nights afterward—partook of all the fluctuations, gloom, despair, hopes again arous'd, courage evoked—death readily risk'd—the cause, too—along and filling those agonistic and lurid following years . . . the real parturition years . . . of this henceforth homogeneous Union. Without those three or four years and the experiences they gave, Leaves of Grass would not now be existing.

Having thus obtained the necessary stimulus for the quickening and awakening of the personal self, some day to be endowed with universality, he sought to find new notes of song, and, passing beyond the mere passion for expression, he aimed at 'Suggestiveness' first.

I round and finish little, if anything; and could not, consistently with my scheme. The reader will have his or her part to do, just as much as I have had mine. I seek less to state or display any theme or thought, and more to bring you, reader, into the atmosphere of the theme or thought—there to pursue your own flight.

Another 'impetus-word' is Comradeship, and other 'word-signs' are Good Cheer, Content and Hope. Individuality, especially, he sought for:

I have allowed the stress of my poems from beginning to end to bear upon American individuality and assist it—not only because that is a great lesson in Nature, amid all her generalising laws, but as counterpoise to the leveling tendencies of Democracy—and for other reasons. Defiant of ostensible literary and other conventions, I avowedly chant 'the great pride of man in himself,' and permit it to be more or less a motif of nearly all my verse. I think this pride indispensable to an American. I think it not inconsistent with obedience, humility, deference, and self-questioning.

A new theme also was to be found in the relation of the sexes, conceived in a natural, simple and healthy form, and he protests against poor Mr. William Rossetti's attempt to Bowdlerise and expurgate his song.

From another point of view Leaves of Grass is avowedly the song of Sex and Amativeness, and even Animality—though meanings that do not usually go along with these words are behind all, and will duly emerge; and all are sought to be lifted into a different light and atmosphere. Of this feature, intentionally palpable in a few lines, I shall only say the espousing principle of those lines so gives breath to my whole scheme that the bulk of the pieces might as well have been left unwritten were those lines omitted. . . .

Universal as are certain facts and symptoms of communities . . . there is nothing so rare in modern conventions and poetry as their normal recognizance. Literature is

always calling in the doctor for consultation and confession, and always giving evasions and swathing suppressions in place of that 'heroic nudity,' on which only a genuine diagnosis . . . can be built. And in respect to editions of Leaves of Grass in time to come (if there should be such) I take occasion now to confirm those lines with the settled convictions and deliberate renewals of thirty years, and to hereby prohibit, as far as word of mine can do so, any elision of them.

But beyond all these notes and moods and motives is the lofty spirit of a grand and free acceptance of all things that are worthy of existence. He desired, he says, 'to formulate a poem whose every thought or fact should directly or indirectly be or connive at an implicit belief in the wisdom, health, mystery, beauty of every process, every concrete object, every human or other existence, not only consider'd from the point of view of all, but of each.' His two final utterances are that 'really great poetry is always . . . the result of a national spirit, and not the privilege of a polish'd and select few'; and that 'the strongest and sweetest songs yet remain to be sung.'

Such are the views contained in the opening essay *A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads*, as he calls it; but there are many other essays in this fascinating volume, some on poets such as Burns and Lord Tennyson, for whom Walt Whitman has a profound admiration; some on old actors and singers, the elder Booth, Forrest, Alboni and Mario being his special favourites; others on the native Indians, on the Spanish element in American nationality, on Western slang, on the poetry of the Bible, and on Abraham Lincoln. But Walt Whitman is at his best when he is analysing his own work and making schemes for the poetry of the future. Literature, to him, has a distinctly social aim. He seeks to build up the masses by 'building up grand individuals.' And yet literature itself must be preceded by noble forms of life. 'The best literature is always the result of something far greater than itself—not the hero but the portrait of the hero. Before there can be recorded history or poem there must be the transaction.' Certainly, in Walt Whitman's views there is a largeness of vision, a healthy sanity and a fine ethical purpose. He is not to be placed with the professional littérateurs of his country, Boston novelists, New York poets and the like. He stands apart, and the chief value of his work is in its prophecy, not in its performance. He has begun a prelude to larger themes. He is the herald to a new era. As a man he is the precursor of a fresh type. He is a factor in the heroic and spiritual evolution of the human being. If Poetry has passed him by, Philosophy will take note of him.

November Boughs. By Walt Whitman. (Alexander Gardner.)

THE NEW PRESIDENT

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, January 26, 1889.)

In a little book that he calls *The Enchanted Island* Mr. Wyke Bayliss, the new President of the Royal Society of British Artists, has given his gospel of art to the world. His predecessor in office had also a gospel of art but it usually took the form of an autobiography. Mr. Whistler always spelt art, and we believe still spells it, with a capital 'I.' However, he was never dull. His brilliant wit, his caustic satire, and his amusing epigrams, or, perhaps, we should say epitaphs, on his contemporaries, made his views on art as delightful as they were misleading and as fascinating as they were unsound. Besides, he introduced American humour into art criticism, and for this, if for no other reason, he deserves to be affectionately remembered. Mr. Wyke Bayliss, upon the other hand, is rather tedious. The last President never said much that was true, but the present President never says anything that is new; and, if art be a fairy-haunted wood or an enchanted island, we must say that we prefer the old Puck to the fresh Prospero. Water is an admirable thing—at least, the Greeks said it was—and Mr. Ruskin is an admirable writer; but a combination of both is a little depressing.

Still, it is only right to add that Mr. Wyke Bayliss, at his best, writes very good English. Mr. Whistler, for some reason or other, always adopted the phraseology of the minor prophets. Possibly it was in order to emphasise his well-known claims to verbal inspiration, or perhaps he thought with Voltaire that *Habakkuk était capable de tout*, and wished to shelter himself under the shield of a definitely irresponsible writer none of whose prophecies, according to the French philosopher, has ever been fulfilled. The idea was clever enough at the beginning, but ultimately the manner became monotonous. The spirit of the Hebrews is excellent but their mode of writing is not to be imitated, and no amount of American jokes will give it that modernity which is essential to a good literary style. Admirable as are Mr. Whistler's fireworks on canvas, his fireworks in prose are abrupt, violent and exaggerated. However, oracles, since the days of the Pythia, have never been remarkable for style, and the modest Mr. Wyke Bayliss is as much Mr. Whistler's superior as a writer as he is his inferior as a painter and an artist. Indeed, some of the passages in this book are so charmingly written and with such felicity of phrase that we cannot help feeling that the President of the British Artists, like a still more famous President of our day, can express himself far better through the medium of literature than he can through the medium of line and colour. This, however, applies only to Mr. Wyke Bayliss's prose. His poetry is very bad, and the sonnets at the end of the book are almost as mediocre as the drawings that accompany them. As we read them we cannot but regret that, in this point at any rate, Mr. Bayliss has not imitated the wise example of his predecessor who, with all his faults, was never guilty of writing a line of poetry, and is, indeed, quite incapable of doing anything of the kind.

As for the matter of Mr. Bayliss's discourses, his views on art must be admitted to be very commonplace and old-fashioned. What is the use of telling artists that they should try and paint Nature as she really is? What Nature really is, is a question for metaphysics not for art. Art deals with appearances, and the eye of the man who looks at Nature, the vision, in fact, of the artist, is far more important to us than what he looks at. There is more truth in Corot's aphorism that a landscape is simply 'the mood of a man's mind' than there is in all Mr. Bayliss's laborious disquisitions on naturalism. Again, why does Mr. Bayliss waste a whole chapter in pointing out real or supposed resemblances between a book of his published twelve years ago and an article by Mr. Palgrave which appeared recently in the *Nineteenth Century*? Neither the book nor the article contains anything of real interest, and as for the hundred or more parallel passages which Mr. Wyke Bayliss solemnly prints side by side, most of them are like parallel lines and never meet. The only original proposal that Mr. Bayliss has to offer us is that the House of Commons should, every year, select some important event from national and contemporary history and hand it over to the artists who are to choose from among themselves a man to make a picture of it. In this way Mr. Bayliss believes that we could have the historic art, and suggests as examples of what he means a picture of Florence Nightingale in the hospital at Scutari, a picture of the opening of the first London Board-school, and a picture of the Senate House at Cambridge with the girl graduate receiving a degree 'that shall acknowledge her to be as wise as Merlin himself and leave her still as beautiful as Vivien.' This proposal is, of course, very well meant, but, to say nothing of the danger of leaving historic art at the mercy of a majority in the House of Commons, who would naturally vote for its own view of things, Mr. Bayliss does not seem to realise that a great event is not necessarily a pictorial event. 'The decisive events of the world,' as has been well said, 'take place in the intellect,' and as for Board-schools, academic ceremonies, hospital wards and the like, they may well be left to the artists of the illustrated papers, who do them admirably and quite as well as they need be done. Indeed, the pictures of contemporary events, Royal marriages, naval reviews and things of this kind that appear in the Academy every year, are always extremely bad; while the very same subjects treated in black and white in the *Graphic* or the *London News* are excellent. Besides, if we want to understand the history of a nation through the medium of art, it is to the imaginative and ideal arts that we have to go and not to the arts that are definitely imitative. The visible aspect of life no longer contains for us the secret of life's spirit. Probably it never did contain it. And, if Mr. Barker's *Waterloo Banquet* and Mr. Frith's *Marriage of the Prince of Wales* are examples of healthy historic art, the less we have of such art the better. However, Mr. Bayliss is full of the most ardent faith and speaks quite gravely of genuine portraits of St. John, St. Peter

and St. Paul dating from the first century, and of the establishment by the Israelites of a school of art in the wilderness under the now little appreciated Bezaleel. He is a pleasant, picturesque writer, but he should not speak about art. Art is a sealed book to him.

The Enchanted Island. By Wyke Bayliss, F.S.A., President of the Royal Society of British Artists. (Allen and Co.)

SOME LITERARY NOTES—II

(*Woman's World*, February 1889.)

'The various collectors of Irish folk-lore,' says Mr. W. B. Yeats in his charming little book *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, 'have, from our point of view, one great merit, and from the point of view of others, one great fault.'

They have made their work literature rather than science, and told us of the Irish peasantry rather than of the primitive religion of mankind, or whatever else the folk-lorists are on the gad after. To be considered scientists they should have tabulated all their tales in forms like grocers' bills—item the fairy king, item the queen. Instead of this they have caught the very voice of the people, the very pulse of life, each giving what was most noticed in his day. Croker and Lover, full of the ideas of harum-scarum Irish gentility, saw everything humorised. The impulse of the Irish literature of their time came from a class that did not—mainly for political reasons—take the populace seriously, and imagined the country as a humorist's Arcadia; its passion, its gloom, its tragedy, they knew nothing of. What they did was not wholly false; they merely magnified an irresponsible type, found oftenest among boatmen, carmen, and gentlemen's servants, into the type of a whole nation, and created the stage Irishman. The writers of 'Forty-eight, and the famine combined, burst their bubble. Their work had the dash as well as the shallowness of an ascendant and idle class, and in Croker is touched everywhere with beauty—a gentle Arcadian beauty. Carleton, a peasant born, has in many of his stories, . . . more especially in his ghost stories, a much more serious way with him, for all his humour. Kennedy, an old bookseller in Dublin, who seems to have had a something of genuine belief in the fairies, comes next in time. He has far less literary faculty, but is wonderfully accurate, giving often the very words the stories were told in. But the best book since Croker is Lady Wilde's Ancient Legends. The humour has all given way to pathos and tenderness. We have here the innermost heart of the Celt in the moments he has grown to love through years of persecution, when, cushioning himself about with dreams, and hearing fairy-songs in the twilight, he ponders on the soul and on the dead. Here is the Celt, only it is the Celt dreaming.

Into a volume of very moderate dimensions, and of extremely moderate price, Mr. Yeats has collected together the most characteristic of our Irish folklore stories, grouping them together according to subject. First come *The Trooping Fairies*. The peasants say that these are 'fallen angels who were not good enough to be saved, nor bad enough to be lost'; but the Irish antiquarians see in them 'the gods of pagan Ireland,' who, 'when no longer worshipped and fed with offerings, dwindled away in the popular imagination, and now are only a few spans high.' Their chief occupations are feasting, fighting, making love, and playing the most beautiful music. 'They have only one industrious person amongst them, the *lepra-caun*—the shoemaker.' It is his duty to repair their shoes when they wear them out with dancing. Mr. Yeats tells us that 'near the village of Ballisodare is a little woman who lived amongst them seven years. When she came home she had no toes—she had danced them off.' On May Eve, every seventh year, they fight for the harvest, for the best ears of grain belong to them. An old man informed Mr. Yeats that he saw them fight once, and that they tore the thatch off a house. 'Had any one else been near they would merely have seen a great wind whirling everything into the air as it passed.' When the wind drives the leaves and straws before it, 'that is the fairies, and the peasants take off their hats and say "God bless them."' When they are gay, they sing. Many of the most beautiful tunes of Ireland 'are only their music, caught up by eavesdroppers.' No prudent peasant would hum *The Pretty Girl Milking the Cow* near a fairy rath, 'for they are jealous, and do not like to hear their songs on clumsy mortal lips.' Blake once saw a fairy's funeral. But this, as Mr. Yeats points out, must have been an English fairy, for the Irish fairies never die; they are immortal.

Then come *The Solitary Fairies*, amongst whom we find the little *Lepracaun* mentioned above. He has grown very rich, as he possesses all the treasure-crocks buried in war-time. In the early part of this century, according to Croker, they used to show in Tipperary a little shoe forgotten by the fairy shoemaker. Then there are two rather disreputable little fairies—the *Cluricaun*, who gets intoxicated in gentlemen's cellars, and the Red Man, who plays unkind practical jokes. 'The *Fear-Gorta* (Man of Hunger) is an emaciated phantom that goes through the land in famine time, begging an alms and bringing good luck to the giver.' The *Water-sheerie* is 'own brother to the English Jack-o'-Lantern.' '*The Leanhaun Shee* (fairy mistress) seeks the love of mortals. If they refuse, she must be their slave; if they consent, they are hers, and can only escape by finding another to take their place. The fairy lives on their life, and they waste away. Death is no escape from her. She is the Gaelic muse, for she gives inspiration to those she persecutes. The Gaelic poets die young, for she is restless, and will not let them

remain long on earth.' The *Pooka* is essentially an animal spirit, and some have considered him the forefather of Shakespeare's 'Puck.' He lives on solitary mountains, and among old ruins 'grown monstrous with much solitude,' and 'is of the race of the nightmare.' 'He has many shapes—is now a horse, . . . now a goat, now an eagle. Like all spirits, he is only half in the world of form.' The *banshee* does not care much for our democratic levelling tendencies; she loves only old families, and despises the *parvenu* or the *nouveau riche*. When more than one banshee is present, and they wail and sing in chorus, it is for the death of some holy or great one. An omen that sometimes accompanies the banshee is '. . . an immense black coach, mounted by a coffin, and drawn by headless horses driven by a *Dullahan*.' A *Dullahan* is the most terrible thing in the world. In 1807 two of the sentries stationed outside St. James's Park saw one climbing the railings, and died of fright. Mr. Yeats suggests that they are possibly 'descended from that Irish giant who swam across the Channel with his head in his teeth.'

Then come the stories of ghosts, of saints and priests, and of giants. The ghosts live in a state intermediary between this world and the next. They are held there by some earthly longing or affection, or some duty unfulfilled, or anger against the living; they are those who are too good for hell, and too bad for heaven. Sometimes they 'take the forms of insects, especially of butterflies.' The author of the *Parochial Survey of Ireland* 'heard a woman say to a child who was chasing a butterfly, "How do you know it is not the soul of your grandfather?" On November eve they are abroad, and dance with the fairies.' As for the saints and priests, 'there are no martyrs in the stories.' That ancient chronicler Giraldus Cambrensis 'taunted the Archbishop of Cashel, because no one in Ireland had received the crown of martyrdom. "Our people may be barbarous," the prelate answered, "but they have never lifted their hands against God's saints; but now that a people have come amongst us who know how to make them (it was just after the English invasion), we shall have martyrs plentifully."' The giants were the old pagan heroes of Ireland, who grew bigger and bigger, just as the gods grew smaller and smaller. The fact is they did not wait for offerings; they took them *vi et armis*.

Some of the prettiest stories are those that cluster round *Tír-na-n-Og*. This is the Country of the Young, 'for age and death have not found it; neither tears nor loud laughter have gone near it.' 'One man has gone there and returned. The bard, Oisen, who wandered away on a white horse, moving on the surface of the foam with his fairy Niamh lived there three hundred years, and then returned looking for his comrades. The moment his foot touched the earth his three hundred years fell on him, and he was bowed double, and his beard swept the ground. He described his

sojourn in the Land of Youth to Patrick before he died.' Since then, according to Mr. Yeats, 'many have seen it in many places; some in the depths of lakes, and have heard rising therefrom a vague sound of bells; more have seen it far off on the horizon, as they peered out from the western cliffs. Not three years ago a fisherman imagined that he saw it.'

Mr. Yeats has certainly done his work very well. He has shown great critical capacity in his selection of the stories, and his little introductions are charmingly written. It is delightful to come across a collection of purely imaginative work, and Mr. Yeats has a very quick instinct in finding out the best and the most beautiful things in Irish folklore. I am also glad to see that he has not confined himself entirely to prose, but has included Allingham's lovely poem on *The Fairies*:

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
  For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore
  Some make their home,
They live on crispy pancakes
  Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
  Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs
  All night awake.

High on the hill-top
  The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray
  He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
  Columbkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
  From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music,

On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

All lovers of fairy tales and folklore should get this little book. *The Horned Women*, *The Priest's Soul*, {411} and *Teig O'Kane*, are really marvellous in their way; and, indeed, there is hardly a single story that is not worth reading and thinking over.

The wittiest writer in France at present is a woman. That clever, that *spirituelle grande dame*, who has adopted the pseudonym of 'Gyp,' has in her own country no rival. Her wit, her delicate and delightful *esprit*, her fascinating modernity, and her light, happy touch, give her a unique position in that literary movement which has taken for its object the reproduction of contemporary life. Such books as *Autour du Mariage*, *Autour du Divorce*, and *Le Petit Bob*, are, in their way, little playful masterpieces, and the only work in England that we could compare with them is Violet Fane's *Edwin and Angelina Papers*. To the same brilliant pen which gave us these wise and witty studies of modern life we owe now a more serious, more elaborate production. *Helen Davenant* is as earnestly wrought out as it is cleverly conceived. If it has a fault, it is that it is too full of matter. Out of the same material a more economical writer would have made two novels and half a dozen psychological studies for publication in American magazines. Thackeray once met Bishop Wilberforce at dinner at Dean Stanley's, and, after listening to the eloquent prelate's extraordinary flow and fund of stories, remarked to his neighbour, 'I could not afford to spend at that rate.' Violet Fane is certainly lavishly extravagant of incident, plot, and character. But we must not quarrel with richness of subject-matter at a time when tenuity of purpose and meagreness of motive seem to be becoming the dominant notes of contemporary fiction. The side-issues of the story are so complex that it is difficult, almost impossible, to describe the plot in any adequate manner. The interest centres round a young girl, Helen Davenant by name, who contracts a private and clandestine marriage with one of those mysterious and fascinating foreign noblemen who are becoming so invaluable to writers of fiction, either in narrative or dramatic form. Shortly after the marriage her husband is arrested for a terrible murder committed some years before in Russia, under the evil influence of occult magic and mesmerism. The crime was done in a hypnotic state, and, as described by Violet Fane, seems much more probable than the actual hypnotic experiments recorded in scientific publications. This is the supreme advantage that fiction possesses over fact. It can make things artistically probable; can call for imaginative and realistic credence; can, by force of mere style, compel us to believe. The ordinary novelists, by keeping close to the ordinary incidents of commonplace life, seem to me to abdicate

half their power. Romance, at any rate, welcomes what is wonderful; the temper of wonder is part of her own secret; she loves what is strange and curious. But besides the marvels of occultism and hypnotism, there are many other things in *Helen Davenant* that are worthy of study. Violet Fane writes an admirable style. The opening chapter of the book, with its terrible poignant tragedy, is most powerfully written, and I cannot help wondering that the clever authoress cared to abandon, even for a moment, the superb psychological opportunity that this chapter affords. The touches of nature, the vivid sketches of high life, the subtle renderings of the phases and fancies of society, are also admirably done. *Helen Davenant* is certainly clever, and shows that Violet Fane can write prose that is as good as her verse, and can look at life not merely from the point of view of the poet, but also from the standpoint of the philosopher, the keen observer, the fine social critic. To be a fine social critic is no small thing, and to be able to incorporate in a work of fiction the results of such careful observation is to achieve what is out of the reach of many. The difficulty under which the novelists of our day labour seems to me to be this: if they do not go into society, their books are unreadable; and if they do go into society, they have no time left for writing. However, Violet Fane has solved the problem.

The chronicles which I am about to present to the reader are not the result of any conscious effort of the imagination. They are, as the title-page indicates, records of dreams occurring at intervals during the last ten years, and transcribed, pretty nearly in the order of their occurrence, from my diary. Written down as soon as possible after awaking from the slumber during which they presented themselves, these narratives, necessarily unstudied in style, and wanting in elegance of diction, have at least the merit of fresh and vivid colour; for they were committed to paper at a moment when the effect and impress of each successive vision were strong and forceful on the mind. . . .

The most remarkable features of the experiences I am about to record are the methodical consecutiveness of their sequences, and the intelligent purpose disclosed alike in the events witnessed and in the words heard or read. . . . I know of no parallel to this phenomenon, unless in the pages of Bulwer Lytton's romance entitled The Pilgrims of the Rhine, in which is related the story of a German student endowed with so marvellous a faculty of dreaming, that for him the normal conditions of sleeping and waking became reversed; his true life was that which he lived in his slumbers, and his hours of wakefulness appeared to him as so many uneventful and inactive intervals of arrest, occurring in an existence of intense and vivid interest which was wholly passed in the hypnotic state. . . .

During the whole period covered by these dreams I have been busily and almost continuously engrossed with scientific and literary pursuits, demanding accurate judgment and complete self-possession and rectitude of mind. At the time when many of the most vivid and remarkable visions occurred I was following my course as a student at the Paris Faculty of Medicine, preparing for examinations, daily visiting hospital wards as dresser, and attending lectures. Later, when I had taken my degree, I was engaged in the duties of my profession and in writing for the Press on scientific subjects. Neither had I ever taken opium, haschish, or other dream-producing agent. A cup of tea or coffee represents the extent of my indulgences in this direction. I mention these details in order to guard against inferences which might otherwise be drawn as to the genesis of my faculty.

It may, perhaps, be worthy of notice that by far the larger number of the dreams set down in this volume occurred towards dawn; sometimes even, after sunrise, during a 'second sleep.' A condition of fasting, united possibly with some subtle magnetic or other atmospheric state, seems, therefore, to be that most open to impressions of the kind.

This is the account given by the late Dr. Anna Kingsford of the genesis of her remarkable volume, *Dreams and Dream-Stories*; and certainly some of the stories, especially those entitled *Steepside*, *Beyond the Sunset*, and *The Village of Seers*, are well worth reading, though not intrinsically finer, either in motive or idea, than the general run of magazine stories. No one who had the privilege of knowing Mrs. Kingsford, who was one of the brilliant women of our day, can doubt for a single moment that these tales came to her in the way she describes; but to me the result is just a little disappointing. Perhaps, however, I expect too much. There is no reason whatsoever why the imagination should be finer in hours of dreaming than in its hours of waking. Mrs. Kingsford quotes a letter written by Jamblichus to Agathocles, in which he says: 'The soul has a twofold life, a lower and a higher. In sleep the soul is liberated from the constraint of the body, and enters, as an emancipated being, on its divine life of intelligence. The nobler part of the mind is thus united by abstraction to higher natures, and becomes a participant in the wisdom and foreknowledge of the gods. . . . The night-time of the body is the day-time of the soul.' But the great masterpieces of literature and the great secrets of wisdom have not been communicated in this way; and even in Coleridge's case, though *Kubla Khan* is wonderful, it is not more wonderful, while it is certainly less complete, than the *Ancient Mariner*.

As for the dreams themselves, which occupy the first portion of the book, their value, of course, depends chiefly on the value of the truths or predictions which they are

supposed to impart. I must confess that most modern mysticism seems to me to be simply a method of imparting useless knowledge in a form that no one can understand. Allegory, parable, and vision have their high artistic uses, but their philosophical and scientific uses are very small. However, here is one of Mrs. Kingsford's dreams. It has a pleasant quaintness about it:

THE WONDERFUL SPECTACLES

I was walking alone on the sea-shore. The day was singularly clear and sunny. Inland lay the most beautiful landscape ever seen; and far off were ranges of tall hills, the highest peaks of which were white with glittering snows. Along the sands by the sea came towards me a man accoutred as a postman. He gave me a letter. It was from you. It ran thus:

'I have got hold of the earliest and most precious book extant. It was written before the world began. The text is easy enough to read; but the notes, which are very copious and numerous, are in such minute and obscure characters that I cannot make them out. I want you to get for me the spectacles which Swedenborg used to wear; not the smaller pair—those he gave to Hans Christian Andersen—but the large pair, and these seem to have got mislaid. I think they are Spinoza's make. You know, he was an optical-glass maker by profession, and the best we ever had. See if you can get them for me.'

When I looked up after reading this letter I saw the postman hastening away across the sands, and I cried out to him, 'Stop! how am I to send the answer? Will you not wait for it?'

He looked round, stopped, and came back to me.

'I have the answer here,' he said, tapping his letter-bag, 'and I shall deliver it immediately.'

'How can you have the answer before I have written it?' I asked. 'You are making a mistake.'

'No,' he said. 'In the city from which I come the replies are all written at the office, and sent out with the letters themselves. Your reply is in my bag.'

'Let me see it,' I said. He took another letter from his wallet, and gave it to me. I opened it, and read, in my own handwriting, this answer, addressed to you:

'The spectacles you want can be bought in London; but you will not be able to use them at once, for they have not been worn for many years, and they sadly want

cleaning. This you will not be able to do yourself in London, because it is too dark there to see well, and because your fingers are not small enough to clean them properly. Bring them here to me, and I will do it for you.'

I gave this letter back to the postman. He smiled and nodded at me; and then I perceived, to my astonishment, that he wore a camel's-hair tunic round his waist. I had been on the point of addressing him—I know not why—as Hermes. But I now saw that he must be John the Baptist; and in my fright at having spoken to so great a Saint I awoke.

Mr. Maitland, who edits the present volume, and who was joint-author with Mrs. Kingsford of that curious book *The Perfect Way*, states in a footnote that in the present instance the dreamer knew nothing of Spinoza at the time, and was quite unaware that he was an optician; and the interpretation of the dream, as given by him, is that the spectacles in question were intended to represent Mrs. Kingsford's remarkable faculty of intuitional and interpretative perception. For a spiritual message fraught with such meaning, the mere form of this dream seems to me somewhat ignoble, and I cannot say that I like the blending of the postman with St. John the Baptist. However, from a psychological point of view, these dreams are interesting, and Mrs. Kingsford's book is undoubtedly a valuable addition to the literature of the mysticism of the nineteenth century.

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The Romance of a Shop, by Miss Amy Levy, is a more mundane book, and deals with the adventures of some young ladies who open a photographic studio in Baker Street to the horror of some of their fashionable relatives. It is so brightly and pleasantly written that the sudden introduction of a tragedy into it seems violent and unnecessary. It lacks the true tragic temper, and without this temper in literature all misfortunes and miseries seem somewhat mean and ordinary. With this exception the book is admirably done, and the style is clever and full of quick observation. Observation is perhaps the most valuable faculty for a writer of fiction. When novelists reflect and moralise, they are, as a rule, dull. But to observe life with keen vision and quick intellect, to catch its many modes of expression, to seize upon the subtlety, or satire, or dramatic quality of its situations, and to render life for us with some spirit of distinction and fine selection—this, I fancy, should be the aim of the modern realistic novelist. It would be, perhaps, too much to say that Miss Levy has distinction; this is the rarest quality in modern literature, though not a few of its masters are modern; but she has many other qualities which are admirable.

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Faithful and Unfaithful is a powerful but not very pleasing novel. However, the object of most modern fiction is not to give pleasure to the artistic instinct, but rather to portray life vividly for us, to draw attention to social anomalies, and social forms of injustice. Many of our novelists are really pamphleteers, reformers masquerading as story-tellers, earnest sociologists seeking to mend as well as to mirror life. The heroine, or rather martyr, of Miss Margaret Lee's story is a very noble and graciously Puritanic American girl, who is married at the age of eighteen to a man whom she insists on regarding as a hero. Her husband cannot live in the high rarefied atmosphere of idealism with which she surrounds him; her firm and fearless faith in him becomes a factor in his degradation. 'You are too good for me,' he says to her in a finely conceived scene at the end of the book; 'we have not an idea, an inclination, or a passion in common. I'm sick and tired of seeming to live up to a standard that is entirely beyond my reach and my desire. We make each other miserable! I can't pull you down, and for ten years you have been exhausting yourself in vain efforts to raise me to your level. The thing must end!' He asks her to divorce him, but she refuses. He then abandons her, and availing himself of those curious facilities for breaking the marriage-tie that prevail in the United States, succeeds in divorcing her without her consent, and without her knowledge. The book is certainly characteristic of an age so practical and so literary as ours, an age in which all social reforms have been preceded and have been largely influenced by fiction. *Faithful and Unfaithful* seems to point to some coming change in the marriage-laws of America.

(1) *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*. Edited and Selected by W. B. Yeats. (Walter Scott.)

(2) *Helen Davenant*. By Violet Fane. (Chapman and Hall.)

(3) *Dreams and Dream-Stories*. By Dr. Anna Kingsford. (Redway.)

(4) *The Romance of a Shop*. By Amy Levy. (Fisher Unwin.)

(5) *Faithful and Unfaithful*. By Margaret Lee. (Macmillan and Co.)