

ONE OF THE BIBLES OF THE WORLD

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 12, 1889.)

The Kalevala is one of those poems that Mr. William Morris once described as 'The Bibles of the World.' It takes its place as a national epic beside the Homeric poems, the Niebelunge, the Shahnameth and the Mahabharata, and the admirable translation just published by Mr. John Martin Crawford is sure to be welcomed by all scholars and lovers of primitive poetry. In his very interesting preface Mr. Crawford claims for the Finns that they began earlier than any other European nation to collect and preserve their ancient folklore. In the seventeenth century we meet men of literary tastes like Palmsköld who tried to collect and interpret the various national songs of the fenn-dwellers of the North. But the *Kalevala* proper was collected by two great Finnish scholars of our own century, Zacharias Topelius and Elias Lönnrot. Both were practising physicians, and in this capacity came into frequent contact with the people of Finland. Topelius, who collected eighty epical fragments of the *Kalevala*, spent the last eleven years of his life in bed, afflicted with a fatal disease. This misfortune, however, did not damp his enthusiasm. Mr. Crawford tells us that he used to invite the wandering Finnish merchants to his bedside and induce them to sing their heroic poems which he copied down as soon as they were uttered, and that whenever he heard of a renowned Finnish minstrel he did all in his power to bring the song-man to his house in order that he might gather new fragments of the national epic. Lönnrot travelled over the whole country, on horseback, in reindeer sledges and in canoes, collecting the old poems and songs from the hunters, the fishermen and the shepherds. The people gave him every assistance, and he had the good fortune to come across an old peasant, one of the oldest of the *runolainen* in the Russian province of Wuokinlem, who was by far the most renowned song-man of the country, and from him he got many of the most splendid runes of the poem. And certainly the *Kalevala*, as it stands, is one of the world's great poems. It is perhaps hardly accurate to describe it as an epic. It lacks the central unity of a true epic in our sense of the word. It has many heroes beside Wainomoinen and is, properly speaking, a collection of folk-songs and ballads. Of its antiquity there is no doubt. It is thoroughly pagan from beginning to end, and even the legend of the Virgin Mariatta to whom the Sun tells where 'her golden babe lies hidden'—

Yonder is thy golden infant,
There thy holy babe lies sleeping
Hidden to his belt in water,
Hidden in the reeds and rushes—

is, according to all scholars, essentially pre-Christian in origin. The gods are chiefly gods of air and water and forest. The highest is the sky-god Ukks who is 'The Father of the Breezes,' 'The Shepherd of the Lamb-Clouds'; the lightning is his sword, the rainbow is his bow; his skirt sparkles with fire, his stockings are blue and his shoes crimson-coloured. The daughters of the Sun and Moon sit on the scarlet rims of the clouds and weave the rays of light into a gleaming web. Untar presides over fogs and mists, and passes them through a silver sieve before sending them to the earth. Ahto, the wave-god, lives with 'his cold and cruel-hearted spouse,' Wellamo, at the bottom of the sea in the chasm of the Salmon-Rocks, and possesses the priceless treasure of the Sampo, the talisman of success. When the branches of the primitive oak-trees shut out the light of the sun from the Northland, Pikku-Mies (the Pygmy) emerged from the sea in a suit of copper, with a copper hatchet in his belt, and having grown to a giant's stature felled the huge oak with the third stroke of his axe. Wirokannas is 'The Green-robed Priest of the Forest,' and Tapio, who has a coat of tree-moss and a high-crowned hat of fir-leaves, is 'The Gracious God of the Woodlands.' Otso, the bear, is the 'Honey-Paw of the Mountains,' the 'Fur-robed Forest Friend.' In everything, visible and invisible, there is God, a divine presence. There are three worlds, and they are all peopled with divinities.

As regards the poem itself, it is written in trochaic eight-syllabled lines with alliteration and the part-line echo, the metre which Longfellow adopted for *Hiawatha*. One of its distinguishing characteristics is its wonderful passion for nature and for the beauty of natural objects. Lemenkainen says to Tapio:

Sable-bearded God of forests,
In thy hat and coat of ermine,
Robe thy trees in finest fibres,
Deck thy groves in richest fabrics,
Give the fir-trees shining silver,
Deck with gold the slender balsams,
Give the spruces copper-belting,
And the pine-trees silver girdles,
Give the birches golden flowers,
Deck their stems with silver fretwork,
This their garb in former ages
When the days and nights were brighter,
When the fir-trees shone like sunlight,
And the birches like the moonbeams;
Honey breathe throughout the forest,

Settled in the glens and highlands,
Spices in the meadow-borders,
Oil outpouring from the lowlands.

All handicrafts and art-work are, as in Homer, elaborately described:

Then the smiter Ilmarinen
The eternal artist-forgeman,
In the furnace forged an eagle
From the fire of ancient wisdom,
For this giant bird of magic
Forged he talons out of iron,
And his beak of steel and copper;
Seats himself upon the eagle,
On his back between the wing-bones
Thus addresses he his creature,
Gives the bird of fire this order.
Mighty eagle, bird of beauty,
Fly thou whither I direct thee,
To Tuoni's coal-black river,
To the blue-depths of the Death-stream,
Seize the mighty fish of Mana,
Catch for me this water-monster.

And Wainamoinen's boat-building is one of the great incidents of the poem:

Wainamoinen old and skilful,
The eternal wonder-worker,
Builds his vessel with enchantment,
Builds his boat by art and magic,
From the timber of the oak-tree,
Forms its posts and planks and flooring.
Sings a song and joins the framework;
Sings a second, sets the siding;
Sings a third time, sets the rowlocks;
Fashions oars, and ribs, and rudder,
Joins the sides and ribs together.

.....

Now he decks his magic vessel,
Paints the boat in blue and scarlet,
Trims in gold the ship's fore-castle,
Decks the prow in molten silver;
Sings his magic ship down gliding,
On the cylinders of fir-tree;
Now erects the masts of pine-wood,
On each mast the sails of linen,
Sails of blue, and white, and scarlet,
Woven into finest fabric.

All the characteristics of a splendid antique civilisation are mirrored in this marvellous poem, and Mr. Crawford's admirable translation should make the wonderful heroes of Suomi song as familiar if not as dear to our people as the heroes of the great Ionian epic.

The Kalevala, the Epic Poem of Finland. Translated into English by John Martin Crawford. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

POETICAL SOCIALISTS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 15, 1889.)

Mr. Stopford Brooke said some time ago that Socialism and the socialistic spirit would give our poets nobler and loftier themes for song, would widen their sympathies and enlarge the horizon of their vision and would touch, with the fire and fervour of a new faith, lips that had else been silent, hearts that but for this fresh gospel had been cold. What Art gains from contemporary events is always a fascinating problem and a problem that is not easy to solve. It is, however, certain that Socialism starts well equipped. She has her poets and her painters, her art lecturers and her cunning designers, her powerful orators and her clever writers. If she fails it will not be for lack of expression. If she succeeds her triumph will not be a triumph of mere brute force. The first thing that strikes one, as one looks over the list of contributors to Mr. Edward Carpenter's *Chants of Labour*, is the curious variety of their several occupations, the wide differences of social position that exist between them, and the strange medley of men whom a common passion has for the moment united. The editor is a 'Science lecturer'; he is followed by a draper and a porter; then we have two late Eton masters and then two bootmakers; and these are, in their turn, succeeded by an ex-Lord Mayor of Dublin, a bookbinder, a photographer, a steel-worker and an authoress. On one page we have a journalist, a draughtsman and a music-teacher: and on another a Civil servant, a machine fitter, a medical student, a cabinet-maker

and a minister of the Church of Scotland. Certainly, it is no ordinary movement that can bind together in close brotherhood men of such dissimilar pursuits, and when we mention that Mr. William Morris is one of the singers, and that Mr. Walter Crane has designed the cover and frontispiece of the book, we cannot but feel that, as we pointed out before, Socialism starts well equipped.

As for the songs themselves, some of them, to quote from the editor's preface, are 'purely revolutionary, others are Christian in tone; there are some that might be called merely material in their tendency, while many are of a highly ideal and visionary character.' This is, on the whole, very promising. It shows that Socialism is not going to allow herself to be trammelled by any hard and fast creed or to be stereotyped into an iron formula. She welcomes many and multiform natures. She rejects none and has room for all. She has the attraction of a wonderful personality and touches the heart of one and the brain of another, and draws this man by his hatred of injustice, and his neighbour by his faith in the future, and a third, it may be, by his love of art or by his wild worship of a lost and buried past. And all of this is well. For, to make men Socialists is nothing, but to make Socialism human is a great thing.

They are not of any very high literary value, these poems that have been so dexterously set to music. They are meant to be sung, not to be read. They are rough, direct and vigorous, and the tunes are stirring and familiar. Indeed, almost any mob could warble them with ease. The transpositions that have been made are rather amusing. *'Twas in Trafalgar Square* is set to the tune of *'Twas in Trafalgar's Bay; Up, Ye People!* a very revolutionary song by Mr. John Gregory, boot-maker, with a refrain of
Up, ye People! or down into your graves!

Cowards ever will be slaves!

is to be sung to the tune of *Rule, Britannia!* the old melody of *The Vicar of Bray* is to accompany the new *Ballade of Law and Order*—which, however, is not a ballade at all—and to the air of *Here's to the Maiden of Bashful Fifteen* the democracy of the future is to thunder forth one of Mr. T. D. Sullivan's most powerful and pathetic lyrics. It is clear that the Socialists intend to carry on the musical education of the people simultaneously with their education in political science and, here as elsewhere, they seem to be entirely free from any narrow bias or formal prejudice. Mendelssohn is followed by Moody and Sankey; the *Wacht am Rhein* stands side by side with the *Marseillaise*; *Lillibulero*, a chorus from *Norma*, *John Brown* and an air from Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* are all equally delightful to them. They sing the National Anthem in Shelley's version and chant William Morris's *Voice of Toil* to the flowing numbers of *Ye Banks and Braes of Bonny*

Doon. Victor Hugo talks somewhere of the terrible cry of 'Le Tigre Populaire,' but it is evident from Mr. Carpenter's book that should the Revolution ever break out in England we shall have no inarticulate roar but, rather, pleasant glees and graceful part-songs. The change is certainly for the better. Nero fiddled while Rome was burning—at least, inaccurate historians say he did; but it is for the building up of an eternal city that the Socialists of our day are making music, and they have complete confidence in the art instincts of the people.

They say that the people are brutal—
That their instincts of beauty are dead—
Were it so, shame on those who condemn them
To the desperate struggle for bread.
But they lie in their throats when they say it,
For the people are tender at heart,
And a wellspring of beauty lies hidden
Beneath their life's fever and smart,

is a stanza from one of the poems in this volume, and the feeling expressed in these words is paramount everywhere. The Reformation gained much from the use of popular hymn-tunes, and the Socialists seem determined to gain by similar means a similar hold upon the people. However, they must not be too sanguine about the result. The walls of Thebes rose up to the sound of music, and Thebes was a very dull city indeed.

Chants of Labour: A Song-Book of the People. With Music. Edited by Edward Carpenter. With Designs by Walter Crane. (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.)

MR. BRANDER MATTHEWS' ESSAYS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, February 27, 1889.)

'If you to have your book criticized favorably, give yourself a good notice in the Preface!' is the golden rule laid down for the guidance of authors by Mr. Brander Matthews in an amusing essay on the art of preface-writing and, true to his own theory, he announces his volume as 'the most interesting, the most entertaining, and the most instructive book of the decade.' Entertaining it certainly is in parts. The essay on Poker, for instance, is very brightly and pleasantly written. Mr. Proctor objected to Poker on the somewhat trivial ground that it was a form of lying, and on the more serious ground that it afforded special opportunities for cheating; and, indeed, he regarded the mere existence of the game outside gambling dens as 'one of the most portentous phenomena of American civilisation.' Mr. Brander Matthews

points out, in answer to these grave charges, that Bluffing is merely a *suppressio veri* and that it requires a great deal of physical courage on the part of the player. As for the cheating, he claims that Poker affords no more opportunities for the exercise of this art than either Whist or Ecarté, though he admits that the proper attitude towards an opponent whose good luck is unduly persistent is that of the German-American who, finding four aces in his hand, was naturally about to bet heavily, when a sudden thought struck him and he inquired, 'Who dole dem carts?' 'Jakey Einstein' was the answer. 'Jakey Einstein?' he repeated, laying down his hand; 'den I pass out.'

The history of the game will be found very interesting by all card-lovers. Like most of the distinctly national products of America, it seems to have been imported from abroad and can be traced back to an Italian game in the fifteenth century. Euchre was probably acclimatised on the Mississippi by the Canadian *voyageurs*, being a form of the French game of *Triomphe*. It was a Kentucky citizen who, desiring to give his sons a few words of solemn advice for their future guidance in life, had them summoned to his deathbed and said to them, 'Boys, when you go down the river to Orleans jest you beware of a game called Yucker where the jack takes the ace;—it's unchristian!'—after which warning he lay back and died in peace. And 'it was Euchre which the two gentlemen were playing in a boat on the Missouri River when a bystander, shocked by the frequency with which one of the players turned up the jack, took the liberty of warning the other player that the winner was dealing from the bottom, to which the loser, secure in his power of self-protection, answered gruffly, "Well, suppose he is—it's his deal, isn't it?"'

The chapter *On the Antiquity of Jests*, with its suggestion of an International Exhibition of Jokes, is capital. Such an exhibition, Mr. Matthews remarks, would at least dispel any lingering belief in the old saying that there are only thirty-eight good stories in existence and that thirty-seven of these cannot be told before ladies; and the Retrospective Section would certainly be the constant resort of any true folklorist. For most of the good stories of our time are really folklore, myth survivals, echoes of the past. The two well-known American proverbs, 'We have had a hell of a time' and 'Let the other man walk' are both traced back by Mr. Matthews: the first to Walpole's letters, and the other to a story Poggio tells of an inhabitant of Perugia who walked in melancholy because he could not pay his debts. 'Vah, stulte,' was the advice given to him, 'leave anxiety to your creditors!' and even Mr. William M. Evart's brilliant repartee when he was told that Washington once threw a dollar across the Natural Bridge in Virginia, 'In those days a dollar went so much farther than it does now!' seems to be the direct descendant of a witty remark of Foote's, though we must say that in this case we prefer the child to the father. The essay *On the French Spoken by Those who*

do not Speak French is also cleverly written and, indeed, on every subject, except literature, Mr. Matthews is well worth reading.

On literature and literary subjects he is certainly 'sadly to seek.' The essay on *The Ethics of Plagiarism*, with its laborious attempt to rehabilitate Mr. Rider Haggard and its foolish remarks on Poe's admirable paper *Mr. Longfellow and Other Plagiarists*, is extremely dull and commonplace and, in the elaborate comparison that he draws between Mr. Frederick Locker and Mr. Austin Dobson, the author of *Pen and Ink* shows that he is quite devoid of any real critical faculty or of any fine sense of the difference between ordinary society verse and the exquisite work of a very perfect artist in poetry. We have no objection to Mr. Matthews likening Mr. Locker to Mr. du Maurier, and Mr. Dobson to Randolph Caldecott and Mr. Edwin Abbey. Comparisons of this kind, though extremely silly, do not do much harm. In fact, they mean nothing and are probably not intended to mean anything. Upon the other hand, we really must protest against Mr. Matthews' efforts to confuse the poetry of Piccadilly with the poetry of Parnassus. To tell us, for instance, that Mr. Austin Dobson's verse 'has not the condensed clearness nor the incisive vigor of Mr. Locker's' is really too bad even for Transatlantic criticism. Nobody who lays claim to the slightest knowledge of literature and the forms of literature should ever bring the two names into conjunction. Mr. Locker has written some pleasant *vers de société*, some tuneful trifles in rhyme admirably suited for ladies' albums and for magazines. But to mention Herrick and Suckling and Mr. Austin Dobson in connection with him is absurd. He is not a poet. Mr. Dobson, upon the other hand, has produced work that is absolutely classical in its exquisite beauty of form. Nothing more artistically perfect in its way than the *Lines to a Greek Girl* has been written in our time. This little poem will be remembered in literature as long as *Thyrsis* is remembered, and *Thyrsis* will never be forgotten. Both have that note of distinction that is so rare in these days of violence, exaggeration and rhetoric. Of course, to suggest, as Mr. Matthews does, that Mr. Dobson's poems belong to 'the literature of power' is ridiculous. Power is not their aim, nor is it their effect. They have other qualities, and in their own delicately limited sphere they have no contemporary rivals; they have none even second to them. However, Mr. Matthews is quite undaunted and tries to drag poor Mr. Locker out of Piccadilly, where he was really quite in his element, and to set him on Parnassus where he has no right to be and where he would not claim to be. He praises his work with the recklessness of an eloquent auctioneer. These very commonplace and slightly vulgar lines on *A Human Skull*:

It may have held (to shoot some random shots)

Thy brains, Eliza Fry! or Baron Byron's;

The wits of Nelly Gwynne or Doctor Watts—
Two quoted bards. Two philanthropic sirens.

But this, I trust, is clearly understood,
If man or woman, if adored or hated—
Whoever own'd this Skull was not so good
Nor quite so bad as many may have stated;

are considered by him to be 'sportive and brightsome' and full of 'playful humor,' and 'two things especially are to be noted in them—individuality and directness of expression.' Individuality and directness of expression! We wonder what Mr. Matthews thinks these words mean.

Unfortunate Mr. Locker with his uncouth American admirer! How he must blush to read these heavy panegyrics! Indeed, Mr. Matthews himself has at least one fit of remorse for his attempt to class Mr. Locker's work with the work of Mr. Austin Dobson, but like most fits of remorse it leads to nothing. On the very next page we have the complaint that Mr. Dobson's verse has not 'the condensed clearness' and the 'incisive vigor' of Mr. Locker's. Mr. Matthews should confine himself to his clever journalistic articles on Euchre, Poker, bad French and old jokes. On these subjects he can, to use an expression of his own, 'write funny.' He 'writes funny,' too, upon literature, but the fun is not quite so amusing.

Pen and Ink: Papers on Subjects of More or Less Importance. By Brander Matthews. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

SOME LITERARY NOTES—III

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

Miss Nesbit has already made herself a name as a writer of graceful and charming verse, and though her last volume, *Leaves of Life*, does not show any distinct advance on her former work, it still fully maintains the high standard already achieved, and justifies the reputation of the author. There are some wonderfully pretty poems in it, poems full of quick touches of fancy, and of pleasant ripples of rhyme; and here and there a poignant note of passion flashes across the song, as a scarlet thread flashes through the shuttlerace of a loom, giving a new value to the delicate tints, and bringing the scheme of colour to a higher and more perfect key. In Miss Nesbit's earlier volume, the *Lays and Legends*, as it was called, there was an attempt to give poetic form to humanitarian dreams and socialistic aspirations; but the poems that dealt with these subjects were, on the whole, the least successful of the collection; and with the quick, critical instinct of an artist, Miss Nesbit seems to have recognised

this. In the present volume, at any rate, such poems are rare, and these few felicitous verses give us the poet's defence:

A singer sings of rights and wrongs,
Of world's ideals vast and bright,
And feels the impotence of songs
To scourge the wrong or help the right;
And only writhes to feel how vain
Are songs as weapons for his fight;
And so he turns to love again,
And sings of love for heart's delight.

For heart's delight the singers bind
The wreath of roses round the head,
And will not loose it lest they find
Time victor, and the roses dead.
'Man can but sing of what he knows—
I saw the roses fresh and red!'
And so they sing the deathless rose,
With withered roses garlanded.

And some within their bosom hide
Their rose of love still fresh and fair,
And walk in silence, satisfied
To keep its folded fragrance rare.
And some—who bear a flag unfurled—
Wreath with their rose the flag they bear,
And sing their banner for the world,
And for their heart the roses there.

Yet thus much choice in singing is;
We sing the good, the true, the just,
Passionate duty turned to bliss,
And honour growing out of trust.
Freedom we sing, and would not lose
Her lightest footprint in life's dust.
We sing of her because we choose,
We sing of love because we must.

Certainly Miss Nesbit is at her best when she sings of love and nature. Here she is close to her subject, and her temperament gives colour and form to the various

dramatic moods that are either suggested by Nature herself or brought to Nature for interpretation. This, for instance, is very sweet and graceful:

When all the skies with snow were grey,
And all the earth with snow was white,
I wandered down a still wood way,
And there I met my heart's delight
Slow moving through the silent wood,
The spirit of its solitude:
The brown birds and the lichen'd tree
Seemed less a part of it than she.

Where pheasants' feet and rabbits' feet
Had marked the snow with traces small,
I saw the footprints of my sweet—
The sweetest woodland thing of all.
With Christmas roses in her hand,
One heart-beat's space I saw her stand;
And then I let her pass, and stood
Lone in an empty world of wood.

And though by that same path I've passed
Down that same woodland every day,
That meeting was the first and last,
And she is hopelessly away.
I wonder was she really there—
Her hands, and eyes, and lips, and hair?
Or was it but my dreaming sent
Her image down the way I went?

Empty the woods are where we met—
They will be empty in the spring;
The cowslip and the violet
Will die without her gathering.
But dare I dream one radiant day
Red rose-wreathed she will pass this way
Across the glad and honoured grass;
And then—I will not let her pass.

And this Dedication, with its tender silver-grey notes of colour, is charming:

In any meadow where your feet may tread,
In any garland that your love may wear,
May be the flower whose hidden fragrance shed
Wakes some old hope or numbs some old despair,
And makes life's grief not quite so hard to bear,
And makes life's joy more poignant and more dear
Because of some delight dead many a year.

Or in some cottage garden there may be
The flower whose scent is memory for you;
The sturdy southern-wood, the frail sweet-pea,
Bring back the swallow's cheep, the pigeon's coo,
And youth, and hope, and all the dreams they knew,
The evening star, the hedges grey with mist,
The silent porch where Love's first kiss was kissed.

So in my garden may you chance to find
Or royal rose or quiet meadow flower,
Whose scent may be with some dear dream entwined,
And give you back the ghost of some sweet hour,
As lilies fragrant from an August shower,
Or airs of June that over bean-fields blow,
Bring back the sweetness of my long ago.

All through the volume we find the same dexterous refining of old themes, which is indeed the best thing that our lesser singers can give us, and a thing always delightful. There is no garden so well tilled but it can bear another blossom, and though the subject-matter of Miss Nesbit's book is as the subject-matter of almost all books of poetry, she can certainly lend a new grace and a subtle sweetness to almost everything on which she writes.

The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems is from the clever pen of Mr. W. B. Yeats, whose charming anthology of Irish fairy-tales I had occasion to notice in a recent number of the *Woman's World*. [\[437\]](#) It is, I believe, the first volume of poems that Mr. Yeats has published, and it is certainly full of promise. It must be admitted that many of the poems are too fragmentary, too incomplete. They read like stray scenes out of unfinished plays, like things only half remembered, or, at best, but dimly seen. But the architectonic power of construction, the power to build up and make perfect a harmonious whole, is nearly always the latest, as it certainly is the highest, development of the artistic temperament. It is somewhat unfair to expect it in early

work. One quality Mr. Yeats has in a marked degree, a quality that is not common in the work of our minor poets, and is therefore all the more welcome to us—I mean the romantic temper. He is essentially Celtic, and his verse, at its best, is Celtic also. Strongly influenced by Keats, he seems to study how to ‘load every rift with ore,’ yet is more fascinated by the beauty of words than by the beauty of metrical music. The spirit that dominates the whole book is perhaps more valuable than any individual poem or particular passage, but this from *The Wanderings of Oisín* is worth quoting. It describes the ride to the Island of Forgetfulness:

And the ears of the horse went sinking away in the hollow light,
For, as drift from a sailor slow drowning the gleams of the world and the sun,
Ceased on our hands and faces, on hazel and oak leaf, the light,
And the stars were blotted above us, and the whole of the world was one;

Till the horse gave a whinny; for cumbrous with stems of the hazel and oak,
Of hollies, and hazels, and oak-trees, a valley was sloping away
From his hoofs in the heavy grasses, with monstrous slumbering folk,
Their mighty and naked and gleaming bodies heaped loose where they lay.

More comely than man may make them, inlaid with silver and gold,
Were arrow and shield and war-axe, arrow and spear and blade,
And dew-blanchèd horns, in whose hollows a child of three years old
Could sleep on a couch of rushes, round and about them laid.

And this, which deals with the old legend of the city lying under the waters of a lake, is strange and interesting:

The maker of the stars and worlds
Sat underneath the market cross,
And the old men were walking, walking,
And little boys played pitch-and-toss.

‘The props,’ said He, ‘of stars and worlds
Are prayers of patient men and good.’
The boys, the women, and old men,
Listening, upon their shadows stood.

A grey professor passing cried,
‘How few the mind’s intemperance rule!
What shallow thoughts about deep things!
The world grows old and plays the fool.’

The mayor came, leaning his left ear—
There were some talking of the poor—
And to himself cried, 'Communist!'
And hurried to the guardhouse door.

The bishop came with open book,
Whispering along the sunny path;
There was some talking of man's God,
His God of stupor and of wrath.

The bishop murmured, 'Atheist!
How sinfully the wicked scoff!'
And sent the old men on their way,
And drove the boys and women off.

The place was empty now of people;
A cock came by upon his toes;
An old horse looked across the fence,
And rubbed along the rail his nose.

The maker of the stars and worlds
To His own house did Him betake,
And on that city dropped a tear,
And now that city is a lake.

Mr. Yeats has a great deal of invention, and some of the poems in his book, such as *Mosada*, *Jealousy*, and *The Island of Statues*, are very finely conceived. It is impossible to doubt, after reading his present volume, that he will some day give us work of high import. Up to this he has been merely trying the strings of his instrument, running over the keys.

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Lady Munster's *Dorinda* is an exceedingly clever novel. The heroine is a sort of well-born Becky Sharp, only much more beautiful than Becky, or at least than Thackeray's portraits of her, which, however, have always seemed to me rather ill-natured. I feel sure that Mrs. Rawdon Crawley was extremely pretty, and I have never understood how it was that Thackeray could caricature with his pencil so fascinating a creation of his pen. In the first chapter of Lady Munster's novel we find Dorinda at a fashionable school, and the sketches of the three old ladies who preside over the select seminary are very amusing. Dorinda is not very popular, and grave suspicions rest upon her of having stolen a cheque. This is a startling *début* for a heroine, and I was a little afraid

at first that Dorinda, after undergoing endless humiliations, would be proved innocent in the last chapter. It was quite a relief to find that Dorinda was guilty. In fact, Dorinda is a kleptomaniac; that is to say, she is a member of the upper classes who spends her time in collecting works of art that do not belong to her. This, however, is only one of her accomplishments, and it does not occupy any important place in the story till the last volume is reached. Here we find Dorinda married to a Styrian Prince, and living in the luxury for which she had always longed. Unfortunately, while staying in the house of a friend she is detected stealing some rare enamels. Her punishment, as described by Lady Munster, is extremely severe; and when she finally commits suicide, maddened by the imprisonment to which her husband had subjected her, it is difficult not to feel a good deal of pity for her. Lady Munster writes a very clever, bright style, and has a wonderful faculty of drawing in a few sentences the most lifelike portraits of social types and social exceptions. Sir Jasper Broke and his sister, the Duke and Duchess of Cheviotdale, Lord and Lady Glenalmond, and Lord Baltimore, are all admirably drawn. The 'novel of high life,' as it used to be called, has of late years fallen into disrepute. Instead of duchesses in Mayfair, we have philanthropic young ladies in Whitechapel; and the fashionable and brilliant young dandies, in whom Disraeli and Bulwer Lytton took such delight, have been entirely wiped out as heroes of fiction by hardworking curates in the East End. The aim of most of our modern novelists seems to be, not to write good novels, but to write novels that will do good; and I am afraid that they are under the impression that fashionable life is not an edifying subject. They wish to reform the morals, rather than to portray the manners of their age. They have made the novel the mode of propaganda. It is possible, however, that *Dorinda* points to some coming change, and certainly it would be a pity if the Muse of Fiction confined her attention entirely to the East End.

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The four remarkable women whom Mrs. Walford has chosen as the subjects of her *Four Biographies from 'Blackwood'* are Jane Taylor, Elizabeth Fry, Hannah More, and Mary Somerville. Perhaps it is too much to say that Jane Taylor is remarkable. In her day she was said to have been 'known to four continents,' and Sir Walter Scott described her as 'among the first women of her time'; but no one now cares to read *Essays in Rhyme*, or *Display*, though the latter is really a very clever novel and full of capital things. Elizabeth Fry is, of course, one of the great personalities of this century, at any rate in the particular sphere to which she devoted herself, and ranks with the many uncanonised saints whom the world has loved, and whose memory is sweet. Mrs. Walford gives a most interesting account of her. We see her first a gay, laughing, flaxen-haired girl, 'mightily addicted to fun,' pleased to be finely dressed and

sent to the opera to see the 'Prince,' and be seen by him; pleased to exhibit her pretty figure in a becoming scarlet riding-habit, and to be looked at with obvious homage by the young officers quartered hard by, as she rode along the Norfolk lanes; 'dissipated' by simply hearing their band play in the square, and made giddy by the veriest trifle: 'an idle, flirting, worldly girl,' to use her own words. Then came the eventful day when 'in purple boots laced with scarlet' she went to hear William Savery preach at the Meeting House. This was the turning-point of her life, her psychological moment, as the phrase goes. After it came the era of 'thees' and 'thous,' of the drab gown and the beaver hat, of the visits to Newgate and the convict ships, of the work of rescuing the outcast and seeking the lost. Mrs. Walford quotes the following interesting account of the famous interview with Queen Charlotte at the Mansion-House:

Inside the Egyptian Hall there was a subject for Hayter—the diminutive stature of the Queen, covered with diamonds, and her countenance lighted up with the kindest benevolence; Mrs. Fry, her simple Quaker's dress adding to the height of her figure—though a little flushed—preserving her wonted calmness of look and manner; several of the bishops standing near; the platform crowded with waving feathers, jewels, and orders; the hall lined with spectators, gaily and nobly clad, and the centre filled with hundreds of children, brought there from their different schools to be examined. A murmur of applause ran through the assemblage as the Queen took Mrs. Fry by the hand. The murmur was followed by a clap and a shout, which was taken up by the multitudes without till it died away in the distance.

Those who regard Hannah More as a prim maiden lady of the conventional type, with a pious and literary turn of mind, will be obliged to change their views should they read Mrs. Walford's admirable sketch of the authoress of *Percy*. Hannah More was a brilliant wit, a *femme d'esprit*, passionately fond of society, and loved by society in return. When the serious-minded little country girl, who at the age of eight had covered a whole quire of paper with letters seeking to reform imaginary depraved characters, and with return epistles full of contrition and promises of amendment, paid her first visit to London, she became at once the intimate friend of Johnson, Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Garrick, and most of the distinguished people of the day, delighting them by her charm, and grace, and wit. 'I dined at the Adelphi yesterday,' she writes in one of her letters. 'Garrick was the very soul of the company, and I never saw Johnson in more perfect good-humour. After all had risen to go we stood round them for above an hour, laughing, in defiance of every rule of decorum and Chesterfield. I believe we should never have thought of sitting down, nor of parting, had not an impertinent watchman been saucily vociferating. Johnson outstaid them all, and sat with me for half an hour.' The following is from her sister's pen:

On Tuesday evening we drank tea at Sir Joshua's with Dr. Johnson. Hannah is certainly a great favourite. She was placed next him, and they had the entire conversation to themselves. They were both in remarkably high spirits, and it was certainly her lucky night; I never heard her say so many good things. The old genius was as jocular as the young one was pleasant. You would have imagined we were at some comedy had you heard our peals of laughter. They certainly tried which could 'pepper the highest,' and it is not clear to me that the lexicographer was really the highest seasoner.

Hannah More was certainly, as Mrs. Walford says, 'the fêted and caressed idol of society.' The theatre at Bristol vaunted, 'Boast we not a More?' and the learned cits at Oxford inscribed their acknowledgment of her authority. Horace Walpole sat on the doorstep—or threatened to do so—till she promised to go down to Strawberry Hill; Foster quoted her; Mrs. Thrale twined her arms about her; Wilberforce consulted her and employed her. When *The Estimate of the Religion of the Fashionable World* was published anonymously, 'Aut Morus, aut Angelus,' exclaimed the Bishop of London, before he had read six pages. Of her village stories and ballads two million copies were sold during the first year. *Cælebs in Search of a Wife* ran into thirty editions. Mrs. Barbauld writes to tell her about 'a good and sensible woman' of her acquaintance, who, on being asked how she contrived to divert herself in the country, replied, 'I have my spinning-wheel and my Hannah More. When I have spun one pound of flax I put on another, and when I have finished my book I begin it again. *I want no other amusement.*' How incredible it all sounds! No wonder that Mrs. Walford exclaims, 'No other amusement! Good heavens! Breathes there a man, woman, or child with soul so quiescent nowadays as to be satisfied with reels of flax and yards of Hannah More? Give us Hannah's company, but not—not her writings!' It is only fair to say that Mrs. Walford has thoroughly carried out the views she expresses in this passage, for she gives us nothing of Hannah More's grandiloquent literary productions, and yet succeeds in making us know her thoroughly. The whole book is well written, but the biography of Hannah More is a wonderfully brilliant sketch, and deserves great praise.

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Miss Mabel Wotton has invented a new form of picture-gallery. Feeling that the visible aspect of men and women can be expressed in literature no less than through the medium of line and colour, she has collected together a series of *Word Portraits of Famous Writers* extending from Geoffrey Chaucer to Mrs. Henry Wood. It is a far cry from the author of the *Canterbury Tales* to the authoress of *East Lynne*; but as a beauty, at any rate, Mrs. Wood deserved to be described, and we hear of the pure oval of her face, of her perfect mouth, her 'dazzling' complexion, and the extraordinary youth by which 'she kept to the last the . . . freshness of a young girl.' Many of the

'famous writers' seem to have been very ugly. Thomson, the poet, was of a dull countenance, and a gross, unanimated, uninviting appearance; Richardson looked 'like a plump white mouse in a wig.' Pope is described in the *Guardian*, in 1713, as 'a lively little creature, with long arms and legs: a spider is no ill emblem of him. He has been taken at a distance for a small windmill.' Charles Kingsley appears as 'rather tall, very angular, surprisingly awkward, with thin staggering legs, a hatchet face adorned with scraggy gray whiskers, a faculty for falling into the most ungainly attitudes, and making the most hideous contortions of visage and frame; with a rough provincial accent and an uncouth way of speaking which would be set down for absurd caricature on the boards of a comic theatre.' Lamb is described by Carlyle as 'the leanest of mankind; tiny black breeches buttoned to the knee-cap and no further, surmounting spindle legs also in black, face and head fineish, black, bony, lean, and of a Jew type rather'; and Talfourd says that the best portrait of him is his own description of Braham—'a compound of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel.' William Godwin was 'short and stout, his clothes loosely and carelessly put on, and usually old and worn; his hands were generally in his pockets; he had a remarkably large, bald head, and a weak voice; seeming generally half asleep when he walked, and even when he talked.' Lord Charlemont spoke of David Hume as more like a 'turtle-eating alderman' than 'a refined philosopher.' Mary Russell Mitford was ill-naturedly described by L.E.L. as 'Sancho Panza in petticoats!'; and as for poor Rogers, who was somewhat cadaverous, the descriptions given of him are quite dreadful. Lord Dudley once asked him 'why, now that he could afford it, he did not set up his hearse,' and it is said that Sydney Smith gave him mortal offence by recommending him 'when he sat for his portrait to be drawn saying his prayers, with his face hidden in his hands,' christened him the 'Death dandy,' and wrote underneath a picture of him, 'Painted in his lifetime.' We must console ourselves—if not with Mr. Hardy's statement that 'ideal physical beauty is incompatible with mental development, and a full recognition of the evil of things'—at least with the pictures of those who had some comeliness, and grace, and charm. Dr. Grosart says of a miniature of Edmund Spenser, 'It is an exquisitely beautiful face. The brow is ample, the lips thin but mobile, the eyes a grayish-blue, the hair and beard a golden red (as of "red monie" of the ballads) or goldenly chestnut, the nose with semi-transparent nostril and keen, the chin firm-poised, the expression refined and delicate. Altogether just such "presentment" of the Poet of Beauty *par excellence*, as one would have imagined.' Antony Wood describes Sir Richard Lovelace as being, at the age of sixteen, 'the most amiable and beautiful person that ever eye beheld.' Nor need we wonder at this when we remember the portrait of Lovelace that hangs at Dulwich College. Barry Cornwall, described himself by S. C. Hall as 'a decidedly rather pretty

little fellow,' said of Keats: 'His countenance lives in my mind as one of singular beauty and brightness,—it had an expression as if he had been looking on some glorious sight.' Chatterton and Byron were splendidly handsome, and beauty of a high spiritual order may be claimed both for Milton and Shelley, though an industrious gentleman lately wrote a book in two volumes apparently for the purpose of proving that the latter of these two poets had a snub nose. Hazlitt once said that 'A man's life may be a lie to himself and others, and yet a picture painted of him by a great artist would probably stamp his character.' Few of the word-portraits in Miss Wotton's book can be said to have been drawn by a great artist, but they are all interesting, and Miss Wotton has certainly shown a wonderful amount of industry in collecting her references and in grouping them. It is not a book to be read through from beginning to end, but it is a delightful book to glance at, and by its means one can raise the ghosts of the dead, at least as well as the Psychical Society can.

(1) *Leaves of Life*. By E. Nesbit. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

(2) *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems*. By W. B. Yeats. (Kegan Paul.)

(3) *Dorinda*. By Lady Munster. (Hurst and Blackett.)

(4) *Four Biographies from 'Blackwood.'* By Mrs. Walford. (Blackwood and Sons.)

(5) *Word Portraits of Famous Writers*. Edited by Mabel Wotton. (Bentley and Son.)

MR. WILLIAM MORRIS'S LAST BOOK

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, March 2, 1889.)

Mr. Morris's last book is a piece of pure art workmanship from beginning to end, and the very remoteness of its style from the common language and ordinary interests of our day gives to the whole story a strange beauty and an unfamiliar charm. It is written in blended prose and verse, like the mediæval 'cante-fable,' and tells the tale of the House of the Wolfings in its struggles against the legionaries of Rome then advancing into Northern Germany. It is a kind of Saga, and the language in which the folk-epic, as we may call it, is set forth recalls the antique dignity and directness of our English tongue four centuries ago. From an artistic point of view it may be described as an attempt to return by a self-conscious effort to the conditions of an earlier and a fresher age. Attempts of this kind are not uncommon in the history of art. From some such feeling came the Pre-Raphaelite movement of our own day and the archaistic movement of later Greek sculpture. When the result is beautiful the method is justified, and no shrill insistence upon a supposed necessity for absolute modernity of form can prevail against the value of work that has the incomparable excellence of

style. Certainly, Mr. Morris's work possesses this excellence. His fine harmonies and rich cadences create in the reader that spirit by which alone can its own spirit be interpreted, awake in him something of the temper of romance and, by taking him out of his own age, place him in a truer and more vital relation to the great masterpieces of all time. It is a bad thing for an age to be always looking in art for its own reflection. It is well that, now and then, we are given work that is nobly imaginative in its method and purely artistic in its aim. As we read Mr. Morris's story with its fine alternations of verse and prose, its decorative and descriptive beauties, its wonderful handling of romantic and adventurous themes, we cannot but feel that we are as far removed from the ignoble fiction as we are from the ignoble facts of our own day. We breathe a purer air, and have dreams of a time when life had a kind of poetical quality of its own, and was simple and stately and complete.

The tragic interest of *The House of the Wolfings* centres round the figure of Thiodolf, the great hero of the tribe. The goddess who loves him gives him, as he goes to battle against the Romans, a magical hauberk on which rests this strange fate: that he who wears it shall save his own life and destroy the life of his land. Thiodolf, finding out this secret, brings the hauberk back to the Wood-Sun, as she is called, and chooses death for himself rather than the ruin of his cause, and so the story ends.

But Mr. Morris has always preferred romance to tragedy, and set the development of action above the concentration of passion. His story is like some splendid old tapestry crowded with stately images and enriched with delicate and delightful detail. The impression it leaves on us is not of a single central figure dominating the whole, but rather of a magnificent design to which everything is subordinated, and by which everything becomes of enduring import. It is the whole presentation of the primitive life that really fascinates. What in other hands would have been mere archæology is here transformed by quick artistic instinct and made wonderful for us, and human and full of high interest. The ancient world seems to have come to life again for our pleasure.

Of a work so large and so coherent, completed with no less perfection than it is conceived, it is difficult by mere quotation to give any adequate idea. This, however, may serve as an example of its narrative power. The passage describes the visit of Thiodolf to the Wood-Sun:

The moonlight lay in a great flood on the grass without, and the dew was falling in the coldest hour of the night, and the earth smelled sweetly: the whole habitation was asleep now, and there was no sound to be known as the sound of any creature, save that from the distant meadow came the lowing of a cow that had lost her calf, and that

a white owl was flitting about near the eaves of the Roof with her wild cry that sounded like the mocking of merriment now silent. Thiodolf turned toward the wood, and walked steadily through the scattered hazel-trees, and thereby into the thick of the beech-trees, whose boles grew smooth and silver-grey, high and close-set: and so on and on he went as one going by a well-known path, though there was no path, till all the moonlight was quenched under the close roof of the beech-leaves, though yet for all the darkness, no man could go there and not feel that the roof was green above him. Still he went on in despite of the darkness, till at last there was a glimmer before him, that grew greater till he came unto a small wood-lawn whereon the turf grew again, though the grass was but thin, because little sunlight got to it, so close and thick were the tall trees round about it. . . . Nought looked Thiodolf either at the heavens above, or the trees, as he strode from off the husk-strewn floor of the beech wood on to the scanty grass of the lawn, but his eyes looked straight before him at that which was amidmost of the lawn: and little wonder was that; for there on a stone chair sat a woman exceeding fair, clad in glittering raiment, her hair lying as pale in the moonlight on the grey stone as the barley acres in the August night before the reaping-hook goes in amongst them. She sat there as though she were awaiting some one, and he made no stop nor stay, but went straight up to her, and took her in his arms, and kissed her mouth and her eyes, and she him again; and then he sat himself down beside her.

As an example of the beauty of the verse we would take this from the song of the Wood-Sun. It at least shows how perfectly the poetry harmonises with the prose, and how natural the transition is from the one to the other:

In many a stead Doom dwelleth, nor sleepeth day nor night:
The rim of the bowl she kisseth, and beareth the chambering light
When the kings of men wend happy to the bride-bed from the board.
It is little to say that she wendeth the edge of the grinded sword,
When about the house half builded she hangeth many a day;
The ship from the strand she shoveth, and on his wonted way
By the mountain hunter fareth where his foot ne'er failed before:
She is where the high bank crumbles at last on the river's shore:
The mower's scythe she whetteth; and lulleth the shepherd to sleep
Where the deadly ling-worm wakeneth in the desert of the sheep.
Now we that come of the God-kin of her redes for ourselves we wot,
But her will with the lives of men-folk and their ending know we not.
So therefore I bid thee not fear for thyself of Doom and her deed,
But for me: and I bid thee hearken to the helping of my need.

Or else—Art thou happy in life, or lusteth thou to die
In the flower of thy days, when thy glory and thy longing bloom on high?

The last chapter of the book in which we are told of the great feast made for the dead is so finely written that we cannot refrain from quoting this passage:

Now was the glooming falling upon the earth; but the Hall was bright within even as the Hall-Sun had promised. Therein was set forth the Treasure of the Wolfings; fair cloths were hung on the walls, goodly broidered garments on the pillars: goodly brazen cauldrons and fair-carven chests were set down in nooks where men could see them well, and vessels of gold and silver were set all up and down the tables of the feast. The pillars also were wreathed with flowers, and flowers hung garlanded from the walls over the precious hangings; sweet gums and spices were burning in fair-wrought censers of brass, and so many candles were alight under the Roof, that scarce had it looked more ablaze when the Romans had litten the faggots therein for its burning amidst the hurry of the Morning Battle.

There then they fell to feasting, hallowing in the high-tide of their return with victory in their hands: and the dead corpses of Thiodolf and Otter, clad in precious glittering raiment, looked down on them from the High-seat, and the kindreds worshipped them and were glad; and they drank the Cup to them before any others, were they Gods or men.

In days of uncouth realism and unimaginative imitation, it is a high pleasure to welcome work of this kind. It is a work in which all lovers of literature cannot fail to delight.

A Tale of the House of the Wolfings and all the Kindreds of the Mark. Written in Prose and in Verse by William Morris. (Reeves and Turner.)

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

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

A critic recently remarked of Adam Lindsay Gordon that through him Australia had found her first fine utterance in song. [{452}](#) This, however, is an amiable error. There is very little of Australia in Gordon's poetry. His heart and mind and fancy were always preoccupied with memories and dreams of England and such culture as England gave him. He owed nothing to the land of his adoption. Had he stayed at home he would have done much better work. In a few poems such as *The Sick Stockrider*, *From the Wreck*, and *Wolf and Hound* there are notes of Australian influences, and these

Swinburnian stanzas from the dedication to the *Bush Ballads* deserve to be quoted, though the promise they hold out was never fulfilled:

They are rhymes rudely strung with intent less
Of sound than of words,
In lands where bright blossoms are scentless,
And songless bright birds;
Where, with fire and fierce drought on her tresses,
Insatiable summer oppresses
Sere woodlands and sad wildernesses,
And faint flocks and herds.

Whence gather'd?—The locust's grand chirrup
May furnish a stave;
The ring of a rowel and stirrup,
The wash of a wave.
The chaunt of the marsh frog in rushes,
That chimes through the pauses and hushes
Of nightfall, the torrent that gushes,
The tempests that rave.

In the gathering of night gloom o'erhead, in
The still silent change,
All fire-flushed when forest trees redden
On slopes of the range.
When the gnarl'd, knotted trunks Eucalyptian
Seem carved, like weird columns Egyptian,
With curious device—quaint inscription,
And hieroglyph strange;

In the Spring, when the wattle gold trembles
'Twixt shadow and shine,
When each dew-laden air draught resembles
A long draught of wine;
When the sky-line's blue burnish'd resistance
Makes deeper the dreamiest distance,
Some song in all hearts hath existence,—
Such songs have been mine.

As a rule, however, Gordon is distinctly English, and the landscapes he describes are always the landscapes of our own country. He writes about mediæval lords and

ladies in his *Rhyme of Joyous Garde*, about Cavaliers and Roundheads in *The Romance of Britomarte*, and *Ashtaroath*, his longest and most ambitious poem, deals with the adventures of the Norman barons and Danish knights of ancient days. Steeped in Swinburne and bewildered with Browning, he set himself to reproduce the marvellous melody of the one and the dramatic vigour and harsh strength of the other. *From the Wreck* is a sort of Australian edition of the *Ride to Ghent*. These are the first three stanzas of one of the so-called *Bush Ballads*:

On skies still and starlit
 White lustres take hold,
And grey flashes scarlet,
 And red flashes gold.
And sun-glories cover
The rose, shed above her,
Like lover and lover
 They flame and unfold.

.....

Still bloom in the garden
 Green grass-plot, fresh lawn,
Though pasture lands harden
 And drought fissures yawn.
While leaves, not a few fall,
Let rose-leaves for you fall,
Leaves pearl-strung with dewfall,
 And gold shot with dawn.

Does the grass-plot remember
 The fall of your feet
In Autumn's red ember
 When drought leagues with heat,
When the last of the roses
Despairingly closes
In the lull that reposes
 Ere storm winds wax fleet?

And the following verses show that the Norman Baron of *Ashtaroath* had read *Dolores* just once too often:

Dead priests of Osiris, and Isis,
And Apis! that mystical lore,
Like a nightmare, conceived in a crisis
Of fever, is studied no more;
Dead Magian! yon star-troop that spangles
The arch of yon firmament vast
Looks calm, like a host of white angels
On dry dust of votaries past.

On seas unexplored can the ship shun
Sunk rocks? Can man fathom life's links,
Past or future, unsolved by Egyptian
Or Theban, unspoken by Sphynx?
The riddle remains yet, unravell'd
By students consuming night oil.
O earth! we have toil'd, we have travailed:
How long shall we travail and toil?

By the classics Gordon was always very much fascinated. He loved what he calls 'the scroll that is godlike and Greek,' though he is rather uncertain about his quantities, rhyming 'Polyxena' to 'Athena' and 'Aphrodite' to 'light,' and occasionally makes very rash statements, as when he represents Leonidas exclaiming to the three hundred at Thermopylae:

'Ho! comrades let us gaily dine—
This night with Plato we shall sup,'

if this be not, as we hope it is, a printer's error. What the Australians liked best were his spirited, if somewhat rough, horse-racing and hunting poems. Indeed, it was not till he found that *How We Beat the Favourite* was on everybody's lips that he consented to forego his anonymity and appear in the unsuspected character of a verse-writer, having up to that time produced his poems shyly, scribbled them on scraps of paper, and sent them unsigned to the local magazines. The fact is that the social atmosphere of Melbourne was not favourable to poets, and the worthy colonials seem to have shared Audrey's doubts as to whether poetry was a true and honest thing. It was not till Gordon won the Cup Steeplechase for Major Baker in 1868 that he became really popular, and probably there were many who felt that to steer Babler to the winning-post was a finer achievement than 'to babble o'er green fields.'

On the whole, it is impossible not to regret that Gordon ever emigrated. His literary power cannot be denied, but it was stunted in uncongenial surroundings and marred

by the rude life he was forced to lead. Australia has converted many of our failures into prosperous and admirable mediocrities, but she certainly spoiled one of our poets for us. Ovid at Tomi is not more tragic than Gordon driving cattle or farming an unprofitable sheep-ranch.

That Australia, however, will some day make amends by producing a poet of her own we cannot doubt, and for him there will be new notes to sound and new wonders to tell of. The description, given by Mr. Marcus Clarke in the preface to this volume, of the aspect and spirit of Nature in Australia is most curious and suggestive. The Australian forests, he tells us, are funereal and stern, and 'seem to stifle, in their black gorges, a story of sullen despair.' No leaves fall from the trees, but 'from the melancholy gum strips of white bark hang and rustle. Great grey kangaroos hop noiselessly over the coarse grass. Flights of cockatoos stream out, shrieking like evil souls. The sun suddenly sinks and the mopokes burst out into horrible peals of semi-human laughter.' The aborigines aver that, when night comes, from the bottomless depth of some lagoon a misshapen monster rises, dragging his loathsome length along the ooze. From a corner of the silent forest rises a dismal chant, and around a fire dance natives painted like skeletons. All is fear-inspiring and gloomy. No bright fancies are linked with the memories of the mountains. Hopeless explorers have named them out of their sufferings—Mount Misery, Mount Dreadful, Mount Despair.

In Australia alone (says Mr. Clarke) is to be found the Grotesque, the Weird, the strange scribblings of nature learning how to write. But the dweller in the wilderness acknowledges the subtle charm of the fantastic land of monstrosities. He becomes familiar with the beauty of loneliness. Whispered to by the myriad tongues of the wilderness, he learns the language of the barren and the uncouth, and can read the hieroglyphs of haggard gum-trees, blown into odd shapes, distorted with fierce hot winds, or cramped with cold nights, when the Southern Cross freezes in a cloudless sky of icy blue. The phantasmagoria of that wild dream-land termed the Bush interprets itself, and the Poet of our desolation begins to comprehend why free Esau loved his heritage of desert sand better than all the bountiful richness of Egypt.

Here, certainly, is new material for the poet, here is a land that is waiting for its singer. Such a singer Gordon was not. He remained thoroughly English, and the best that we can say of him is that he wrote imperfectly in Australia those poems that in England he might have made perfect.

Poems. By Adam Lindsay Gordon. (Samuel Mullen.)

THE POETS' CORNER—IX

(Pall Mall Gazette, March 30, 1889.)

Judges, like the criminal classes, have their lighter moments, and it was probably in one of his happiest and, certainly, in one of his most careless moods that Mr. Justice Denman conceived the idea of putting the early history of Rome into doggerel verse for the benefit of a little boy of the name of Jack. Poor Jack! He is still, we learn from the preface, under six years of age, and it is sad to think of the future career of a boy who is being brought up on bad history and worse poetry. Here is a passage from the learned judge's account of Romulus:

Poor Tatius by some unknown hand
Was soon assassinated,
Some said by Romulus' command;
I know not—but 'twas fated.

Sole King again, this Romulus
Play'd some fantastic tricks,
Lictors he had, who hatchets bore
Bound up with rods of sticks.

He treated all who thwarted him
No better than a dog,
Sometimes 'twas 'Heads off, Lictors, there!'
Sometimes 'Ho! Lictors, flog!'

Then he created Senators,
And gave them rings of gold;
Old soldiers all; their name deriv'd
From 'Senex' which means 'old.'

Knights, too, he made, good horsemen all,
Who always were at hand
To execute immediately
Whate'er he might command.

But these were of Patrician rank,
Plebeians all the rest;
Remember this distinction, Jack!
For 'tis a useful test.

The reign of Tullius Hostilius opens with a very wicked rhyme:

As Numa, dying, only left
A daughter, named Pompilia,
The Senate had to choose a King.
They choose one sadly sillier.

If Jack goes to the bad, Mr. Justice Denman will have much to answer for.

After such a terrible example from the Bench, it is pleasant to turn to the seats reserved for Queen's Counsel. Mr. Cooper Willis's *Tales and Legends*, if somewhat boisterous in manner, is still very spirited and clever. *The Prison of the Danes* is not at all a bad poem, and there is a great deal of eloquent, strong writing in the passage beginning:

The dying star-song of the night sinks in the dawning day,
And the dark-blue sheen is changed to green, and the green fades into grey,
And the sleepers are roused from their slumbers, and at last the Danesmen know
How few of all their numbers are left them by the foe.

Not much can be said of a poet who exclaims:

Oh, for the power of Byron or of Moore,
To glow with one, and with the latter soar.

And yet Mr. Moodie is one of the best of those South African poets whose works have been collected and arranged by Mr. Wilmot. Pringle, the 'father of South African verse,' comes first, of course, and his best poem is, undoubtedly, *Afar in the Desert*:

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:
Away, away, from the dwelling of men
By the wild-deer's haunt, by the buffalo's glen:
By valleys remote where the oribi plays,
Where the gnu, the gazelle and the hartebeest graze,
And the kúdí and eland unhunted recline
By the skirts of grey forests o'erhung with wild vine,
Where the elephant browses at peace in his wood,
And the river-horse gambols unscared in the flood,
And the mighty rhinoceros wallows at will
In the fen where the wild ass is drinking his fill.

It is not, however, a very remarkable production.

The Smouse, by Fannin, has the modern merit of incomprehensibility. It reads like something out of *The Hunting of the Snark*:

I'm a Smouse, I'm a Smouse in the wilderness wide,
The veld is my home, and the wagon's my pride:
The crack of my 'voerslag' shall sound o'er the lea,
I'm a Smouse, I'm a Smouse, and the trader is free!
I heed not the Governor, I fear not his law,
I care not for civilisation one straw,
And ne'er to 'Ompanda'—'Umgazis' I'll throw
While my arm carries fist, or my foot bears a toe!
'Trek,' 'trek,' ply the whip—touch the fore oxen's skin,
I'll warrant we'll 'go it' through thick and through thin—
Loop! loop ye oud skellums! ot Vikmaan trek jy;
I'm a Smouse, I'm a Smouse, and the trader is free!

The South African poets, as a class, are rather behind the age. They seem to think that 'Aurora' is a very novel and delightful epithet for the dawn. On the whole they depress us.

Chess, by Mr. Louis Tylor, is a sort of Christmas masque in which the *dramatis personæ* consist of some unmusical carollers, a priggish young man called Eric, and the chessmen off the board. The White Queen's Knight begins a ballad and the Black King's Bishop completes it. The Pawns sing in chorus and the Castles converse with each other. The silliness of the form makes it an absolutely unreadable book.

Mr. Williamson's *Poems of Nature and Life* are as orthodox in spirit as they are commonplace in form. A few harmless heresies of art and thought would do this poet no harm. Nearly everything that he says has been said before and said better. The only original thing in the volume is the description of Mr. Robert Buchanan's 'grandeur of mind.' This is decidedly new.

Dr. Cockle tells us that Müllner's *Guilt* and *The Ancestress* of Grillparzer are the masterpieces of German fate-tragedy. His translation of the first of these two masterpieces does not make us long for any further acquaintance with the school. Here is a specimen from the fourth act of the fate-tragedy.

SCENE VIII.

ELVIRA. HUGO.

ELVIRA (after long silence, leaving the harp, steps to Hugo, and seeks his gaze).

HUGO (softly). Though I made sacrifice of thy sweet life. The Father has forgiven. Can the wife—Forgive?

ELVIRA (on his breast). She can!

HUGO (with all the warmth of love). Dear wife!

ELVIRA (after a pause, in deep sorrow). Must it be so, beloved one?

HUGO (sorry to have betrayed himself). What?

In his preface to *The Circle of Seasons*, a series of hymns and verses for the seasons of the Church, the Rev. T. B. Dover expresses a hope that this well-meaning if somewhat tedious book 'may be of value to those many earnest people to whom the subjective aspect of truth is helpful.' The poem beginning

Lord, in the inn of my poor worthless heart
Guests come and go; but there is room for Thee,

has some merit and might be converted into a good sonnet. The majority of the poems, however, are quite worthless. There seems to be some curious connection between piety and poor rhymes.

Lord Henry Somerset's verse is not so good as his music. Most of the *Songs of Adieu* are marred by their excessive sentimentality of feeling and by the commonplace character of their weak and lax form. There is nothing that is new and little that is true in verse of this kind:

The golden leaves are falling,
Falling one by one,
Their tender 'Adieux' calling
To the cold autumnal sun.
The trees in the keen and frosty air
Stand out against the sky,
'Twould seem they stretch their branches bare
To Heaven in agony.

It can be produced in any quantity. Lord Henry Somerset has too much heart and too little art to make a good poet, and such art as he does possess is devoid of almost every intellectual quality and entirely lacking in any intellectual strength. He has nothing to say and says it.

Mrs. Cora M. Davis is eloquent about the splendours of what the authoress of *The Circle of Seasons* calls 'this earthly ball.'

Let's sing the beauties of this grand old earth,

she cries, and proceeds to tell how

Imagination paints old Egypt's former glory,
Of mighty temples reaching heavenward,
Of grim, colossal statues, whose barbaric story
The caustic pens of erudition still record,
Whose ancient cities of glittering minarets
Reflect the gold of Afric's gorgeous sunsets.

'The caustic pens of erudition' is quite delightful and will be appreciated by all Egyptologists. There is also a charming passage in the same poem on the pictures of the Old Masters:

the mellow richness of whose tints impart,
By contrast, greater delicacy still to modern art.

This seems to us the highest form of optimism we have ever come across in art criticism. It is American in origin, Mrs. Davis, as her biographer tells us, having been born in Alabama, Genesee co., N.Y.

(1) *The Story of the Kings of Rome in Verse*. By the Hon. G. Denman, Judge of the High Court of Justice. (Trübner and Co.)

(2) *Tales and Legends in Verse*. By E. Cooper Willis, Q.C. (Kegan Paul.)

(3) *The Poetry of South Africa*. Collected and arranged by A. Wilmot. (Sampson Low and Co.)

(4) *Chess*. A Christmas Masque. By Louis Tylor. (Fisher Unwin.)

(5) *Poems of Nature and Life*. By David R. Williamson. (Blackwood.)

(6) *Guilt*. Translated from the German by J. Cockle, M.D. (Williams and Norgate.)

(7) *The Circle of Seasons*. By K. E. V. (Elliot Stock.)

(8) *Songs of Adieu*. By Lord Henry Somerset. (Chatto and Windus.)

(9) *Immortelles*. By Cora M. Davis. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

SOME LITERARY NOTES—IV

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

‘In modern life,’ said Matthew Arnold once, ‘you I cannot well enter a monastery; but you can enter the Wordsworth Society.’ I fear that this will sound to many a somewhat uninviting description of this admirable and useful body, whose papers and productions have been recently published by Professor Knight, under the title of *Wordsworthiana*. ‘Plain living and high thinking’ are not popular ideals. Most people prefer to live in luxury, and to think with the majority. However, there is really nothing in the essays and addresses of the Wordsworth Society that need cause the public any unnecessary alarm; and it is gratifying to note that, although the society is still in the first blush of enthusiasm, it has not yet insisted upon our admiring Wordsworth’s inferior work. It praises what is worthy of praise, reverences what should be revered, and explains what does not require explanation. One paper is quite delightful; it is from the pen of Mr. Rawnsley, and deals with such reminiscences of Wordsworth as still linger among the peasantry of Westmoreland. Mr. Rawnsley grew up, he tells us, in the immediate vicinity of the present Poet-Laureate’s old home in Lincolnshire, and had been struck with the swiftness with which,

As year by year the labourer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,

the memories of the poet of the Somersby Wold had ‘faded from off the circle of the hills’—had, indeed, been astonished to note how little real interest was taken in him or his fame, and how seldom his works were met with in the houses of the rich or poor in the very neighbourhood. Accordingly, when he came to reside in the Lake Country, he endeavoured to find out what of Wordsworth’s memory among the men of the Dales still lingered on—how far he was still a moving presence among them—how far his works had made their way into the cottages and farmhouses of the valleys. He also tried to discover how far the race of Westmoreland and Cumberland farm-folk—the ‘Matthews’ and the ‘Michaels’ of the poet, as described by him—were real or fancy pictures, or how far the characters of the Dalesmen had been altered in any remarkable manner by tourist influences during the thirty-two years that have passed since the Lake poet was laid to rest.

With regard to the latter point, it will be remembered that Mr. Ruskin, writing in 1876, said that ‘the Border peasantry, painted with absolute fidelity by Scott and Wordsworth,’ are, as hitherto, a scarcely injured race; that in his fields at Coniston he had men who might have fought with Henry V. at Agincourt without being distinguished from any of his knights; that he could take his tradesmen’s word for a thousand pounds, and need never latch his garden gate; and that he did not fear molestation, in wood or on moor, for his girl guests. Mr. Rawnsley, however, found that a certain beauty had vanished which the simple retirement of old valley days fifty

years ago gave to the men among whom Wordsworth lived. 'The strangers,' he says, 'with their gifts of gold, their vulgarity, and their requirements, have much to answer for.' As for their impressions of Wordsworth, to understand them one must understand the vernacular of the Lake District. 'What was Mr. Wordsworth like in personal appearance?' said Mr. Rawnsley once to an old retainer, who still lives not far from Rydal Mount. 'He was a ugly-faäced man, and a meän liver,' was the answer; but all that was really meant was that he was a man of marked features, and led a very simple life in matters of food and raiment. Another old man, who believed that Wordsworth 'got most of his poetry out of Hartley,' spoke of the poet's wife as 'a very onpleasant woman, very onpleasant indeed. A close-fisted woman, that's what she was.' This, however, seems to have been merely a tribute to Mrs. Wordsworth's admirable housekeeping qualities.

The first person interviewed by Mr. Rawnsley was an old lady who had been once in service at Rydal Mount, and was, in 1870, a lodging-house keeper at Grasmere. She was not a very imaginative person, as may be gathered from the following anecdote:— Mr. Rawnsley's sister came in from a late evening walk, and said, 'O Mrs. D---, have you seen the wonderful sunset?' The good lady turned sharply round and, drawing herself to her full height, as if mortally offended, answered: 'No, miss; I'm a tidy cook, I know, and "they say" a decentish body for a landlady, but I don't know nothing about sunsets or them sort of things, they've never been in my line.' Her reminiscence of Wordsworth was as worthy of tradition as it was explanatory, from her point of view, of the method in which Wordsworth composed, and was helped in his labours by his enthusiastic sister. 'Well, you know,' she said, 'Mr. Wordsworth went humming and booing about, and she, Miss Dorothy, kept close behind him, and she picked up the bits as he let 'em fall, and tak' 'em down, and put 'em together on paper for him. And you may be very well sure as how she didn't understand nor make sense out of 'em, and I doubt that he didn't know much about them either himself, but, howivver, there's a great many folk as do, I dare say.' Of Wordsworth's habit of talking to himself, and composing aloud, we hear a great deal. 'Was Mr. Wordsworth a sociable man?' asked Mr. Rawnsley of a Rydal farmer. 'Wudsworth, for a' he had noa pride nor nowt,' was the answer, 'was a man who was quite one to hissel, ye kna. He was not a man as folks could crack wi', nor not a man as could crack wi' folks. But there was another thing as kep' folk off, he had a ter'ble girt deep voice, and ye might see his faace agaan for long enuff. I've knoan folks, village lads and lasses, coming over by old road above, which runs from Grasmere to Rydal, flayt a'most to death there by Wishing Gaate to hear the girt voice a groanin' and mutterin' and thunderin' of a still evening. And he had a way of standin' quite still by the rock there in t' path under Rydal, and folks could hear

sounds like a wild beast coming from the rocks, and childer were scared fit to be deäd a'most.'

Wordsworth's description of himself constantly recurs to one:

And who is he with modest looks,
And clad in sober russet gown?
He murmurs by the running brooks,
A music sweeter than their own;
He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noonday grove.

But the corroboration comes in strange guise. Mr. Rawnsley asked one of the Dalesmen about Wordsworth's dress and habits. This was the reply: 'Wudsworth wore a Jem Crow, never seed him in a boxer in my life,—a Jem Crow and an old blue cloak was his rig, and *as for his habits, he had noan*; niver knew him with a pot i' his hand, or a pipe i' his mouth. But he was a greät skater, for a' that—noan better in these parts—why, he could cut his own naäme upo' the ice, could Mr. Wudsworth.' Skating seems to have been Wordsworth's one form of amusement. He was 'over feckless i' his hands'—could not drive or ride—'not a bit of fish in him,' and 'nowt of a mountaineer.' But he could skate. The rapture of the time when, as a boy, on Esthwaite's frozen lake, he had

wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home, and, shod with steel,
Had hissed along the polished ice,

was continued, Mr. Rawnsley tells us, into manhood's later day; and Mr. Rawnsley found many proofs that the skill the poet had gained, when

Not seldom from the uproar he retired,
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng
To cut across the reflex of a star,

was of such a kind as to astonish the natives among whom he dwelt. The recollection of a fall he once had, when his skate caught on a stone, still lingers in the district. A boy had been sent to sweep the snow from the White Moss Tarn for him. 'Did Mr. Wudsworth gie ye owt?' he was asked, when he returned from his labour. 'Na, but I seed him tumlle, though!' was the answer. 'He was a ter'ble girt skater, was Wudsworth now,' says one of Mr. Rawnsley's informants; 'he would put one hand i' his

breast (he wore a frill shirt i' them days), and t'other hand i' his waistband, same as shepherds does to keep their hands warm, and he would stand up straight and sway and swing away grandly.'

Of his poetry they did not think much, and whatever was good in it they ascribed to his wife, his sister, and Hartley Coleridge. He wrote poetry, they said, 'because he couldn't help it—because it was his hobby'—for sheer love, and not for money. They could not understand his doing work 'for nowt,' and held his occupation in somewhat light esteem because it did not bring in 'a deal o' brass to the pocket.' 'Did you ever read his poetry, or see any books about in the farmhouses?' asked Mr. Rawnsley. The answer was curious: 'Ay, ay, time or two. But ya're weel aware there's potry and potry. There's potry wi' a li'le bit pleasant in it, and potry sic as a man can laugh at or the childer understand, and some as takes a deal of mastery to make out what's said, and a deal of Wudsworth's was this sort, ye kna. You could tell fra the man's faace his potry would niver have no laugh in it. His potry was quite different work from li'le Hartley. Hartley 'ud goa running along beside o' the brooks and mak his, and goa in the first oppen door and write what he had got upo' paper. But Wudsworth's potry was real hard stuff, and bided a deal of makking, and he'd keep it in his head for long enough. Eh, but it's queer, mon, different ways folks hes of making potry now . . . Not but what Mr. Wudsworth didn't stand very high, and was a well-spoken man enough.' The best criticism on Wordsworth that Mr. Rawnsley heard was this: 'He was an open-air man, and a great critic of trees.'

There are many useful and well-written essays in Professor Knight's volume, but Mr. Rawnsley's is far the most interesting of all. It gives us a graphic picture of the poet as he appeared in outward semblance and manner to those about whom he wrote.

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Mary Myles is Mrs. Edmonds's first attempt at writing fiction. Mrs. Edmonds is well known as an authority on modern Greek literature, and her style has often a very pleasant literary flavour, though in her dialogues she has not as yet quite grasped the difference between *la langue parleé* and *la langue écrite*. Her heroine is a sort of Nausicaa from Girton, who develops into the Pallas Athena of a provincial school. She has her love-romance, like her Homeric prototype, and her Odysseus returns to her at the close of the book. It is a nice story.

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Lady Dilke's *Art in the Modern State* is a book that cannot fail to interest deeply every one who cares either for art or for history. The 'modern State' which gives its title to

the book is that political and social organisation of our day that comes to us from the France of Richelieu and Colbert, and is the direct outcome of the 'Grand Siècle,' the true greatness of which century, as Lady Dilke points out, consists not in its vain wars, and formal stage and stilted eloquence, and pompous palaces, but in the formation and working out of the political and social system of which these things were the first-fruits. To the question that naturally rises on one's lips, 'How can one dwell on the art of the seventeenth century?—it has no charm,' Lady Dilke answers that this art presents in its organisation, from the point of view of social polity, problems of the highest intellectual interest. Throughout all its phases—to quote her own words—'the life of France wears, during the seventeenth century, a political aspect. The explanation of all changes in the social system, in letters, in the arts, in fashions even, has to be sought in the necessities of the political position; and the seeming caprices of taste take their rise from the same causes which went to determine the making of a treaty or the promulgation of an edict. This seems all the stranger because, in times preceding, letters and the arts, at least, appeared to flourish in conditions as far removed from the action of statecraft as if they had been a growth of fairyland. In the Middle Ages they were devoted to a virgin image of Virtue; they framed, in the shade of the sanctuary, an ideal shining with the beauty born of self-renunciation, of resignation to self-enforced conditions of moral and physical suffering. By the queenly Venus of the Renaissance they were consecrated to the joys of life, and the world saw that through their perfect use men might renew their strength, and behold virtue and beauty with clear eyes. It was, however, reserved for the rulers of France in the seventeenth century fully to realise the political function of letters and the arts in the modern State, and their immense importance in connection with the prosperity of a commercial nation.'

The whole subject is certainly extremely fascinating. The Renaissance had for its object the development of great personalities. The perfect freedom of the temperament in matters of art, the perfect freedom of the intellect in intellectual matters, the full development of the individual, were the things it aimed at. As we study its history we find it full of great anarchies. It solved no political or social problems; it did not seek to solve them. The ideal of the 'Grand Siècle,' and of Richelieu, in whom the forces of that great age were incarnate, was different. The ideas of citizenship, of the building up of a great nation, of the centralisation of forces, of collective action, of ethnic unity of purpose, came before the world. It was inevitable that they should have done so, and Lady Dilke, with her keen historic sense and her wonderful power of grouping facts, has told us the story of their struggle and their victory. Her book is, from every point of view, a most remarkable work. Her style

is almost French in its clearness, its sobriety, its fine and, at times, ascetic simplicity. The whole ground-plan and intellectual-conception is admirable.

It is, of course, easy to see how much Art lost by having a new mission forced upon her. The creation of a formal tradition upon classical lines is never without its danger, and it is sad to find the provincial towns of France, once so varied and individual in artistic expression, writing to Paris for designs and advice. And yet, through Colbert's great centralising scheme of State supervision and State aid, France was the one country in Europe, and has remained the one country in Europe, where the arts are not divorced from industry. The Academy of Painting and Sculpture and the School of Architecture were not, to quote Lady Dilke's words, called into being in order that royal palaces should be raised surpassing all others in magnificence:

Bièvrebache and the Savonnerie were not established only that such palaces should be furnished more sumptuously than those of an Eastern fairy-tale. Colbert did not care chiefly to inquire, when organising art administration, what were the institutions best fitted to foster the proper interests of art; he asked, in the first place, what would most contribute to swell the national importance. Even so, in surrounding the King with the treasures of luxury, his object was twofold—their possession should, indeed, illustrate the Crown, but should also be a unique source of advantage to the people. Glass-workers were brought from Venice, and lace-makers from Flanders, that they might yield to France the secrets of their skill. Palaces and public buildings were to afford commissions for French artists, and a means of technical and artistic education for all those employed upon them. The royal collections were but a further instrument in educating the taste and increasing the knowledge of the working classes. The costly factories of the Savonnerie and the Gobelins were practical schools, in which every detail of every branch of all those industries which contribute to the furnishing and decoration of houses were brought to perfection; whilst a band of chosen apprentices were trained in the adjoining schools. To Colbert is due the honour of having foreseen, not only that the interests of the modern State were inseparably bound up with those of industry, but also that the interests of industry could not, without prejudice, be divorced from art.

Mr. Bret Harte has never written anything finer than *Cressy*. It is one of his most brilliant and masterly productions, and will take rank with the best of his Californian stories. Hawthorne re-created for us the America of the past with the incomparable grace of a very perfect artist, but Mr. Bret Harte's emphasised modernity has, in its own sphere, won equal, or almost equal, triumphs. Wit, pathos, humour, realism, exaggeration, and romance are in this marvellous story all blended together, and out of the very clash and chaos of these things comes life itself. And what a curious life it

is, half civilised and half barbarous, naïve and corrupt, chivalrous and commonplace, real and improbable! Cressy herself is the most tantalising of heroines. She is always eluding one's grasp. It is difficult to say whether she sacrifices herself on the altar of romance, or is merely a girl with an extraordinary sense of humour. She is intangible, and the more we know of her, the more incomprehensible she becomes. It is pleasant to come across a heroine who is not identified with any great cause, and represents no important principle, but is simply a wonderful nymph from American backwoods, who has in her something of Artemis, and not a little of Aphrodite.

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It is always a pleasure to come across an American poet who is not national, and who tries to give expression to the literature that he loves rather than to the land in which he lives. The Muses care so little for geography! Mr. Richard Day's *Poems* have nothing distinctively American about them. Here and there in his verse one comes across a flower that does not bloom in our meadows, a bird to which our woodlands have never listened. But the spirit that animates the verse is simple and human, and there is hardly a poem in the volume that English lips might not have uttered. *Sounds of the Temple* has much in it that is interesting in metre as well as in matter:—

Then sighed a poet from his soul:

‘The clouds are blown across the stars,
And chill have grown my lattice bars;

I cannot keep my vigil whole
By the lone candle of my soul.

‘This reed had once devoutest tongue,
And sang as if to its small throat
God listened for a perfect note;

As charily this lyre was strung:
God's praise is slow and has no tongue.’

But the best poem is undoubtedly the *Hymn to the Mountain*:—

Within the hollow of thy hand—

This wooded dell half up the height,
Where streams take breath midway in flight—

Here let me stand.

Here warbles not a lowland bird,

Here are no babbling tongues of men;

Thy rivers rustling through the glen
Alone are heard.

Above no pinion cleaves its way,
Save when the eagle's wing, as now,
With sweep imperial shades thy brow
Beetling and grey.

What thoughts are thine, majestic peak?
And moods that were not born to chime
With poets' ineffectual rhyme
And numbers weak?

The green earth spreads thy gaze before,
And the unfailing skies are brought
Within the level of thy thought.
There is no more.

The stars salute thy rugged crown
With syllables of twinkling fire;
Like choral burst from distant choir,
Their psalm rolls down.

And I within this temple niche,
Like statue set where prophets talk,
Catch strains they murmur as they walk,
And I am rich.

Miss Ella Curtis's *A Game of Chance* is certainly the best novel that this clever young writer has as yet produced. If it has a fault, it is that it is crowded with too much incident, and often surrenders the study of character to the development of plot. Indeed, it has many plots, each of which, in more economical hands, would have served as the basis of a complete story. We have as the central incident the career of a clever lady's-maid who personifies her mistress, and is welcomed by Sir John Erskine, an English country gentleman, as the widow of his dead son. The real husband of the adventuress tracks his wife to England, and claims her. She pretends that he is insane, and has him removed. Then he tries to murder her, and when she recovers, she finds her beauty gone and her secret discovered. There is quite enough sensation here to interest even the jaded City man, who is said to have grown quite critical of late on the subject of what is really a thrilling plot. But Miss Curtis is not satisfied. The lady's-maid has an extremely handsome brother, who is a wonderful

musician, and has a divine tenor voice. With him the stately Lady Judith falls wildly in love, and this part of the story is treated with a great deal of subtlety and clever analysis. However, Lady Judith does not marry her rustic Orpheus, so the social *convenances* are undisturbed. The romance of the Rector of the Parish, who falls in love with a charming school-teacher, is a good deal overshadowed by Lady Judith's story, but it is pleasantly told. A more important episode is the marriage between the daughter of the Tory squire and the Radical candidate for the borough. They separate on their wedding-day, and are not reconciled till the third volume. No one could say that Miss Curtis's book is dull. In fact, her style is very bright and amusing. It is impossible, perhaps, not to be a little bewildered by the amount of characters, and by the crowded incidents; but, on the whole, the scheme of the construction is clear, and certainly the decoration is admirable.

(1) *Wordsworthiana: A Selection from Papers read to the Wordsworth Society*. Edited by William Knight. (Macmillan and Co.)

(2) *Mary Myles*. By E. M. Edmonds. (Remington and Co.)

(3) *Art in the Modern State*. By Lady Dilke. (Chapman and Hall.)

(4) *Cressy*. By Bret Harte. (Macmillan and Co.)

(5) *Poems*. By Richard Day. (New York: Cassell and Co.)

(6) *A Game of Chance*. By Ella Curtis. (Hurst and Blackett.)

MR. FROUDE'S BLUE-BOOK

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, April 13, 1889.)

Blue-books are generally dull reading, but Blue-books on Ireland have always been interesting. They form the record of one of the great tragedies of modern Europe. In them England has written down her indictment against herself and has given to the world the history of her shame. If in the last century she tried to govern Ireland with an insolence that was intensified by race hatred and religious prejudice, she has sought to rule her in this century with a stupidity that is aggravated by good intentions. The last of these Blue-books, Mr. Froude's heavy novel, has appeared, however, somewhat too late. The society that he describes has long since passed away. An entirely new factor has appeared in the social development of the country, and this factor is the Irish-American and his influence. To mature its powers, to concentrate its actions, to learn the secret of its own strength and of England's weakness, the Celtic intellect has had to cross the Atlantic. At home it had but learned the pathetic weakness of nationality; in a strange land it realised what indomitable forces nationality

possesses. What captivity was to the Jews, exile has been to the Irish. America and American influence has educated them. Their first practical leader is an Irish-American.

But while Mr. Froude's book has no practical relation to modern Irish politics, and does not offer any solution of the present question, it has a certain historical value. It is a vivid picture of Ireland in the latter half of the eighteenth century, a picture often false in its lights and exaggerated in its shadows, but a picture none the less. Mr. Froude admits the martyrdom of Ireland but regrets that the martyrdom was not more completely carried out. His ground of complaint against the Executioner is not his trade but his bungling. It is the bluntness not the cruelty of the sword that he objects to. Resolute government, that shallow shibboleth of those who do not understand how complex a thing the art of government is, is his posthumous panacea for past evils. His hero, Colonel Goring, has the words Law and Order ever on his lips, meaning by the one the enforcement of unjust legislation, and implying by the other the suppression of every fine national aspiration. That the government should enforce iniquity and the governed submit to it, seems to Mr. Froude, as it certainly is to many others, the true ideal of political science. Like most penmen he overrates the power of the sword. Where England has had to struggle she has been wise. Where physical strength has been on her side, as in Ireland, she has been made unwieldy by that strength. Her own strong hands have blinded her. She has had force but no direction.

There is, of course, a story in Mr. Froude's novel. It is not simply a political disquisition. The interest of the tale, such as it is, centres round two men, Colonel Goring and Morty Sullivan, the Cromwellian and the Celt. These men are enemies by race and creed and feeling. The first represents Mr. Froude's cure for Ireland. He is a resolute 'Englishman, with strong Nonconformist tendencies,' who plants an industrial colony on the coast of Kerry, and has deep-rooted objections to that illicit trade with France which in the last century was the sole method by which the Irish people were enabled to pay their rents to their absentee landlords. Colonel Goring bitterly regrets that the Penal Laws against the Catholics are not rigorously carried out. He is a '*Police at any price*' man.

'And this,' said Goring scornfully, 'is what you call governing Ireland, hanging up your law like a scarecrow in the garden till every sparrow has learnt to make a jest of it. Your Popery Acts! Well, you borrowed them from France. The French Catholics did not choose to keep the Hugonots among them, and recalled the Edict of Nantes. As they treated the Hugonots, so you said to all the world that you would treat the Papists. You borrowed from the French the very language of your Statute, but they are not afraid to stand by their law, and you are afraid to stand by yours. You let the

people laugh at it, and in teaching them to despise one law, you teach them to despise all laws—God's and man's alike. I cannot say how it will end; but I can tell you this, that you are training up a race with the education which you are giving them that will astonish mankind by and bye.'

Mr. Froude's resume of the history of Ireland is not without power though it is far from being really accurate. 'The Irish,' he tells us, 'had disowned the facts of life, and the facts of life had proved the strongest.' The English, unable to tolerate anarchy so near their shores, 'consulted the Pope. The Pope gave them leave to interfere, and the Pope had the best of the bargain. For the English brought him in, and the Irish . . . kept him there.' England's first settlers were Norman nobles. They became more Irish than the Irish, and England found herself in this difficulty: 'To abandon Ireland would be discreditable, to rule it as a province would be contrary to English traditions.' She then 'tried to rule by dividing,' and failed. The Pope was too strong for her. At last she made her great political discovery. What Ireland wanted was evidently an entirely new population 'of the same race and the same religion as her own.' The new policy was partly carried out:

Elizabeth first and then James and then Cromwell replanted the Island, introducing English, Scots, Hugonots, Flemings, Dutch, tens of thousands of families of vigorous and earnest Protestants, who brought their industries along with them. Twice the Irish . . . tried . . . to drive out this new element . . . They failed. . . . [But] England . . . had no sooner accomplished her long task than she set herself to work to spoil it again. She destroyed the industries of her colonists by her trade laws. She set the Bishops to rob them of their religion. . . . [As for the gentry,] The purpose for which they had been introduced into Ireland was unfulfilled. They were but alien intruders, who did nothing, who were allowed to do nothing. The time would come when an exasperated population would demand that the land should be given back to them, and England would then, perhaps, throw the gentry to the wolves, in the hope of a momentary peace. But her own turn would follow. She would be face to face with the old problem, either to make a new conquest or to retire with disgrace.

Political disquisitions of this kind, and prophecies after the event, are found all through Mr. Froude's book, and on almost every second page we come across aphorisms on the Irish character, on the teachings of Irish history and on the nature of England's mode of government. Some of them represent Mr. Froude's own views, others are entirely dramatic and introduced for the purpose of characterisation. We append some specimens. As epigrams they are not very felicitous, but they are interesting from some points of view.

Irish Society grew up in happy recklessness. Insecurity added zest to enjoyment.

We Irish must either laugh or cry, and if we went in for crying, we should all hang ourselves.

Too close a union with the Irish had produced degeneracy both of character and creed in all the settlements of English.

We age quickly in Ireland with the whiskey and the broken heads.

The Irish leaders cannot fight. They can make the country ungovernable, and keep an English army occupied in watching them.

No nation can ever achieve a liberty that will not be a curse to them, except by arms in the field.

[The Irish] are taught from their cradles that English rule is the cause of all their miseries. They were as ill off under their own chiefs; but they would bear from their natural leaders what they will not bear from us, and if we have not made their lot more wretched we have not made it any better.

‘Patriotism? Yes! Patriotism of the Hibernian order. The country has been badly treated, and is poor and miserable. This is the patriot’s stock in trade. Does he want it mended? Not he. His own occupation would be gone.’

Irish corruption is the twin-brother of Irish eloquence.

England will not let us break the heads of our scoundrels; she will not break them herself; we are a free country, and must take the consequences.

The functions of the Anglo-Irish Government were to do what ought not to be done, and to leave undone what ought to be done.

The Irish race have always been noisy, useless and ineffectual. They have produced nothing, they have done nothing, which it is possible to admire. What they are, that they have always been, and the only hope for them is that their ridiculous Irish nationality should be buried and forgotten.

The Irish are the best actors in the world.

Order is an exotic in Ireland. It has been imported from England, but it will not grow. It suits neither soil, nor climate. If the English wanted order in Ireland, they should have left none of us alive.

When ruling powers are unjust, nature reasserts her rights.

Even anarchy has its advantages.

Nature keeps an accurate account. . . . The longer a bill is left unpaid, the heavier the accumulation of interest.

You cannot live in Ireland without breaking laws on one side or another. *Pecca fortiter*, therefore, as . . . Luther said.

The animal spirits of the Irish remained when all else was gone, and if there was no purpose in their lives, they could at least enjoy themselves.

The Irish peasants can make the country hot for the Protestant gentleman, but that is all they are fit for.

As we said before, if Mr. Froude intended his book to help the Tory Government to solve the Irish question he has entirely missed his aim. The Ireland of which he writes has disappeared. As a record, however, of the incapacity of a Teutonic to rule a Celtic people against their own wish, his book is not without value. It is dull, but dull books are very popular at present; and as people have grown a little tired of talking about *Robert Elsmere*, they will probably take to discussing *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy*. There are some who will welcome with delight the idea of solving the Irish question by doing away with the Irish people. There are others who will remember that Ireland has extended her boundaries, and that we have now to reckon with her not merely in the Old World but in the New.

The Two Chiefs of Dunboy: or An Irish Romance of the Last Century. By J. A. Froude. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

SOME LITERARY NOTES—V

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

Miss Caroline Fitz Gerald's volume of poems, *Venetia Victrix*, is dedicated to Mr. Robert Browning, and in the poem that gives its title to the book it is not difficult to see traces of Mr. Browning's influence. *Venetia Victrix* is a powerful psychological study of a man's soul, a vivid presentation of a terrible, fiery-coloured moment in a marred and incomplete life. It is sometimes complex and intricate in expression, but then the subject itself is intricate and complex. Plastic simplicity of outline may render for us the visible aspect of life; it is different when we come to deal with those secrets which self-consciousness alone contains, and which self-consciousness itself can but half reveal. Action takes place in the sunlight, but the soul works in the dark.

There is something curiously interesting in the marked tendency of modern poetry to become obscure. Many critics, writing with their eyes fixed on the masterpieces of past literature, have ascribed this tendency to wilfulness and to affectation. Its origin is rather to be found in the complexity of the new problems, and in the fact that self-consciousness is not yet adequate to explain the contents of the Ego. In Mr. Browning's poems, as in life itself which has suggested, or rather necessitated, the new method, thought seems to proceed not on logical lines, but on lines of passion. The unity of the individual is being expressed through its inconsistencies and its contradictions. In a strange twilight man is seeking for himself, and when he has found his own image, he cannot understand it. Objective forms of art, such as sculpture and the drama, sufficed one for the perfect presentation of life; they can no longer so suffice.

The central motive of Miss Caroline Fitz Gerald's psychological poem is the study of a man who to do a noble action wrecks his own soul, sells it to evil, and to the spirit of evil. Many martyrs have for a great cause sacrificed their physical life; the sacrifice of the spiritual life has a more poignant and a more tragic note. The story is supposed to be told by a French doctor, sitting at his window in Paris one evening:

How far off Venice seems to-night! How dim
The still-remembered sunsets, with the rim
Of gold round the stone haloes, where they stand,
Those carven saints, and look towards the land,
Right Westward, perched on high, with palm in hand,
Completing the peaked church-front. Oh how clear
And dark against the evening splendour! Steer
Between the graveyard island and the quay,
Where North-winds dash the spray on Venice;—see
The rosy light behind dark dome and tower,
Or gaunt smoke-laden chimney;—mark the power
Of Nature's gentleness, in rise or fall
Of interlinkèd beauty, to recall
Earth's majesty in desecration's place,
Lending yon grimy pile that dream-like face
Of evening beauty;—note yon rugged cloud,
Red-rimmed and heavy, drooping like a shroud
Over Murano in the dying day.
I see it now as then—so far away!

The face of a boy in the street catches his eye. He seems to see in it some likeness to a dead friend. He begins to think, and at last remembers a hospital ward in Venice:

'Twas an April day,
The year Napoleon's troops took Venice—say
The twenty-fifth of April. All alone
Walking the ward, I heard a sick man moan,
In tones so piteous, as his heart would break:
'Lost, lost, and lost again—for Venice' sake!
I turned. There lay a man no longer young,
Wasted with fever. I had marked, none hung
About his bed, as friends, with tenderness,
And, when the priest went by, he spared to bless,
Glancing perplexed—perhaps mere sullenness.
I stopped and questioned: 'What is lost, my friend?'
'My soul is lost, and now draws near the end.
My soul is surely lost. Send me no priest!
They sing and solemnise the marriage feast
Of man's salvation in the house of love,
And I in Hell, and God in Heaven above,
And Venice safe and fair on earth between—
No love of mine—mere service—for my Queen.'

He was a seaman, and the tale he tells the doctor before he dies is strange and not a little terrible. Wild rage against a foster-brother who had bitterly wronged him, and who was one of the ten rulers over Venice, drives him to make a mad oath that on the day when he does anything for his country's good he will give his soul to Satan. That night he sails for Dalmatia, and as he is keeping the watch, he sees a phantom boat with seven fiends sailing to Venice:

I heard the fiends' shrill cry: 'For Venice' good!
Rival thine ancient foe in gratitude,
Then come and make thy home with us in Hell!
I knew it must be so. I knew the spell
Of Satan on my soul. I felt the power
Granted by God to serve Him one last hour,
Then fall for ever as the curse had wrought.
I climbed aloft. My brain had grown one thought,
One hope, one purpose. And I heard the hiss
Of raging disappointment, loth to miss

Its prey—I heard the lapping of the flame,
That through the blanched figures went and came,
Darting in frenzy to the devils' yell.
I set that cross on high, and cried: 'To Hell
My soul for ever, and my deed to God!
Once Venice guarded safe, let this vile clod
Drift where fate will.'

And then (the hideous laugh
Of fiends in full possession, keen to quaff
The wine of one new soul not weak with tears,
Peeling like ruinous thunder in mine ears)
I fell, and heard no more. The pale day broke
Through lazar-windows, when once more I woke,
Remembering I might no more dare to pray.

The idea of the story is extremely powerful, and *Venetia Victrix* is certainly the best poem in the volume—better than *Ophelion*, which is vague, and than *A Friar's Story*, which is pretty but ordinary. It shows that we have in Miss Fitz Gerald a new singer of considerable ability and vigour of mind, and it serves to remind us of the splendid dramatic possibilities extant in life, which are ready for poetry, and unsuitable for the stage. What is really dramatic is not necessarily that which is fitting for presentation in a theatre. The theatre is an accident of the dramatic form. It is not essential to it. We have been deluded by the name of action. To think is to act.

Of the shorter poems collected here, this *Hymn to Persephone* is, perhaps, the best:

Oh, fill my cup, Persephone,
With dim red wine of Spring,
And drop therein a faded leaf
Plucked from the Autumn's bearded sheaf,
Whence, dread one, I may quaff to thee,
While all the woodlands ring.

Oh, fill my heart, Persephone,
With thine immortal pain,
That lingers round the willow bowers
In memories of old happy hours,
When thou didst wander fair and free
O'er Enna's blooming plain.

Oh, fill my soul, Persephone,
With music all thine own!
Teach me some song thy childhood knew,
Lisped in the meadow's morning dew,
Or chant on this high windy lea,
Thy godhead's ceaseless moan.

But this *Venetian Song* also has a good deal of charm:

Leaning between carved stone and stone,
As glossy birds peer from a nest
Scooped in the crumbling trunk where rest
Their freckled eggs, I pause alone
And linger in the light awhile,
Waiting for joy to come to me—
Only the dawn beyond yon isle,
Only the sunlight on the sea.

I gaze—then turn and ply my loom,
Or broider blossoms close beside;
The morning world lies warm and wide,
But here is dim, cool silent gloom,
Gold crust and crimson velvet pile,
And not one face to smile on me—
Only the dawn beyond yon isle,
Only the sunlight on the sea.

Over the world the splendours break
Of morning light and noontide glow,
And when the broad red sun sinks low,
And in the wave long shadows shake,
Youths, maidens, glad with song and wile,
Glide and are gone, and leave with me
Only the dawn beyond yon isle,
Only the sunlight on the sea.

Darwinism and Politics, by Mr. David Ritchie, of Jesus College, Oxford, contains some very interesting speculations on the position and the future of women in the modern State. The one objection to the equality of the sexes that he considers deserves serious attention is that made by Sir James Stephen in his clever attack on John Stuart Mill. Sir James Stephen points out in *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, that women may

suffer more than they have done, if plunged into a nominally equal but really unequal contest in the already overcrowded labour market. Mr. Ritchie answers that, while the conclusion usually drawn from this argument is a sentimental reaction in favour of the old family ideal, as, for instance, in Mr. Besant's books, there is another alternative, and that is the resettling of the labour question. 'The elevation of the status of women and the regulation of the conditions of labour are ultimately,' he says, 'inseparable questions. On the basis of individualism, I cannot see how it is possible to answer the objections of Sir James Stephen.' Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his *Sociology*, expresses his fear that women, if admitted now to political life, might do mischief by introducing the ethics of the family into the State. 'Under the ethics of the family the greatest benefits must be given where the merits are smallest; under the ethics of the State the benefits must be proportioned to the merits.' In answer to this, Mr. Ritchie asks whether in any society we have ever seen people so get benefits in proportion to their merits, and protests against Mr. Spencer's separation of the ethics of the family from those of the State. If something is right in a family, it is difficult to see why it is therefore, without any further reason, wrong in the State. If the participation of women in politics means that as a good family educates all its members, so must a good State, what better issue could there be? The family ideal of the State may be difficult of attainment, but as an ideal it is better than the policeman theory. It would mean the moralisation of politics. The cultivation of separate sorts of virtues and separate ideals of duty in men and women has led to the whole social fabric being weaker and unhealthier than it need be. As for the objection that in countries where it is considered necessary to have compulsory military service for all men, it would be unjust and inexpedient that women should have a voice in political matters, Mr. Ritchie meets it, or tries to meet it, by proposing that all women physically fitted for such purpose should be compelled to undergo training as nurses, and should be liable to be called upon to serve as nurses in time of war. This training, he remarks, 'would be more useful to them and to the community in time of peace than his military training is to the peasant or artisan.' Mr. Ritchie's little book is extremely suggestive, and full of valuable ideas for the philosophic student of sociology.

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Mr. Alan Cole's lecture on Irish lace, delivered recently before the Society of Arts, contains some extremely useful suggestions as to the best method of securing an immediate connection between the art schools of a country and the country's ordinary manufactures. In 1883, Mr. Cole was deputed by the Department of Science and Art to lecture at Cork and at Limerick on the subject of lace-making, and to give a history of its rise and development in other countries, as well as a review of the many

kinds of ornamental patterns used from the sixteenth century to modern times. In order to make these lectures of practical value, Mr. Cole placed typical specimens of Irish laces beside Italian, Flemish, and French laces, which seem to be the prototypes of the lace of Ireland. The public interest was immediately aroused. Some of the newspapers stoutly maintained that the ornament and patterns of Irish lace were of such a national character that it was wrong to asperse them on that score. Others took a different view, and came to the conclusion that Irish lace could be vastly improved in all respects, if some systematic action could be taken to induce the lace-makers to work from more intelligently composed patterns than those in general use. There was a consensus of opinion that the workmanship of Irish laces was good, and that it could be applied to better materials than those ordinarily used, and that its methods were suited to render a greater variety of patterns than those usually attempted.

These and other circumstances seem to have prompted the promoters of the Cork Exhibition to further efforts in the cause of lace-making. Towards the close of the year 1883 they made fresh representations to Government, and inquired what forms of State assistance could be given. A number of convents in the neighbourhood of Cork was engaged in giving instruction to children under their care in lace and crochet making. At some, rooms were allotted for the use of grown-up workers who made laces under the supervision of the nuns. These convents obviously were centres where experiments in reform could be tried. The convents, however, lacked instruction in the designing of patterns for laces. An excellent School of Art was at work at Cork, but the students there had not been instructed in specially designing for lace. If the convents with their workrooms could be brought into relation with this School of Art, it seemed possible that something of a serious character might be done to benefit lace-makers, and also to open up a new field in ornamental design for the students at the School of Art. The rules of the Department of Science and Art were found to be adapted to aid in meeting such wants as those sketched out by the promoters at Cork. As the nuns in the different lace-making convents had not been able to attend in Cork to hear Mr. Cole's lectures, they asked that he should visit them and repeat them at the convents. This Mr. Cole did early in 1884, the masters of the local Schools of Art accompanying him on his visits. Negotiations were forthwith opened for connecting the convents with the art schools. By the end of 1885 some six or seven different lace-making convents had placed themselves in connection with Schools of Art at Cork and Waterford. These convents were attended not only by the nuns but by outside pupils also; and, at the request of the convents, Mr. Cole has visited them twice a year, lecturing and giving advice upon designs for lace. The

composition of new patterns for lace was attempted, and old patterns which had degenerated were revised and redrawn for the use of the workers connected with the convents. There are now twelve convents, Mr. Cole tells us, where instruction in drawing and in the composition of patterns is given, and some of the students have won some of the higher prizes offered by the Department of Science and Art for designing lace-patterns.

The Cork School of Art then acquired a collection of finely-patterned old laces, selections from which are freely circulated through the different convents connected with that school. They have also the privilege of borrowing similar specimens of old lace from the South Kensington Museum. So successful has been the system of education pursued by Mr. Brennan, the head-master of the Cork School of Art, that two female students of his school last year gained the gold and silver medals for their designs for laces and crochets at the national competition which annually takes place in London between all the Schools of Art in the United Kingdom. As for the many lace-makers who were not connected either with the convents or with the art schools, in order to assist them, a committee of ladies and gentlemen interested in Irish lace-making raised subscriptions, and offered prizes to be competed for by designers generally. The best designs were then placed out with lace-makers, and carried into execution. It is, of course, often said that the proper person to make the design is the lace-maker. Mr. Cole, however, points out that from the sixteenth century forward the patterns for ornamental laces have always been designed by decorative artists having knowledge of the composition of ornament, and of the materials for which they were called upon to design. Lace pattern books were published in considerable quantity in Italy, France and Germany during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and from these the lace-makers worked. Many lace-makers would, no doubt, derive benefit from practice in drawing, in discriminating between well and badly shaped forms. But the skill they are primarily required to show and to develop is one of fine fingers in reproducing beautiful forms in threads. The conception, arrangement, and drawing of beautiful forms for a design, have to be undertaken by decorative artists acquainted with the limitations of those materials and methods which the ultimate expression of the design involves.

This lovely Irish art of lace-making is very much indebted to Mr. Cole, who has really re-created it, given it new life, and shown it the true artistic lines on which to progress. Hardly £20,000 a year is spent by England upon Irish laces, and almost all of this goes upon the cheaper and commoner kinds. And yet, as Mr. Cole points out, it is possible to produce Irish laces of as high artistic quality as almost any foreign laces. The Queen, Lady Londonderry, Lady Dorothy Nevill, Mrs. Alfred Morrison, and

others, have done much to encourage the Irish workers, and it rests largely with the ladies of England whether this beautiful art lives or dies. The real good of a piece of lace, says Mr. Ruskin, is 'that it should show, first, that the designer of it had a pretty fancy; next, that the maker of it had fine fingers; lastly, that the wearer of it has worthiness or dignity enough to obtain what is difficult to obtain, and common-sense enough not to wear it on all occasions.'

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The High-Caste Hindu Woman is an interesting book. It is from the pen of the Pundita Ramabai Sarasvati, and the introduction is written by Miss Rachel Bodley, M.D., the Dean of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania. The story of the parentage of this learned lady is very curious. A certain Hindu, being on a religious pilgrimage with his family, which consisted of his wife and two daughters, one nine and the other seven years of age, stopped in a town to rest for a day or two. One morning the Hindu was bathing in the sacred river Godavari, near the town, when he saw a fine-looking man coming there to bathe also. After the ablution and the morning prayers were over, the father inquired of the stranger who he was and whence he came. On learning his caste, and clan, and dwelling-place, and also that he was a widower, he offered him his little daughter of nine in marriage. All things were settled in an hour or so; next day the marriage was concluded, and the little girl placed in the possession of the stranger, who took her nearly nine hundred miles away from her home, and gave her into the charge of his mother. The stranger was the learned Ananta Shastri, a Brahman pundit, who had very advanced views on the subject of woman's education, and he determined that he would teach his girl-wife Sanskrit, and give her the intellectual culture that had been always denied to women in India. Their daughter was the Pundita Ramabai, who, after the death of her parents, travelled all over India advocating the cause of female education, and to whom seems to be due the first suggestion for the establishment of the profession of women doctors. In 1866, Miss Mary Carpenter made a short tour in India for the purpose of finding out some way by which women's condition in that country might be improved. She at once discovered that the chief means by which the desired end could be accomplished was by furnishing women teachers for the Hindu Zenanas. She suggested that the British Government should establish normal schools for training women teachers, and that scholarships should be awarded to girls in order to prolong their school-going period, and to assist indigent women who would otherwise be unable to pursue their studies.

In response to Miss Carpenter's appeal, upon her return to England, the English Government founded several schools for women in India, and a few 'Mary Carpenter Scholarships' were endowed by benevolent persons. These schools were open to

women of every caste; but while they have undoubtedly been of use, they have not realised the hopes of their founders, chiefly through the impossibility of keeping caste rules in them. Ramabai, in a very eloquent chapter, proposes to solve the problem in a different way. Her suggestion is that houses should be opened for the young and high-caste child-widows, where they can take shelter without the fear of losing their caste, or of being disturbed in their religious belief, and where they may have entire freedom of action as regards caste rules. The whole account given by the Pundita of the life of the high-caste Hindu lady is full of suggestion for the social reformer and the student of progress, and her book, which is wonderfully well written, is likely to produce a radical change in the educational schemes that at present prevail in India.

(1) *Venetia Victrix*. By Caroline Fitz Gerald. (Macmillan and Co.)

(2) *Darwinism and Politics*. By David Ritchie, Jesus College, Oxford. (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.)

(3) *The High-Caste Hindu Woman*. By the Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati. (Bell and Sons.)

OUIDA'S NEW NOVEL

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 17, 1889.)

Ouida is the last of the romantics. She belongs to the school of Bulwer Lytton and George Sand, though she may lack the learning of the one and the sincerity of the other. She tries to make passion, imagination, and poetry part of fiction. She still believes in heroes and in heroines. She is florid and fervent and fanciful. Yet even she, the high priestess of the impossible, is affected by her age. Her last book, *Guilderoy* as she calls it, is an elaborate psychological study of modern temperaments. For her, it is realistic, and she has certainly caught much of the tone and temper of the society of our day. Her people move with ease and grace and indolence. The book may be described as a study of the peerage from a poetical point of view. Those who are tired of mediocre young curates who have doubts, of serious young ladies who have missions, and of the ordinary figureheads of most of the English fiction of our time, might turn with pleasure, if not with profit, to this amazing romance. It is a resplendent picture of our aristocracy. No expense has been spared in gilding. For the comparatively small sum of £1, 11s. 6d. one is introduced to the best society. The central figures are exaggerated, but the background is admirable. In spite of everything, it gives one a sense of something like life.

What is the story? Well, we must admit that we have a faint suspicion that Ouida has told it to us before. Lord Guilderoy, 'whose name was as old as the days of Knut,' falls madly in love, or fancies that he falls madly in love, with a rustic Perdita, a provincial

Artemis who has 'a Gainsborough face, with wide-opened questioning eyes and tumbled auburn hair.' She is poor but well-born, being the only child of Mr. Vernon of Llanarth, a curious recluse, who is half a pedant and half Don Quixote. Guilderoy marries her and, tiring of her shyness, her lack of power to express herself, her want of knowledge of fashionable life, returns to an old passion for a wonderful creature called the Duchess of Soriá. Lady Guilderoy becomes ice; the Duchess becomes fire; at the end of the book Guilderoy is a pitiable object. He has to submit to be forgiven by one woman, and to endure to be forgotten by the other. He is thoroughly weak, thoroughly worthless, and the most fascinating person in the whole story. Then there is his sister Lady Sunbury, who is very anxious for Guilderoy to marry, and is quite determined to hate his wife. She is really a capital sketch. Ouida describes her as 'one of those admirably virtuous women who are more likely to turn men away from the paths of virtue than the wickedest of sirens.' She irritates herself, alienates her children, and infuriates her husband:

'You are perfectly right; I know you are always right; I admit you are; but it is just that which makes you so damnably odious!' said Lord Sunbury once, in a burst of rage, in his town house, speaking in such stentorian tones that the people passing up Grosvenor Street looked up at his open windows, and a crossing-sweeper said to a match-seller, 'My eye! ain't he giving it to the old gal like blazes.'

The noblest character in the book is Lord Aubrey. As he is not a genius he, naturally, behaves admirably on every occasion. He begins by pitying the neglected Lady Guilderoy, and ends by loving her, but he makes the great renunciation with considerable effect, and, having induced Lady Guilderoy to receive back her husband, he accepts 'a distant and arduous Viceroyalty.' He is Ouida's ideal of the true politician, for Ouida has apparently taken to the study of English politics. A great deal of her book is devoted to political disquisitions. She believes that the proper rulers of a country like ours are the aristocrats. Oligarchy has great fascinations for her. She thinks meanly of the people and adores the House of Lords and Lord Salisbury. Here are some of her views. We will not call them ideas:

The House of Lords wants nothing of the nation, and therefore it is the only candid and disinterested guardian of the people's needs and resources. It has never withstood the real desire of the country: it has only stood between the country and its impetuous and evanescent follies.

A democracy cannot understand honour; how should it? The Caucus is chiefly made up of men who sand their sugar, put alum in their bread, forge bayonets and girders

which bend like willow-wands, send bad calico to India, and insure vessels at Lloyd's which they know will go to the bottom before they have been ten days at sea.

Lord Salisbury has often been accused of arrogance; people have never seen that what they mistook for arrogance was the natural, candid consciousness of a great noble that he is more capable of leading the country than most men composing it would be.

Democracy, after having made everything supremely hideous and uncomfortable for everybody, always ends by clinging to the coat tails of some successful general.

The prosperous politician may be honest, but his honesty is at best a questionable quality. The moment that a thing is a *métier*, it is wholly absurd to talk about any disinterestedness in the pursuit of it. To the professional politician national affairs are a manufacture into which he puts his audacity and his time, and out of which he expects to make so much percentage for his lifetime.

There is too great a tendency to govern the world by noise.

Ouida's aphorisms on women, love, and modern society are somewhat more characteristic:

Women speak as though the heart were to be treated at will like a stone, or a bath.

Half the passions of men die early, because they are expected to be eternal.

It is the folly of life that lends charm to it.

What is the cause of half the misery of women? That their love is so much more tenacious than the man's: it grows stronger as his grows weaker.

To endure the country in England for long, one must have the rusticity of Wordsworth's mind, and boots and stockings as homely.

It is because men feel the necessity to explain that they drop into the habit of saying what is not true. Wise is the woman who never insists on an explanation.

Love can make its own world in a solitude *à deux*, but marriage cannot.

Nominally monogamous, all cultured society is polygamous; often even polyandrous.

Moralists say that a soul should resist passion. They might as well say that a house should resist an earthquake.

The whole world is just now on its knees before the poorer classes: all the cardinal virtues are taken for granted in them, and it is only property of any kind which is the sinner.

Men are not merciful to women's tears as a rule; and when it is a woman belonging to them who weeps, they only go out, and slam the door behind them.

Men always consider women unjust to them, when they fail to deify their weaknesses.

No passion, once broken, will ever bear renewal.

Feeling loses its force and its delicacy if we put it under the microscope too often.

Anything which is not flattery seems injustice to a woman.

When society is aware that you think it a flock of geese, it revenges itself by hissing loudly behind your back.

Of descriptions of scenery and art we have, of course, a large number, and it is impossible not to recognise the touch of the real Ouida manner in the following:

It was an old palace: lofty, spacious, magnificent, and dull. Busts of dusky yellow marble, weird bronzes stretching out gaunt arms into the darkness, ivories brown with age, worn brocades with gold threads gleaming in them, and tapestries with strange and pallid figures of dead gods, were all half revealed and half obscured in the twilight. As he moved through them, a figure which looked almost as pale as the Adonis of the tapestry and was erect and motionless like the statue of the wounded Love, came before his sight out of the darkness. It was that of Gladys.

It is a manner full of exaggeration and overemphasis, but with some remarkable rhetorical qualities and a good deal of colour. Ouida is fond of airing a smattering of culture, but she has a certain intrinsic insight into things and, though she is rarely true, she is never dull. *Guilderoy*, with all its faults, which are great, and its absurdities, which are greater, is a book to be read.

Guilderoy. By Ouida. (Chatto and Windus.)

SOME LITERARY NOTES—VI

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

A writer in the *Quarterly Review* for January 1874 says:

No literary event since the war has excited anything like such a sensation in Paris as the publication of the *Lettres à une Inconnue*. Even politics became a secondary consideration for the hour, and academicians or deputies of opposite parties might be seen eagerly accosting each other in the Chamber or the street to inquire who this fascinating and perplexing 'unknown' could be. The statement in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* that she was an Englishwoman, moving in brilliant society, was not supported by evidence; and M. Blanchard, the painter, from whom the publisher received the manuscripts, died most provokingly at the very commencement of the inquiry, and made no sign. Some intimate friends of Mérimée, rendered incredulous by wounded self-love at not having been admitted to his confidence, insisted that there was no secret to tell; their hypothesis being that the *Inconnue* was a myth, and the letters a

romance, with which some petty details of actual life had been interwoven to keep up the mystification.

But an artist like Mérimée would not have left his work in so unformed a state, so defaced by repetitions, or with such a want of proportion between the parts. The *Inconnue* was undoubtedly a real person, and her letters in answer to those of Mérimée have just been published by Messrs. Macmillan under the title of *An Author's Love*.

Her letters? Well, they are such letters as she might have written. 'By the tideless sea at Cannes on a summer day,' says their anonymous author, 'I had fallen asleep, and the plashing of the waves upon the shore had doubtless made me dream. When I awoke the yellow paper-covered volumes of Prosper Mérimée's *Lettres à une Inconnue* lay beside me; I had been reading the book before I fell asleep, but the answers—had they ever been written, or had I only dreamed?' The invention of the love-letters of a curious and unknown personality, the heroine of one of the great literary flirtations of our age, was a clever idea, and certainly the author has carried out his scheme with wonderful success; with such success indeed that it is said that one of our statesmen, whose name occurs more than once in the volume, was for a moment completely taken in by what is really a *jeu-d'esprit*, the first serious joke perpetrated by Messrs. Macmillan in their publishing capacity. Perhaps it is too much to call it a joke. It is a fine, delicate piece of fiction, an imaginative attempt to complete a real romance. As we had the letters of the academic Romeo, it was obviously right that we should pretend we had the answers of the clever and somewhat *mondaine* Juliet. Or is it Juliet herself, in her little Paris boudoir, looking over these two volumes with a sad, cynical smile? Well, to be put into fiction is always a tribute to one's reality.

As for extracts from these fascinating forgeries, the letters should be read in conjunction with those of Mérimée himself. It is difficult to judge of them by samples. We find the *Inconnue* first in London, probably in 1840.

Little (she writes) can you imagine the storm of indignation you aroused in me by your remark that your feelings for me were those suitable for a fourteen-year-old niece. Merci. Anything less like a respectable uncle than yourself I cannot well imagine. The rôle would never suit you, believe me, so do not try it.

Now in return for your story of the phlegmatic musical animal who called forth such stormy devotion in a female breast, and who, himself cold and indifferent, was loved to the extent of a watery grave being sought by his inamorata as solace for his indifference, let me ask the question why the women who torment men with their

uncertain tempers, drive them wild with jealousy, laugh contemptuously at their humble entreaties, and fling their money to the winds, have twice the hold upon their affections that the patient, long-suffering, domestic, frugal Griseldas have, whose existences are one long penance of unsuccessful efforts to please? Answer this comprehensively, and you will have solved a riddle which has puzzled women since Eve asked questions in Paradise.

Later on she writes:

Why should all natures be alike? It would make the old saws useless if they were, and deprive us of one of the truest of them all, 'Variety is the spice of life.' How terribly monotonous it would be if all the flowers were roses, every woman a queen, and each man a philosopher. My private opinion is that it takes at least six men such as one meets every day to make one really valuable one. I like so many men for one particular quality which they possess, and so few men for all. *Comprenez-vous?*

In another place:

Is it not a trifle dangerous, this experiment we are trying of a friendship in pen and ink and paper? A letter. What thing on earth more dangerous to confide in? Written at blood heat, it may reach its destination when the recipient's mental thermometer counts zero, and the burning words and thrilling sentences may turn to ice and be congealed as they are read. . . . A letter; the most uncertain thing in a world of uncertainties, the best or the worst thing devised by mortals.

Again:

Surely it was for you, *mon cher*, that the description given of a friend of mine was originally intended. He is a trifle cynical, this friend, and decidedly pessimistic, and of him it was reported that he never believed in anything until he saw it, and then he was convinced that it was an optical illusion. The accuracy of the description struck me.

They seem to have loved each other best when they were parted.

I think I cannot bear it much longer, this incessant quarrelling when we meet, and your unkindness during the short time that you are with me. Why not let it all end? it would be better for both of us. I do not love you less when I write these words; if you could know the sadness which they echo in my heart you would believe this. No, I think I love you more, but I cannot understand you. As you have often said, our natures must be very different, entirely different; if so, what is this curious bond between them? To me you seem possessed with some strange restlessness and morbid melancholy which utterly spoils your life, and in return you never see me without overwhelming me

with reproaches, if not for one thing, for another. I tell you I cannot, will not, bear it longer. If you love me, then in God's name cease tormenting me as well as yourself with these wretched doubts and questionings and complaints. I have been ill, seriously ill, and there is nothing to account for my illness save the misery of this apparently hopeless state of things existing between us. You have made me weep bitter tears of alternate self-reproach and indignation, and finally of complete miserable bewilderment as to this unhappy condition of affairs. Believe me, tears like these are not good to mingle with love, they are too bitter, too scorching, they blister love's wings and fall too heavily on love's heart. I feel worn out with a dreary sort of hopelessness; if you know a cure for pain like this send it to me quickly.

Yet, in the very next letter, she says to him:

Although I said good-bye to you less than an hour ago, I cannot refrain from writing to tell you that a happy calm which seems to penetrate my whole being seems also to have wiped out all remembrance of the misery and unhappiness which has overwhelmed me lately. Why cannot it always be so, or would life perhaps be then too blessed, too wholly happy for it to be life? I know that you are free to-night, will you not write to me, that the first words my eyes fall upon to-morrow shall prove that to-day has not been a dream? Yes, write to me.

The letter that immediately follows is one of six words only:

Let me dream—Let me dream.

In the following there are interesting touches of actuality:

Did you ever try a cup of tea (the national beverage, by the way) at an English railway station? If you have not, I would advise you, as a friend, to continue to abstain! The names of the American drinks are rather against them, the straws are, I think, about the best part of them. You do not tell me what you think of Mr. Disraeli. I once met him at a ball at the Duke of Sutherland's in the long picture gallery of Stafford House. I was walking with Lord Shrewsbury, and without a word of warning he stopped and introduced him, mentioning with reckless mendacity that I had read every book he had written and admired them all, then he coolly walked off and left me standing face to face with the great statesman. He talked to me for some time, and I studied him carefully. I should say he was a man with one steady aim: endless patience, untiring perseverance, iron concentration; marking out one straight line before him so unbending that despite themselves men stand aside as it is drawn straightly and steadily on. A man who believes that determination brings strength, strength brings endurance, and endurance brings success. You know how often in his novels he

speaks of the influence of women, socially, morally, and politically, yet his manner was the least interested or deferential in talking that I have ever met with in a man of his class. He certainly thought this particular woman of singularly small account, or else the brusque and tactless allusion to his books may perhaps have annoyed him as it did me; but whatever the cause, when he promptly left me at the first approach of a mutual acquaintance, I felt distinctly snubbed. Of the two men, Mr. Gladstone was infinitely more agreeable in his manner, he left one with the pleasant feeling of measuring a little higher in cubic inches than one did before, than which I know no more delightful sensation. A Paris, bientôt.

Elsewhere, we find cleverly-written descriptions of life in Italy, in Algiers, at Hombourg, at French boarding-houses; stories about Napoleon III., Guizot, Prince Gortschakoff, Montalembert, and others; political speculations, literary criticisms, and witty social scandal; and everywhere a keen sense of humour, a wonderful power of observation. As reconstructed in these letters, the *Inconnue* seems to have been not unlike Mérimée himself. She had the same restless, unyielding, independent character. Each desired to analyse the other. Each, being a critic, was better fitted for friendship than for love. 'We are so different,' said Mérimée once to her, 'that we can hardly understand each other.' But it was because they were so alike that each remained a mystery to the other. Yet they ultimately attained to a high altitude of loyal and faithful friendship, and from a purely literary point of view these fictitious letters give the finishing touch to the strange romance that so stirred Paris fifteen years ago. Perhaps the real letters will be published some day. When they are, how interesting to compare them!

The Bird-Bride, by Graham R. Tomson, is a collection of romantic ballads, delicate sonnets, and metrical studies in foreign fanciful forms. The poem that gives its title to the book is the lament of an Eskimo hunter over the loss of his wife and children.

Years ago, on the flat white strand,
I won my sweet sea-girl:
Wrapped in my coat of the snow-white fur,
I watched the wild birds settle and stir,
The grey gulls gather and whirl.

One, the greatest of all the flock,
Perched on an ice-floe bare,
Called and cried as her heart were broke,
And straight they were changed, that fleet bird-folk,
To women young and fair.

Swift I sprang from my hiding-place
And held the fairest fast;
I held her fast, the sweet, strange thing:
Her comrades skirled, but they all took wing,
And smote me as they passed.

I bore her safe to my warm snow house;
Full sweetly there she smiled;
And yet, whenever the shrill winds blew,
She would beat her long white arms anew,
And her eyes glanced quick and wild.

But I took her to wife, and clothed her warm
With skins of the gleaming seal;
Her wandering glances sank to rest
When she held a babe to her fair, warm breast,
And she loved me dear and leal.

Together we tracked the fox and the seal,
And at her behest I swore
That bird and beast my bow might slay
For meat and for raiment, day by day,
But never a grey gull more.

Famine comes upon the land, and the hunter, forgetting his oath, slays four sea-gulls for food. The bird-wife 'shrilled out in a woful cry,' and taking the plumage of the dead birds, she makes wings for her children and for herself, and flies away with them.

'Babes of mine, of the wild wind's kin,
Feather ye quick, nor stay.
Oh, oho! but the wild winds blow!
Babes of mine, it is time to go:
Up, dear hearts, and away!'

And lo! the grey plumes covered them all,
Shoulder and breast and brow.
I felt the wind of their whirling flight:
Was it sea or sky? was it day or night?
It is always night-time now.

Dear, will you never relent, come back?
I loved you long and true.

O winged white wife, and our children three,
Of the wild wind's kin though you surely be,
Are ye not of my kin too?

Ay, ye once were mine, and, till I forget,
Ye are mine forever and aye,
Mine, wherever your wild wings go,
While shrill winds whistle across the snow
And the skies are blear and grey.

Some powerful and strong ballads follow, many of which, such as *The Cruel Priest*, *Deid Folks' Ferry*, and *Märchen*, are in that curious combination of Scotch and Border dialect so much affected now by our modern poets. Certainly dialect is dramatic. It is a vivid method of re-creating a past that never existed. It is something between 'A Return to Nature' and 'A Return to the Glossary.' It is so artificial that it is really naïve. From the point of view of mere music, much may be said for it. Wonderful diminutives lend new notes of tenderness to the song. There are possibilities of fresh rhymes, and in search for a fresh rhyme poets may be excused if they wander from the broad highroad of classical utterance into devious byways and less-trodden paths. Sometimes one is tempted to look on dialect as expressing simply the pathos of provincialisms, but there is more in it than mere mispronunciations. With the revival of an antique form, often comes the revival of an antique spirit. Through limitations that are sometimes uncouth, and always narrow, comes Tragedy herself; and though she may stammer in her utterance, and deck herself in cast-off weeds and trammelling raiment, still we must hold ourselves in readiness to accept her, so rare are her visits to us now, so rare her presence in an age that demands a happy ending from every play, and that sees in the theatre merely a source of amusement. The form, too, of the ballad—how perfect it is in its dramatic unity! It is so perfect that we must forgive it its dialect, if it happens to speak in that strange tongue.

Then by cam' the bride's company
Wi' torches burning bright.
'Tak' up, tak' up your bonny bride
A' in the mirk midnight!

Oh, wan, wan was the bridegroom's face
And wan, wan was the bride,
But clay-cauld was the young mess-priest
That stood them twa beside!

Says, 'Rax me out your hand, Sir Knight,
And wed her wi' this ring';
And the deid bride's hand it was as cauld
As ony earthly thing.

The priest he touched that lady's hand,
And never a word he said;
The priest he touched that lady's hand,
And his ain was wet and red.

The priest he lifted his ain right hand,
And the red blood dripped and fell.
Says, 'I loved ye, lady, and ye loved me;
Sae I took your life mysel'.

.....

Oh! red, red was the dawn o' day,
And tall was the gallows-tree:
The Southland lord to his ain has fled
And the mess-priest's hangit hie!

Of the sonnets, this *To Herodotus* is worth quoting:

Far-travelled coaster of the midland seas,
What marvels did those curious eyes behold!
Winged snakes, and carven labyrinths of old;
The emerald column raised to Heracles;
King Perseus' shrine upon the Chemmian leas;
Four-footed fishes, decked with gems and gold:
But thou didst leave some secrets yet untold,
And veiled the dread Osirian mysteries.

And now the golden asphodels among
Thy footsteps fare, and to the lordly dead
Thou tellest all the stories left unsaid
Of secret rites and runes forgotten long,
Of that dark folk who ate the Lotus-bread
And sang the melancholy Linus-song.

Mrs. Tomson has certainly a very refined sense of form. Her verse, especially in the series entitled *New Words to Old Tunes*, has grace and distinction. Some of the

shorter poems are, to use a phrase made classical by Mr. Pater, 'little carved ivories of speech.' She is one of our most artistic workers in poetry, and treats language as a fine material.

(1) *An Author's Love: Being the Unpublished Letters of Prosper Mérimée's 'Inconnue.'* (Macmillan and Co.)

(2) *The Bird-Bride: A Volume of Ballads and Sonnets.* By Graham R. Tomson. (Longmans, Green and Co.)

A THOUGHT-READER'S NOVEL

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, June 5, 1889.)

There is a great deal to be said in favour of reading a novel backwards. The last page is, as a rule, the most interesting, and when one begins with the catastrophe or the *dénoûment* one feels on pleasant terms of equality with the author. It is like going behind the scenes of a theatre. One is no longer taken in, and the hairbreadth escapes of the hero and the wild agonies of the heroine leave one absolutely unmoved. One knows the jealously-guarded secret, and one can afford to smile at the quite unnecessary anxiety that the puppets of fiction always consider it their duty to display. In the case of Mr. Stuart Cumberland's novel, *The Vasty Deep*, as he calls it, the last page is certainly thrilling and makes us curious to know more about 'Brown, the medium.'

Scene, a padded room in a mad-house in the United States.

A gibbering lunatic discovered dashing wildly about the chamber as if in the act of chasing invisible forms.

'This is our worst case,' says a doctor opening the cell to one of the visitors in lunacy. 'He was a spirit medium and he is hourly haunted by the creations of his fancy. We have to carefully watch him, for he has developed suicidal tendencies.'

The lunatic makes a dash at the retreating form of his visitors, and, as the door closes upon him, sinks with a yell upon the floor.

A week later the lifeless body of Brown, the medium, is found suspended from the gas bracket in his cell.

How clearly one sees it all! How forcible and direct the style is! And what a thrilling touch of actuality the simple mention of the 'gas bracket' gives us! Certainly *The Vasty Deep* is a book to be read.

And we have read it; read it with great care. Though it is largely autobiographical, it is none the less a work of fiction and, though some of us may think that there is very little use in exposing what is already exposed and revealing the secrets of Polichinelle, no doubt there are many who will be interested to hear of the tricks and deceptions of crafty mediums, of their gauze masks, telescopic rods and invisible silk threads, and of the marvellous raps they can produce simply by displacing the *peroneus longus* muscle! The book opens with a description of the scene by the death-bed of Alderman Parkinson. Dr. Josiah Brown, the eminent medium, is in attendance and tries to comfort the honest merchant by producing noises on the bedpost. Mr. Parkinson, however, being extremely anxious to revisit Mrs. Parkinson, in a materialised form after death, will not be satisfied till he has received from his wife a solemn promise that she will not marry again, such a marriage being, in his eyes, nothing more nor less than bigamy. Having received an assurance to this effect from her, Mr. Parkinson dies, his soul, according to the medium, being escorted to the spheres by 'a band of white-robed spirits.' This is the prologue. The next chapter is entitled 'Five Years After.' Violet Parkinson, the Alderman's only child, is in love with Jack Alston, who is 'poor, but clever.' Mrs. Parkinson, however, will not hear of any marriage till the deceased Alderman has materialised himself and given his formal consent. A seance is held at which Jack Alston unmaskes the medium and shows Dr. Josiah Brown to be an impostor—a foolish act, on his part, as he is at once ordered to leave the house by the infuriated Mrs. Parkinson, whose faith in the Doctor is not in the least shaken by the unfortunate exposure.

The lovers are consequently parted. Jack sails for Newfoundland, is shipwrecked and carefully, somewhat too carefully, tended by 'La-ki-wa, or the Star that shines,' a lovely Indian maiden who belongs to the tribe of the Micmacs. She is a fascinating creature who wears 'a necklace composed of thirteen nuggets of pure gold,' a blanket of English manufacture and trousers of tanned leather. In fact, as Mr. Stuart Cumberland observes, she looks 'the embodiment of fresh dewy morn.' When Jack, on recovering his senses, sees her, he naturally inquires who she is. She answers, in the simple utterance endeared to us by Fenimore Cooper, 'I am La-ki-wa. I am the only child of my father, Tall Pine, chief of the Dildoos.' She talks, Mr. Cumberland informs us, very good English. Jack at once entrusts her with the following telegram which he writes on the back of a five-pound note:—

Miss Violet Parkinson, Hotel Kronprinz, Franzensbad, Austria.—Safe. JACK.

But La-ki-wa, we regret to say, says to herself, 'He belongs to Tall Pine, to the Dildoos, and to me,' and never sends the telegram. Subsequently, La-ki-wa proposes to Jack who promptly rejects her and, with the usual callousness of men, offers her a

brother's love. La-ki-wa, naturally, regrets the premature disclosure of her passion and weeps. 'My brother,' she remarks, 'will think that I have the timid heart of a deer with the crying voice of a papoose. I, the daughter of Tall Pine—I a Micmac, to show the grief that is in my heart. O, my brother, I am ashamed.' Jack comforts her with the hollow sophistries of a civilised being and gives her his photograph. As he is on his way to the steamer he receives from Big Deer a soiled piece of a biscuit bag. On it is written La-ki-wa's confession of her disgraceful behaviour about the telegram. 'His thoughts,' Mr. Cumberland tells us, 'were bitter towards La-ki-wa, but they gradually softened when he remembered what he owed her.'

Everything ends happily. Jack arrives in England just in time to prevent Dr. Josiah Brown from mesmerising Violet whom the cunning doctor is anxious to marry, and he hurls his rival out of the window. The victim is discovered 'bruised and bleeding among the broken flower-pots' by a comic policeman. Mrs. Parkinson still believes in spiritualism, but refuses to have anything to do with Brown as she discovers that the deceased Alderman's 'materialised beard' was made only of 'horrid, coarse horsehair.' Jack and Violet are married at last and Jack is horrid enough to send to 'La-ki-wa' another photograph. The end of Dr. Brown is chronicled above. Had we not known what was in store for him we should hardly have got through the book. There is a great deal too much padding in it about Dr. Slade and Dr. Bartram and other mediums, and the disquisitions on the commercial future of Newfoundland seem endless and are intolerable. However, there are many publics, and Mr. Stuart Cumberland is always sure of an audience. His chief fault is a tendency to low comedy; but some people like low comedy in fiction.

The Vasty Deep: A Strange Story of To-day. By Stuart Cumberland. (Sampson Low and Co.)

THE POETS' CORNER—X

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, June 24, 1889.)

Is Mr. Alfred Austin among the Socialists? Has somebody converted the respectable editor of the respectable *National Review*? Has even dulness become revolutionary? From a poem in Mr. Austin's last volume this would seem to be the case. It is perhaps unfair to take our rhymers too seriously. Between the casual fancies of a poet and the callous facts of prose there is, or at least there should be, a wide difference. But since the poem in question, *Two Visions*, as Mr. Austin calls it, was begun in 1863 and revised in 1889 we may regard it as fully representative of Mr. Austin's mature views. He gives us, at any rate, in its somewhat lumbering and pedestrian verses, his conception of the perfect state:

Fearless, unveiled, and unattended
Strolled maidens to and fro:
Youths looked respect, but never bended
Obsequiously low.

And each with other, sans condition,
Held parley brief or long,
Without provoking coarse suspicion
Of marriage, or of wrong.

All were well clad, and none were better,
And gems beheld I none,
Save where there hung a jewelled fetter,
Symbolic, in the sun.

I saw a noble-looking maiden
Close Dante's solemn book,
And go, with crate of linen laden
And wash it in the brook.

Anon, a broad-browed poet, dragging
A load of logs along,
To warm his hearth, withal not flagging
In current of his song.

Each one some handicraft attempted
Or helped to till the soil:
None but the aged were exempted
From communistic toil.

Such an expression as 'coarse suspicion of marriage' is not very fortunate; the log-rolling poet of the fifth stanza is an ideal that we have already realised and one in which we had but little comfort, and the fourth stanza leaves us in doubt whether Mr. Austin means that washerwomen are to take to reading Dante, or that students of Italian literature are to wash their own clothes. But, on the whole, though Mr. Austin's vision of the *citta divina* of the future is not very inspiring, it is certainly extremely interesting as a sign of the times, and it is evident from the two concluding lines of the following stanzas that there will be no danger of the intellect being overworked:

Age lorded not, nor rose the hectic
Up to the cheek of youth;

But reigned throughout their dialectic
Sobriety of truth.

And if a long-held contest tended
To ill-defined result,
It was by calm consent suspended
As over-difficult.

Mr. Austin, however, has other moods, and, perhaps, he is at his best when he is writing about flowers. Occasionally he wearies the reader by tedious enumerations of plants, lacking indeed reticence and tact and selection in many of his descriptions, but, as a rule, he is very pleasant when he is babbling of green fields. How pretty these stanzas from the dedication are!

When vines, just newly burgeoned, link
Their hands to join the dance of Spring,
Green lizards glisten from cleft and chink,
And almond blossoms rosy pink
Cluster and perch, ere taking wing;

Where over strips of emerald wheat
Glimmer red peach and snowy pear,
And nightingales all day long repeat
Their love-song, not less glad than sweet
They chant in sorrow and gloom elsewhere;

Where purple iris-banners scale
Defending walls and crumbling ledge,
And virgin windflowers, lithe and frail,
Now mantling red, now trembling pale,
Peep out from furrow and hide in hedge.

Some of the sonnets also (notably, one entitled *When Acorns Fall*) are very charming, and though, as a whole, *Love's Widowhood* is tedious and prolix, still it contains some very felicitous touches. We wish, however, that Mr. Austin would not write such lines as

Pippins of every sort, and codlins manifold.

'Codlins manifold' is a monstrous expression.

Mr. W. J. Linton's fame as a wood-engraver has somewhat obscured the merits of his poetry. His *Claribel and Other Poems*, published in 1865, is now a scarce book, and

far more scarce is the collection of lyrics which he printed in 1887 at his own press and brought out under the title of *Love-Lore*. The large and handsome volume that now lies before us contains nearly all these later poems as well as a selection from *Claribel* and many renderings, in the original metre, of French poems ranging from the thirteenth century to our own day. A portrait of Mr. Linton is prefixed, and the book is dedicated 'To William Bell Scott, my friend for nearly fifty years.' As a poet Mr. Linton is always fanciful with a studied fancifulness, and often felicitous with a chance felicity. He is fascinated by our seventeenth-century singers, and has, here and there, succeeded in catching something of their quaintness and not a little of their charm. There is a pleasant flavour about his verse. It is entirely free from violence and from vagueness, those two besetting sins of so much modern poetry. It is clear in outline and restrained in form, and, at its best, has much that is light and lovely about it. How graceful, for instance, this is!

BARE FEET

O fair white feet! O dawn-white feet
Of Her my hope may claim!
Bare-footed through the dew she came
Her Love to meet.

Star-glancing feet, the windflowers sweet
Might envy, without shame,
As through the grass they lightly came,
Her Love to meet.

O Maiden sweet, with flower-kiss'd feet!
My heart your footstool name!
Bare-footed through the dew she came,
Her Love to meet.

'Vindicate Gemma!' was Longfellow's advice to Miss Héloïse Durant when she proposed to write a play about Dante. Longfellow, it may be remarked, was always on the side of domesticity. It was the secret of his popularity. We cannot say, however, that Miss Durant has made us like Gemma better. She is not exactly the Xantippe whom Boccaccio describes, but she is very boring, for all that:

GEMMA. The more thou meditat'st, more mad art thou.
Clowns, with their love, can cheer poor wives' hearts more
O'er black bread and goat's cheese than thou canst mine
O'er red Vernaccia, spite of all thy learning!

Care I how tortured spirits feel in hell?

DANTE. Thou tortur'st mine.

GEMMA. Or how souls sing in heaven?

DANTE. Would I were there.

GEMMA. All folly, naught but folly.

DANTE. Thou canst not understand the mandates given
To poets by their goddess Poesy. . . .

GEMMA. Canst ne'er speak prose? Why daily clothe thy thoughts
In strangest garb, as if thy wits played fool

At masquerade, where no man knows a maid
From matron? Fie on poets' mutterings!

DANTE (to himself). If, then, the soul absorbed at last to whole—

GEMMA. Fie! fie! I say. Art thou bewitched?

DANTE. O! peace.

GEMMA. Dost thou deem me deaf and dumb?

DANTE. O! that thou wert.

Dante is certainly rude, but Gemma is dreadful. The play is well meant but it is lumbering and heavy, and the blank verse has absolutely no merit.

Father O'Flynn and Other Irish Lyrics, by Mr. A. P. Graves, is a collection of poems in the style of Lover. Most of them are written in dialect, and, for the benefit of English readers, notes are appended in which the uninitiated are informed that 'brogue' means a boot, that 'mavourneen' means my dear, and that 'astore' is a term of affection. Here is a specimen of Mr. Graves's work:

'Have you e'er a new song,

My Limerick Poet,

To help us along

Wid this terrible boat,

Away over to Tork?'

'Arrah I understand;

For all of your work,

'Twill tighten you, boys,

To cargo that sand

To the overside strand,

Wid the current so strong

Unless you've a song—

A song to lighten and brighten you, boys. . . .'

It is a very dreary production and does not 'lighten and brighten' us a bit. The whole volume should be called *The Lucubrations of a Stage Irishman*.

The anonymous author of *The Judgment of the City* is a sort of bad Blake. So at least his prelude seems to suggest:

Time, the old viol-player,
For ever thrills his ancient strings
With the flying bow of Fate, and thence
Much discord, but some music, brings.

His ancient strings are truth,
Love, hate, hope, fear;
And his choicest melody
Is the song of the faithful seer.

As he progresses, however, he develops into a kind of inferior Clough and writes heavy hexameters upon modern subjects:

Here for a moment stands in the light at the door of a playhouse,
One who is dignified, masterly, hard in the pride of his station;
Here too, the stateliest of matrons, sour in the pride of her station;
With them their daughter, sad-faced and listless, half-crushed to their likeness.

He has every form of sincerity except the sincerity of the artist, a defect that he shares with most of our popular writers.

(1) *Love's Widowhood and Other Poems*. By Alfred Austin. (Macmillan and Co.)

(2) *Poems and Translations*. By W. J. Linton. (Nimmo.)

(3) *Dante: a Dramatic Poem*. By Héloïse Durant. (Kegan Paul.)

(4) *Father O'Flynn and Other Irish Lyrics*. By A. P. Graves. (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.)

(5) *The Judgment of the City and Other Poems*. (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.)

MR. SWINBURNE'S LAST VOLUME

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, June 27, 1889.)

Mr. Swinburne once set his age on fire by a volume of very perfect and very poisonous poetry. Then he became revolutionary and pantheistic, and cried out against those that sit in high places both in heaven and on earth. Then he invented Marie Stuart and

laid upon us the heavy burden of *Bothwell*. Then he retired to the nursery and wrote poems about children of a somewhat over-subtle character. He is now extremely patriotic, and manages to combine with his patriotism a strong affection for the Tory party. He has always been a great poet. But he has his limitations, the chief of which is, curiously enough, the entire lack of any sense of limit. His song is nearly always too loud for his subject. His magnificent rhetoric, nowhere more magnificent than in the volume that now lies before us, conceals rather than reveals. It has been said of him, and with truth, that he is a master of language, but with still greater truth it may be said that Language is his master. Words seem to dominate him. Alliteration tyrannises over him. Mere sound often becomes his lord. He is so eloquent that whatever he touches becomes unreal.

Let us turn to the poem on the Armada:

The wings of the south-west wind are widened; the breath of his fervent lips,
More keen than a sword's edge, fiercer than fire, falls full on the plunging ships.
The pilot is he of the northward flight, their stay and their steersman he;
A helmsman clothed with the tempest, and girdled with strength to constrain the sea.
And the host of them trembles and quails, caught fast in his hand as a bird in the toils;
For the wrath and the joy that fulfil him are mightier than man's, whom he slays and
spoils.

And vainly, with heart divided in sunder, and labour of wavering will,
The lord of their host takes counsel with hope if haply their star shine still.

Somehow we seem to have heard all this before. Does it come from the fact that of all the poets who ever lived Mr. Swinburne is the one who is the most limited in imagery? It must be admitted that he is so. He has wearied us with his monotony. 'Fire' and the 'Sea' are the two words ever on his lips. We must confess also that this shrill singing—marvellous as it is—leaves us out of breath. Here is a passage from a poem called *A Word with the Wind*:

Be the sunshine bared or veiled, the sky superb or shrouded,
Still the waters, lax and languid, chafed and foiled,
Keen and thwarted, pale and patient, clothed with fire or clouded,
Vex their heart in vain, or sleep like serpents coiled.
Thee they look for, blind and baffled, wan with wrath and weary,
Blown for ever back by winds that rock the bird:
Winds that seamew's breast subdue the sea, and bid the dreary
Waves be weak as hearts made sick with hope deferred.
Let the clarion sound from westward, let the south bear token

How the glories of thy godhead sound and shine:
Bid the land rejoice to see the land-wind's broad wings broken,
Bid the sea take comfort, bid the world be thine.

Verse of this kind may be justly praised for the sustained strength and vigour of its metrical scheme. Its purely technical excellence is extraordinary. But is it more than an oratorical *tour de force*? Does it really convey much? Does it charm? Could we return to it again and again with renewed pleasure? We think not. It seems to us empty.

Of course, we must not look to these poems for any revelation of human life. To be at one with the elements seems to be Mr. Swinburne's aim. He seeks to speak with the breath of wind and wave. The roar of the fire is ever in his ears. He puts his clarion to the lips of Spring and bids her blow, and the Earth wakes from her dreams and tells him her secret. He is the first lyric poet who has tried to make an absolute surrender of his own personality, and he has succeeded. We hear the song, but we never know the singer. We never even get near to him. Out of the thunder and splendour of words he himself says nothing. We have often had man's interpretation of Nature; now we have Nature's interpretation of man, and she has curiously little to say. Force and Freedom form her vague message. She deafens us with her clangours.

But Mr. Swinburne is not always riding the whirlwind and calling out of the depths of the sea. Romantic ballads in Border dialect have not lost their fascination for him, and this last volume contains some very splendid examples of this curious artificial kind of poetry. The amount of pleasure one gets out of dialect is a matter entirely of temperament. To say 'mither' instead of 'mother' seems to many the acme of romance. There are others who are not quite so ready to believe in the pathos of provincialisms. There is, however, no doubt of Mr. Swinburne's mastery over the form, whether the form be quite legitimate or not. *The Weary Wedding* has the concentration and colour of a great drama, and the quaintness of its style lends it something of the power of a grotesque. The ballad of *The Witch-Mother*, a mediæval Medea who slays her children because her lord is faithless, is worth reading on account of its horrible simplicity. *The Bride's Tragedy*, with its strange refrain of

In, in, out and in,
Blows the wind and whirls the whin:

The Jacobite's Exile—

O lordly flow the Loire and Seine,
And loud the dark Durance:

But bonnier shine the braes of Tyne
Than a' the fields of France;
And the waves of Till that speak sae still
Gleam goodlier where they glance:

The Tyneside Widow and *A Reiver's Neck-verse* are all poems of fine imaginative power, and some of them are terrible in their fierce intensity of passion. There is no danger of English poetry narrowing itself to a form so limited as the romantic ballad in dialect. It is of too vital a growth for that. So we may welcome Mr. Swinburne's masterly experiments with the hope that things which are inimitable will not be imitated. The collection is completed by a few poems on children, some sonnets, a threnody on John William Inchbold, and a lovely lyric entitled *The Interpreters*.

In human thought have all things habitation;
Our days
Laugh, lower, and lighten past, and find no station
That stays.
But thought and faith are mightier things than time
Can wrong,
Made splendid once by speech, or made sublime
By song.
Remembrance, though the tide of change that rolls
Wax hoary,
Gives earth and heaven, for song's sake and the soul's,
Their glory.

Certainly, 'for song's sake' we should love Mr. Swinburne's work, cannot, indeed, help loving it, so marvellous a music-maker is he. But what of the soul? For the soul we must go elsewhere.

Poems and Ballads. Third Series. By Algernon Charles Swinburne. (Chatto and Windus.)

THREE NEW POETS

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, July 12, 1889.)

Books of poetry by young writers are usually promissory notes that are never met. Now and then, however, one comes across a volume that is so far above the average that one can hardly resist the fascinating temptation of recklessly prophesying a fine future for its author. Such a book Mr. Yeats's *Wanderings of Oisín* certainly is. Here we find nobility of treatment and nobility of subject-matter,

delicacy of poetic instinct and richness of imaginative resource. Unequal and uneven much of the work must be admitted to be. Mr. Yeats does not try to 'out-baby' Wordsworth, we are glad to say; but he occasionally succeeds in 'out-glittering' Keats, and, here and there, in his book we come across strange crudities and irritating conceits. But when he is at his best he is very good. If he has not the grand simplicity of epic treatment, he has at least something of the largeness of vision that belongs to the epical temper. He does not rob of their stature the great heroes of Celtic mythology. He is very naïve and very primitive and speaks of his giants with the air of a child. Here is a characteristic passage from the account of Oisín's return from the Island of Forgetfulness:

And I rode by the plains of the sea's edge, where all is barren and grey,
Grey sands on the green of the grasses and over the dripping trees,
Dripping and doubling landward, as though they would hasten away
Like an army of old men longing for rest from the moan of the seas.

Long fled the foam-flakes around me, the winds fled out of the vast,
Snatching the bird in secret, nor knew I, embosomed apart,
When they froze the cloth on my body like armour riveted fast,
For Remembrance, lifting her leanness, keened in the gates of my heart.

Till fattening the winds of the morning, an odour of new-mown hay
Came, and my forehead fell low, and my tears like berries fell down;
Later a sound came, half lost in the sound of a shore far away,
From the great grass-barnacle calling, and later the shore-winds brown.

If I were as I once was, the gold hooves crushing the sand and the shells,
Coming forth from the sea like the morning with red lips murmuring a song,
Not coughing, my head on my knees, and praying, and wroth with the bells,
I would leave no Saint's head on his body, though spacious his lands were and strong.

Making way from the kindling surges, I rode on a bridle-path,
Much wondering to see upon all hands, of wattle and woodwork made,
Thy bell-mounted churches, and guardless the sacred cairn and the earth,
And a small and feeble populace stooping with mattock and spade.

In one or two places the music is faulty, the construction is sometimes too involved, and the word 'populace' in the last line is rather infelicitous; but, when all is said, it is impossible not to feel in these stanzas the presence of the true poetic spirit.

A young lady who seeks for a 'song surpassing sense,' and tries to reproduce Mr. Browning's mode of verse for our edification, may seem to be in a somewhat parlous

state. But Miss Caroline Fitz Gerald's work is better than her aim. *Venetia Victrix* is in many respects a fine poem. It shows vigour, intellectual strength, and courage. The story is a strange one. A certain Venetian, hating one of the Ten who had wronged him and identifying his enemy with Venice herself, abandons his native city and makes a vow that, rather than lift a hand for her good, he will give his soul to Hell. As he is sailing down the Adriatic at night, his ship is suddenly becalmed and he sees a huge galley

where sate

Like counsellors on high, exempt, elate,
The fiends triumphant in their fiery state,

on their way to Venice. He has to choose between his own ruin and the ruin of his city. After a struggle, he determines to sacrifice himself to his rash oath.

I climbed aloft. My brain had grown one thought,
One hope, one purpose. And I heard the hiss
Of raging disappointment, loth to miss
Its prey—I heard the lapping of the flame,
That through the blenchèd figures went and came,
Darting in frenzy to the devils' yell.
I set that cross on high, and cried: 'To hell
My soul for ever, and my deed to God!
Once Venice guarded safe, let this vile clod
Drift where fate will!'

And then (the hideous laugh
Of fiends in full possession, keen to quaff
The wine of one new soul not weak with tears,
Peeling like ruinous thunder in mine ears)
I fell, and heard no more. The pale day broke
Through lazar-windows, when once more I woke,
Remembering I might no more dare to pray.

Venetia Victrix is followed by *Ophelion*, a curious lyrical play whose *dramatis personæ* consist of Night, Death, Dawn and a Scholar. It is intricate rather than musical, but some of the songs are graceful—notably one beginning

Lady of heaven most pure and holy,
Artemis, fleet as the flying deer,
Glide through the dusk like a silver shadow,
Mirror thy brow in the lonely mere.

Miss Fitz Gerald's volume is certainly worth reading.

Mr. Richard Le Gallienne's little book, *Volumes in Folio* as he quaintly calls it, is full of dainty verse and delicate fancy. Lines such as

And lo! the white face of the dawn
Yearned like a ghost's against the pane,
A sobbing ghost amid the rain;
Or like a chill and pallid rose
Slowly upclimbing from the lawn,

strike, with their fantastic choice of metaphors, a pleasing note. At present Mr. Le Gallienne's muse seems to devote herself entirely to the worship of books, and Mr. Le Gallienne himself is steeped in literary traditions, making Keats his model and seeking to reproduce something of Keats's richness and affluence of imagery. He is keenly conscious how derivative his inspiration is:

Verse of my own! why ask so poor a thing,
When I might gather from the garden-ways
Of sunny memory fragrant offering
Of deathless blooms and white unwithering sprays?

Shakspeare had given me an English rose,
And honeysuckle Spenser sweet as dew,
Or I had brought you from that dreamy close
Keats' passion-blossom, or the mystic blue

Star-flower of Shelley's song, or shaken gold
From lilies of the Blessed Damosel,
Or stolen fire from out the scarlet fold
Of Swinburne's poppies. . . .

Yet now that he has played his prelude with so sensitive and so graceful a touch, we have no doubt that he will pass to larger themes and nobler subject-matter, and fulfil the hope he expresses in this sextet:

For if perchance some music should be mine,
I would fling forth its notes like a fierce sea,
To wash away the piles of tyranny,
To make love free and faith unbound of creed.
O for some power to fill my shrunken line,
And make a trumpet of my oaten reed.

(1) *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems*. By W. B. Yeats. (Kegan Paul.)

(2) *Venetia Victrix*. By Caroline Fitz Gerald. (Macmillan and Co.)

(3) *Volumes in Folio*. By Richard Le Gallienne. (Elkin Mathews.)

A CHINESE SAGE

(*Speaker*, February 8, 1890.)

A eminent Oxford theologian once remarked that his only objection to modern progress was that it progressed forward instead of backward—a view that so fascinated a certain artistic undergraduate that he promptly wrote an essay upon some unnoticed analogies between the development of ideas and the movements of the common sea-crab. I feel sure the *Speaker* will not be suspected even by its most enthusiastic friends of holding this dangerous heresy of retrogression. But I must candidly admit that I have come to the conclusion that the most caustic criticism of modern life I have met with for some time is that contained in the writings of the learned Chuang Tzŭ, recently translated into the vulgar tongue by Mr. Herbert Giles, Her Majesty's Consul at Tamsui.

The spread of popular education has no doubt made the name of this great thinker quite familiar to the general public, but, for the sake of the few and the over-cultured, I feel it my duty to state definitely who he was, and to give a brief outline of the character of his philosophy.

Chuang Tzŭ, whose name must carefully be pronounced as it is not written, was born in the fourth century before Christ, by the banks of the Yellow River, in the Flowery Land; and portraits of the wonderful sage seated on the flying dragon of contemplation may still be found on the simple tea-trays and pleasing screens of many of our most respectable suburban households. The honest ratepayer and his healthy family have no doubt often mocked at the dome-like forehead of the philosopher, and laughed over the strange perspective of the landscape that lies beneath him. If they really knew who he was, they would tremble. For Chuang Tzŭ spent his life in preaching the great creed of Inaction, and in pointing out the uselessness of all useful things. 'Do nothing, and everything will be done,' was the doctrine which he inherited from his great master Lao Tzŭ. To resolve action into thought, and thought into abstraction, was his wicked transcendental aim. Like the obscure philosopher of early Greek speculation, he believed in the identity of contraries; like Plato, he was an idealist, and had all the idealist's contempt for utilitarian systems; he was a mystic like Dionysius, and Scotus Erigena, and Jacob Böhme, and held, with them and with Philo, that the object of life was to get rid of self-

consciousness, and to become the unconscious vehicle of a higher illumination. In fact, Chuang Tzŭ may be said to have summed up in himself almost every mood of European metaphysical or mystical thought, from Heraclitus down to Hegel. There was something in him of the Quietist also; and in his worship of Nothing he may be said to have in some measure anticipated those strange dreamers of mediæval days who, like Tauler and Master Eckhart, adored the *purum nihil* and the Abyss. The great middle classes of this country, to whom, as we all know, our prosperity, if not our civilisation, is entirely due, may shrug their shoulders over all this and ask, with a certain amount of reason, what is the identity of contraries to them, and why they should get rid of that self-consciousness which is their chief characteristic. But Chuang Tzŭ was something more than a metaphysician and an illuminist. He sought to destroy society, as we know it, as the middle classes know it; and the sad thing is that he combines with the passionate eloquence of a Rousseau the scientific reasoning of a Herbert Spencer. There is nothing of the sentimentalist in him. He pities the rich more than the poor, if he ever pities at all, and prosperity seems to him as tragic a thing as suffering. He has nothing of the modern sympathy with failures, nor does he propose that the prizes should always be given on moral grounds to those who come in last in the race. It is the race itself that he objects to; and as for active sympathy, which has become the profession of so many worthy people in our own day, he thinks that trying to make others good is as silly an occupation as 'beating a drum in a forest in order to find a fugitive.' It is a mere waste of energy. That is all. While, as for a thoroughly sympathetic man, he is, in the eyes of Chuang Tzŭ, simply a man who is always trying to be somebody else, and so misses the only possible excuse for his own existence.

Yes; incredible as it may seem, this curious thinker looked back with a sigh of regret to a certain Golden Age when there were no competitive examinations, no wearisome educational systems, no missionaries, no penny dinners for the people, no Established Churches, no Humanitarian Societies, no dull lectures about one's duty to one's neighbour, and no tedious sermons about any subject at all. In those ideal days, he tells us, people loved each other without being conscious of charity, or writing to the newspapers about it. They were upright, and yet they never published books upon Altruism. As every man kept his knowledge to himself, the world escaped the curse of scepticism; and as every man kept his virtues to himself, nobody meddled in other people's business. They lived simple and peaceful lives, and were contented with such food and raiment as they could get. Neighbouring districts were in sight, and 'the cocks and dogs of one could be heard in the other,' yet the people grew old and died without ever interchanging visits. There was no chattering about

clever men, and no laudation of good men. The intolerable sense of obligation was unknown. The deeds of humanity left no trace, and their affairs were not made a burden for posterity by foolish historians.

In an evil moment the Philanthropist made his appearance, and brought with him the mischievous idea of Government. 'There is such a thing,' says Chuang Tzŭ, 'as leaving mankind alone: there has never been such a thing as governing mankind.' All modes of government are wrong. They are unscientific, because they seek to alter the natural environment of man; they are immoral because, by interfering with the individual, they produce the most aggressive forms of egotism; they are ignorant, because they try to spread education; they are self-destructive, because they engender anarchy. 'Of old,' he tells us, 'the Yellow Emperor first caused charity and duty to one's neighbour to interfere with the natural goodness of the heart of man. In consequence of this, Yao and Shun wore the hair off their legs in endeavouring to feed their people. They disturbed their internal economy in order to find room for artificial virtues. They exhausted their energies in framing laws, and they were failures.' Man's heart, our philosopher goes on to say, may be 'forced down or stirred up,' and in either case the issue is fatal. Yao made the people too happy, so they were not satisfied. Chieh made them too wretched, so they grew discontented. Then every one began to argue about the best way of tinkering up society. 'It is quite clear that something must be done,' they said to each other, and there was a general rush for knowledge. The results were so dreadful that the Government of the day had to bring in Coercion, and as a consequence of this 'virtuous men sought refuge in mountain caves, while rulers of state sat trembling in ancestral halls.' Then, when everything was in a state of perfect chaos, the Social Reformers got up on platforms, and preached salvation from the ills that they and their system had caused. The poor Social Reformers! 'They know not shame, nor what it is to blush,' is the verdict of Chuang Tzŭ upon them.

The economic question, also, is discussed by this almond-eyed sage at great length, and he writes about the curse of capital as eloquently as Mr. Hyndman. The accumulation of wealth is to him the origin of evil. It makes the strong violent, and the weak dishonest. It creates the petty thief, and puts him in a bamboo cage. It creates the big thief, and sets him on a throne of white jade. It is the father of competition, and competition is the waste, as well as the destruction, of energy. The order of nature is rest, repetition, and peace. Weariness and war are the results of an artificial society based upon capital; and the richer this society gets, the more thoroughly bankrupt it really is, for it has neither sufficient rewards for the good nor sufficient punishments for the wicked. There is also this to be remembered—that the prizes of the world degrade a man as much as the world's punishments. The age is rotten with

its worship of success. As for education, true wisdom can neither be learnt nor taught. It is a spiritual state, to which he who lives in harmony with nature attains. Knowledge is shallow if we compare it with the extent of the unknown, and only the unknowable is of value. Society produces rogues, and education makes one rogue cleverer than another. That is the only result of School Boards. Besides, of what possible philosophic importance can education be, when it serves simply to make each man differ from his neighbour? We arrive ultimately at a chaos of opinions, doubt everything, and fall into the vulgar habit of arguing; and it is only the intellectually lost who ever argue. Look at Hui Tzu. 'He was a man of many ideas. His works would fill five carts. But his doctrines were paradoxical.' He said that there were feathers in an egg, because there were feathers on a chicken; that a dog could be a sheep, because all names were arbitrary; that there was a moment when a swiftly-flying arrow was neither moving nor at rest; that if you took a stick a foot long, and cut it in half every day, you would never come to the end of it; and that a bay horse and a dun cow were three, because taken separately they were two, and taken together they were one, and one and two made up three. 'He was like a man running a race with his own shadow, and making a noise in order to drown the echo. He was a clever gadfly, that was all. What was the use of him?'

Morality is, of course, a different thing. It went out of fashion, says Chuang Tzŭ, when people began to moralise. Men ceased then to be spontaneous and to act on intuition. They became priggish and artificial, and were so blind as to have a definite purpose in life. Then came Governments and Philanthropists, those two pests of the age. The former tried to coerce people into being good, and so destroyed the natural goodness of man. The latter were a set of aggressive busybodies who caused confusion wherever they went. They were stupid enough to have principles, and unfortunate enough to act up to them. They all came to bad ends, and showed that universal altruism is as bad in its results as universal egotism. They 'tripped people up over charity, and fettered them with duties to their neighbours.' They gushed over music, and fussed over ceremonies. As a consequence of all this, the world lost its equilibrium, and has been staggering ever since.

Who, then, according to Chuang Tzŭ, is the perfect man? And what is his manner of life? The perfect man does nothing beyond gazing at the universe. He adopts no absolute position. 'In motion, he is like water. At rest, he is like a mirror. And, like Echo, he answers only when he is called upon.' He lets externals take care of themselves. Nothing material injures him; nothing spiritual punishes him. His mental equilibrium gives him the empire of the world. He is never the slave of objective existences. He knows that, 'just as the best language is that which is never spoken, so

the best action is that which is never done.' He is passive, and accepts the laws of life. He rests in inactivity, and sees the world become virtuous of itself. He does not try to 'bring about his own good deeds.' He never wastes himself on effort. He is not troubled about moral distinctions. He knows that things are what they are, and that their consequences will be what they will be. His mind is the 'speculum of creation,' and he is ever at peace.

All this is of course excessively dangerous, but we must remember that Chuang Tzŭ lived more than two thousand years ago, and never had the opportunity of seeing our unrivalled civilisation. And yet it is possible that, were he to come back to earth and visit us, he might have something to say to Mr. Balfour about his coercion and active misgovernment in Ireland; he might smile at some of our philanthropic ardours, and shake his head over many of our organised charities; the School Board might not impress him, nor our race for wealth stir his admiration; he might wonder at our ideals, and grow sad over what we have realised. Perhaps it is well that Chuang Tzŭ cannot return.

Meanwhile, thanks to Mr. Giles and Mr. Quaritch, we have his book to console us, and certainly it is a most fascinating and delightful volume. Chuang Tzŭ is one of the Darwinians before Darwin. He traces man from the germ, and sees his unity with nature. As an anthropologist he is excessively interesting, and he describes our primitive arboreal ancestor living in trees through his terror of animals stronger than himself, and knowing only one parent, the mother, with all the accuracy of a lecturer at the Royal Society. Like Plato, he adopts the dialogue as his mode of expression, 'putting words into other people's mouths,' he tells us, 'in order to gain breadth of view.' As a story-teller he is charming. The account of the visit of the respectable Confucius to the great Robber Chê is most vivid and brilliant, and it is impossible not to laugh over the ultimate discomfiture of the sage, the barrenness of whose moral platitudes is ruthlessly exposed by the successful brigand. Even in his metaphysics, Chuang Tzŭ is intensely humorous. He personifies his abstractions, and makes them act plays before us. The Spirit of the Clouds, when passing eastward through the expanse of air, happened to fall in with the Vital Principle. The latter was slapping his ribs and hopping about: whereupon the Spirit of the Clouds said, 'Who are you, old man, and what are you doing?' 'Strolling!' replied the Vital Principle, without stopping, for all activities are ceaseless. 'I want to *know* something,' continued the Spirit of the Clouds. 'Ah!' cried the Vital Principle, in a tone of disapprobation, and a marvellous conversation follows, that is not unlike the dialogue between the Sphinx and the Chimera in Flaubert's curious drama. Talking animals, also, have their place in

Chuang Tzŭ's parables and stories, and through myth and poetry and fancy his strange philosophy finds musical utterance.

Of course it is sad to be told that it is immoral to be consciously good, and that doing anything is the worst form of idleness. Thousands of excellent and really earnest philanthropists would be absolutely thrown upon the rates if we adopted the view that nobody should be allowed to meddle in what does not concern him. The doctrine of the uselessness of all useful things would not merely endanger our commercial supremacy as a nation, but might bring discredit upon many prosperous and serious-minded members of the shop-keeping classes. What would become of our popular preachers, our Exeter Hall orators, our drawing-room evangelists, if we said to them, in the words of Chuang Tzŭ, 'Mosquitoes will keep a man awake all night with their biting, and just in the same way this talk of charity and duty to one's neighbour drives us nearly crazy. Sirs, strive to keep the world to its own original simplicity, and, as the wind bloweth where it listeth, so let Virtue establish itself. Wherefore this undue energy?' And what would be the fate of governments and professional politicians if we came to the conclusion that there is no such thing as governing mankind at all? It is clear that Chuang Tzŭ is a very dangerous writer, and the publication of his book in English, two thousand years after his death, is obviously premature, and may cause a great deal of pain to many thoroughly respectable and industrious persons. It may be true that the ideal of self-culture and self-development, which is the aim of his scheme of life, and the basis of his scheme of philosophy, is an ideal somewhat needed by an age like ours, in which most people are so anxious to educate their neighbours that they have actually no time left in which to educate themselves. But would it be wise to say so? It seems to me that if we once admitted the force of any one of Chuang Tzŭ's destructive criticisms we should have to put some check on our national habit of self-glorification; and the only thing that ever consoles man for the stupid things he does is the praise he always gives himself for doing them. There may, however, be a few who have grown wearied of that strange modern tendency that sets enthusiasm to do the work of the intellect. To these, and such as these, Chuang Tzŭ will be welcome. But let them only read him. Let them not talk about him. He would be disturbing at dinner-parties, and impossible at afternoon teas, and his whole life was a protest against platform speaking. 'The perfect man ignores self; the divine man ignores action; the true sage ignores reputation.' These are the principles of Chuang Tzŭ.

Chuang Tzŭ: Mystic, Moralist, and Social Reformer. Translated from the Chinese by Herbert A. Giles, H.B.M.'s Consul at Tamsui. (Bernard Quaritch.)

MR. PATER'S LAST VOLUME

(*Speaker*, March 22, 1890.)

When I first had the privilege—and I count it a very high one—of meeting Mr. Walter Pater, he said to me, smiling, ‘Why do you always write poetry? Why do you not write prose? Prose is so much more difficult.’

It was during my undergraduate days at Oxford; days of lyrical ardour and of studious sonnet-writing; days when one loved the exquisite intricacy and musical repetitions of the ballade, and the villanelle with its linked long-drawn echoes and its curious completeness; days when one solemnly sought to discover the proper temper in which a triolet should be written; delightful days, in which, I am glad to say, there was far more rhyme than reason.

I may frankly confess now that at the time I did not quite comprehend what Mr. Pater really meant; and it was not till I had carefully studied his beautiful and suggestive essays on the Renaissance that I fully realised what a wonderful self-conscious art the art of English prose-writing really is, or may be made to be. Carlyle’s stormy rhetoric, Ruskin’s winged and passionate eloquence, had seemed to me to spring from enthusiasm rather than from art. I do not think I knew then that even prophets correct their proofs. As for Jacobean prose, I thought it too exuberant; and Queen Anne prose appeared to me terribly bald, and irritatingly rational. But Mr. Pater’s essays became to me ‘the golden book of spirit and sense, the holy writ of beauty.’ They are still this to me. It is possible, of course, that I may exaggerate about them. I certainly hope that I do; for where there is no exaggeration there is no love, and where there is no love there is no understanding. It is only about things that do not interest one, that one can give a really unbiassed opinion; and this is no doubt the reason why an unbiassed opinion is always valueless.

But I must not allow this brief notice of Mr. Pater’s new volume to degenerate into an autobiography. I remember being told in America that whenever Margaret Fuller wrote an essay upon Emerson the printers had always to send out to borrow some additional capital ‘I’s,’ and I feel it right to accept this transatlantic warning.

Appreciations, in the fine Latin sense of the word, is the title given by Mr. Pater to his book, which is an exquisite collection of exquisite essays, of delicately wrought works of art—some of them being almost Greek in their purity of outline and perfection of form, others mediæval in their strangeness of colour and passionate suggestion, and all of them absolutely modern, in the true meaning of the term modernity. For he to whom the present is the only thing that is present, knows nothing of the age in which he lives. To realise the nineteenth century one must realise every century that has preceded it, and that has contributed to its making. To know anything about oneself,

one must know all about others. There must be no mood with which one cannot sympathise, no dead mode of life that one cannot make alive. The legacies of heredity may make us alter our views of moral responsibility, but they cannot but intensify our sense of the value of Criticism; for the true critic is he who bears within himself the dreams and ideas and feelings of myriad generations, and to whom no form of thought is alien, no emotional impulse obscure.

Perhaps the most interesting, and certainly the least successful, of the essays contained in the present volume is that on *Style*. It is the most interesting because it is the work of one who speaks with the high authority that comes from the noble realisation of things nobly conceived. It is the least successful, because the subject is too abstract. A true artist like Mr. Pater is most felicitous when he deals with the concrete, whose very limitations give him finer freedom, while they necessitate more intense vision. And yet what a high ideal is contained in these few pages! How good it is for us, in these days of popular education and facile journalism, to be reminded of the real scholarship that is essential to the perfect writer, who, 'being a true lover of words for their own sake, a minute and constant observer of their physiognomy,' will avoid what is mere rhetoric, or ostentatious ornament, or negligent misuse of terms, or ineffective surplusage, and will be known by his tact of omission, by his skilful economy of means, by his selection and self-restraint, and perhaps above all by that conscious artistic structure which is the expression of mind in style. I think I have been wrong in saying that the subject is too abstract. In Mr. Pater's hands it becomes very real to us indeed, and he shows us how, behind the perfection of a man's style, must lie the passion of a man's soul.

As one passes to the rest of the volume, one finds essays on Wordsworth and on Coleridge, on Charles Lamb and on Sir Thomas Browne, on some of Shakespeare's plays and on the English kings that Shakespeare fashioned, on Dante Rossetti, and on William Morris. As that on Wordsworth seems to be Mr. Pater's last work, so that on the singer of the *Defence of Guenevere* is certainly his earliest, or almost his earliest, and it is interesting to mark the change that has taken place in his style. This change is, perhaps, at first sight not very apparent. In 1868 we find Mr. Pater writing with the same exquisite care for words, with the same studied music, with the same temper, and something of the same mode of treatment. But, as he goes on, the architecture of the style becomes richer and more complex, the epithet more precise and intellectual. Occasionally one may be inclined to think that there is, here and there, a sentence which is somewhat long, and possibly, if one may venture to say so, a little heavy and cumbersome in movement. But if this be so, it comes from those side-issues suddenly suggested by the idea in its progress, and really revealing the idea

more perfectly; or from those felicitous after-thoughts that give a fuller completeness to the central scheme, and yet convey something of the charm of chance; or from a desire to suggest the secondary shades of meaning with all their accumulating effect, and to avoid, it may be, the violence and harshness of too definite and exclusive an opinion. For in matters of art, at any rate, thought is inevitably coloured by emotion, and so is fluid rather than fixed, and, recognising its dependence upon moods and upon the passion of fine moments, will not accept the rigidity of a scientific formula or a theological dogma. The critical pleasure, too, that we receive from tracing, through what may seem the intricacies of a sentence, the working of the constructive intelligence, must not be overlooked. As soon as we have realised the design, everything appears clear and simple. After a time, these long sentences of Mr. Pater's come to have the charm of an elaborate piece of music, and the unity of such music also.

I have suggested that the essay on Wordsworth is probably the most recent bit of work contained in this volume. If one might choose between so much that is good, I should be inclined to say it is the finest also. The essay on Lamb is curiously suggestive; suggestive, indeed, of a somewhat more tragic, more sombre figure, than men have been wont to think of in connection with the author of the *Essays of Elia*. It is an interesting aspect under which to regard Lamb, but perhaps he himself would have had some difficulty in recognising the portrait given of him. He had, undoubtedly, great sorrows, or motives for sorrow, but he could console himself at a moment's notice for the real tragedies of life by reading any one of the Elizabethan tragedies, provided it was in a folio edition. The essay on Sir Thomas Browne is delightful, and has the strange, personal, fanciful charm of the author of the *Religio Medici*, Mr. Pater often catching the colour and accent and tone of whatever artist, or work of art, he deals with. That on Coleridge, with its insistence on the necessity of the cultivation of the relative, as opposed to the absolute spirit in philosophy and in ethics, and its high appreciation of the poet's true position in our literature, is in style and substance a very blameless work. Grace of expression and delicate subtlety of thought and phrase, characterise the essays on Shakespeare. But the essay on Wordsworth has a spiritual beauty of its own. It appeals, not to the ordinary Wordsworthian with his uncritical temper, and his gross confusion of ethical and æsthetical problems, but rather to those who desire to separate the gold from the dross, and to reach at the true Wordsworth through the mass of tedious and prosaic work that bears his name, and that serves often to conceal him from us. The presence of an alien element in Wordsworth's art is, of course, recognised by Mr. Pater, but he touches on it merely from the psychological point of view, pointing out how this quality of higher and lower

moods gives the effect in his poetry 'of a power not altogether his own, or under his control'; a power which comes and goes when it wills, 'so that the old fancy which made the poet's art an enthusiasm, a form of divine possession, seems almost true of him.' Mr. Pater's earlier essays had their *purpurei panni*, so eminently suitable for quotation, such as the famous passage on *Mona Lisa*, and that other in which Botticelli's strange conception of the Virgin is so strangely set forth. From the present volume it is difficult to select any one passage in preference to another as specially characteristic of Mr. Pater's treatment. This, however, is worth quoting at length. It contains a truth eminently suitable for our age:

That the end of life is not action but contemplation—being as distinct from doing—a certain disposition of the mind: is, in some shape or other, the principle of all the higher morality. In poetry, in art, if you enter into their true spirit at all, you touch this principle in a measure; these, by their sterility, are a type of beholding for the mere joy of beholding. To treat life in the spirit of art is to make life a thing in which means and ends are identified: to encourage such treatment, the true moral significance of art and poetry. Wordsworth, and other poets who have been like him in ancient or more recent times, are the masters, the experts, in this art of impassioned contemplation. Their work is not to teach lessons, or enforce rules, or even to stimulate us to noble ends, but to withdraw the thoughts for a while from the mere machinery of life, to fix them, with appropriate emotions, on the spectacle of those great facts in man's existence which no machinery affects, 'on the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature'—on 'the operations of the elements and the appearances of the visible universe, on storm and sunshine, on the revolutions of the seasons, on cold and heat, on loss of friends and kindred, on injuries and resentments, on gratitude and hope, on fear and sorrow.' To witness this spectacle with appropriate emotions is the aim of all culture; and of these emotions poetry like Wordsworth's is a great nourisher and stimulant. He sees nature full of sentiment and excitement; he sees men and women as parts of nature, passionate, excited, in strange grouping and connection with the grandeur and beauty of the natural world:—images, in his own words, 'of men suffering, amid awful forms and powers.'

Certainly the real secret of Wordsworth has never been better expressed. After having read and reread Mr. Pater's essay—for it requires re-reading—one returns to the poet's work with a new sense of joy and wonder, and with something of eager and impassioned expectation. And perhaps this might be roughly taken as the test or touchstone of the finest criticism.

Finally, one cannot help noticing the delicate instinct that has gone to fashion the brief epilogue that ends this delightful volume. The difference between the classical and romantic spirits in art has often, and with much over-emphasis, been discussed. But with what a light sure touch does Mr. Pater write of it! How subtle and certain are his distinctions! If imaginative prose be really the special art of this century, Mr. Pater must rank amongst our century's most characteristic artists. In certain things he stands almost alone. The age has produced wonderful prose styles, turbid with individualism, and violent with excess of rhetoric. But in Mr. Pater, as in Cardinal Newman, we find the union of personality with perfection. He has no rival in his own sphere, and he has escaped disciples. And this, not because he has not been imitated, but because in art so fine as his there is something that, in its essence, is inimitable.

Appreciations, with an Essay on Style. By Walter Pater, Fellow of Brasenose College. (Macmillan and Co.)

PRIMAVERA

(*Pall Mall Gazette*, May 24, 1890.)

In the summer term Oxford teaches the exquisite art of idleness, one of the most important things that any University can teach, and possibly as the first-fruits of the dreaming in grey cloister and silent garden, which either makes or mars a man, there has just appeared in that lovely city a dainty and delightful volume of poems by four friends. These new young singers are Mr. Laurence Binyon, who has just gained the Newdigate; Mr. Manmohan Ghose, a young Indian of brilliant scholarship and high literary attainments who gives some culture to Christ Church; Mr. Stephen Phillips, whose recent performance of the Ghost in *Hamlet* at the Globe Theatre was so admirable in its dignity and elocution; and Mr. Arthur Cripps, of Trinity. Particular interest attaches naturally to Mr. Ghose's work. Born in India, of purely Indian parentage, he has been brought up entirely in England, and was educated at St. Paul's School, and his verses show us how quick and subtle are the intellectual sympathies of the Oriental mind, and suggest how close is the bond of union that may some day bind India to us by other methods than those of commerce and military strength.

There is something charming in finding a young Indian using our language with such care for music and words as Mr. Ghose does. Here is one of his songs:

Over thy head, in joyful wanderings
Through heaven's wide spaces, free,
Birds fly with music in their wings;

And from the blue, rough sea
The fishes flash and leap;
There is a life of loveliest things
O'er thee, so fast asleep.

In the deep West the heavens grow heavenlier,
Eve after eve; and still
The glorious stars remember to appear;
The roses on the hill
Are fragrant as before:
Only thy face, of all that's dear,
I shall see nevermore!

It has its faults. It has a great many faults. But the lines we have set in italics are lovely. The temper of Keats, the moods of Matthew Arnold, have influenced Mr. Ghose, and what better influence could a beginner have? Here are some stanzas from another of Mr. Ghose's poems:

Deep-shaded will I lie, and deeper yet
In night, where not a leaf its neighbour knows;
Forget the shining of the stars, forget
The vernal visitation of the rose;
And, far from all delights, prepare my heart's repose.

'O crave not silence thou! too soon, too sure,
Shall Autumn come, and through these branches weep:
Some birds shall cease, and flowers no more endure;
And thou beneath the mould unwilling creep,
And silent soon shalt be in that eternal sleep.

'Green still it is, where that fair goddess strays;
Then follow, till around thee all be sere.
Lose not a vision of her passing face;
Nor miss the sound of her soft robes, that here
Sweep over the wet leaves of the fast-falling year.'

The second line is very beautiful, and the whole shows culture and taste and feeling. Mr. Ghose ought some day to make a name in our literature.

Mr. Stephen Phillips has a more solemn classical Muse. His best work is his *Orestes*:

Me in far lands did Justice call, cold queen
Among the dead, who, after heat and haste
At length have leisure for her steadfast voice,
That gathers peace from the great deeps of hell.
She call'd me, saying: I heard a cry by night!
Go thou, and question not; within thy halls
My will awaits fulfilment.

.....

And she lies there,
My mother! ay, my mother now; O hair
That once I play'd with in these halls! O eyes
That for a moment knew me as I came,
And lighten'd up, and trembled into love;
The next were darkened by my hand! Ah me!
Ye will not look upon me in that world.
Yet thou, perchance, art happier, if thou go'st
Into some land of wind and drifting leaves,
To sleep without a star; but as for me,
Hell hungers, and the restless Furies wait.

Milton, and the method of Greek tragedy are Mr. Phillips's influences, and again we may say, what better influences could a young singer have? His verse is dignified, and has distinction.

* * * * *

Mr. Cripps is melodious at times, and Mr. Binyon, Oxford's latest Laureate, shows us in his lyrical ode on *Youth* that he can handle a difficult metre dexterously, and in this sonnet that he can catch the sweet echoes that sleep in the sonnets of Shakespeare:

I cannot raise my eyelids up from sleep,
But I am visited with thoughts of you;
Slumber has no refreshment half so deep
As the sweet morn, that wakes my heart anew.

I cannot put away life's trivial care,
But you straightway steal on me with delight:
My purest moments are your mirror fair;
My deepest thought finds you the truth most bright

You are the lovely regent of my mind,
The constant sky to the unresting sea;
Yet, since 'tis you that rule me, I but find
A finer freedom in such tyranny.

Were the world's anxious kingdoms govern'd so,
Lost were their wrongs, and vanish'd half their woe!

On the whole *Primavera* is a pleasant little book, and we are glad to welcome it. It is charmingly 'got up,' and undergraduates might read it with advantage during lecture hours.

Primavera: Poems. By Four Authors. (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell.)

INDEX OF AUTHORS AND BOOKS REVIEWED

AITCHISON, JAMES: *The Chronicle of Mites*

ANONYMOUS: *An Author's Love*

Annals of the Life of Shakespeare

Miss Bayle's Romance

Rachel

Sturm und Drang

The Cross and the Grail

The Judgment of the City

Warring Angels

ARMSTRONG, GEORGE FRANCIS: *Stories of Wicklow*

ARNOLD, SIR EDWIN: *With Sa'di in the Garden*

ASHBY-STERRY, J.: *The Lazy Minstrel*

AUSTIN, ALFRED: *Days of the Year*

Love's Widowhood

Author of *Flitters, Tatters, and the Counsellor*: *Ismay's Children*

Author of *Lucy*: *Tiff*

Author of *Mademoiselle Mori*: *A Child of the Revolution*

Under a Cloud

Author of *The White Africans*: *Æonial*

BALZAC, HONORÉ DE: César Birotteau
The Duchess of Langeais and Other Stories

BARKER, JOHN THOMAS: The Pilgrimage of Memory

BARR, AMELIA: A Daughter of Fife

BARRETT, FRANK: The Great Hesper

BAUCHE, EMILE: A Statesman's Love

BAYLISS, WYKE: The Enchanted Island

BEAUFORT, RAPHAEL LEDOS DE: Letters of George Sand

BELLAIRS, LADY: Gossips with Girls and Maidens

BLUNT, WILFRID SCAWEN: In Vinculis

BOISSIER, GASTON: Nouvelles Promenades Archéologiques

BOWEN, SIR CHARLES: Virgil in English Verse. Eclogues and Æneid I.-VI.

BOWLING, E. W.: Sagittulæ

BRODIE, E. H.: Lyrics of the Sea

BROUGHTON, RHODA: Betty's Visions

BROWNE, PHYLLIS: Mrs. Somerville and Mary Carpenter

BUCHAN, ALEXANDER: Joseph and His Brethren

BUCHANAN, ROBERT: That Winter Night

BURNS, DAWSON: Oliver Cromwell

CAINE, HALL: Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge

CAIRNS, WILLIAM: A Day after the Pair

CALDECOTT, RANDOLPH: Gleanings from the *Graphic*

CAMERON, MRS. HENRY LOVETT: A Life's Mistake

CARNARVON, EARL OF: The Odyssey of Homer. Books I.-XII.

CARPENTER, EDWARD: Chants of Labour

CATTY, CHARLES: Poems in the Modern Spirit

CESARESCO, COUNTESS EVELYN MARTINENGO: Essays in the Study of Folk-Songs

CHAPMAN, ELIZABETH RACHEL: The New Purgatory

CHETWYND, HON. MRS. HENRY: Mrs. Dorriman

CHRISTIAN, H. R. H. PRINCESS: Memoirs of Wilhelmine, Margravine of Baireuth

COCKLE, J.: Guilt (Müllner)

COLE, ALAN: Embroidery and Lace (Ernest Lefébure)

COLERIDGE, HON. STEPHEN: Demetrius

COLLIER, HON. JOHN: A Manual of Oil Painting

COLVIN, SIDNEY: Keats

CONWAY, HUGH: A Cardinal Sin

COOPER, ELISE: The Queen's Innocent

CORKRAN, ALICE: Margery Morton's Girlhood
Meg's Friend

CRAIK, MRS.: Poems

CRANE, WALTER: Flora's Feast

CRAWFORD, JOHN MARTIN: The Kalevala, the Epic Poem of Finland

CUMBERLAND, STUART: The Vasty Deep

CURTIS, ELLA: A Game of Chance

CURZON, G.: Delamere

DALZIEL, GEORGE: Pictures in the Fire

DAVIS, CORAM.: Immortelles

DAY, RICHARD: Poems

DENMAN, HON. G.: The Story of the Kings of Rome in Verse

DENNING, JOHN RENTON: Poems and Songs

DILKE, LADY: Art in the Modern State

DIXON, CONSTANCE E.: The Chimney-piece of Bruges

DOBELL, MRS. HORACE: In the Watches of the Night

DOUDNEY, SARAH: Under False Colours

DOVETON, F. B.: Sketches in Prose and Verse

DUFFY, BELLA: Life of Madame de Staël

DURANT, HÉLOÏSE: Dante: a Dramatic Poem

DYER, REV. A. SAUNDERS: The Poems of Madame de la Mothe Guyon

EDMONDS, E. M.: Greek Lays, Idylls, Legends, etc.
Mary Myles

EVANS, W.: Cæsar Borgia

EVELYN, JOHN: Life of Mrs. Godolphin

FANE, VIOLET: Helen Davenant

FENN, GEORGE MANVILLE: A Bag of Diamonds
The Master of the Ceremonies

FIELD, MICHAEL: Canute the Great

FITZ GERALD, CAROLINE: Venetia Victrix

FOSKET, EDWARD: Poems

FOSTER, DAVID SKAATS: Rebecca the Witch

FOUR AUTHORS: Primavera

FROUDE, J. A.: The Two Chiefs of Dunboy

FURLONG, ATHERTON: Echoes of Memory

GALLENKA, A.: Jenny Jennet

GIBERNE, AGNES: Ralph Hardcastle's Will

GILES, HERBERT A: Chuang Tzŭ

GLENESSA: The Discovery

GOODCHILD, JOHN A.: Somnia Medici. Second Series

GORDON, ADAM LINDSAY: Poems

GRANT, JOHN CAMERON: Vanclin

GRAVES, A. P.: Father O'Flynn and Other Irish Lyrics

GRIFFIN, EDWIN ELLIS: Vortigern and Rowena

GRIFFITHS, WILLIAM: Sonnets and Other Poems

HAMILTON, IAN: The Ballad of Hádji

HARDINGE, W. M.: The Willow Garth

HARDY, A. J.: How to be Happy Though Married

HARRISON, CLIFFORD: In Hours of Leisure

HARTE, BRET: Cressy

HAYES, ALFRED: David Westren

HEARTSEASE: God's Garden

HENLEY, WILLIAM ERNEST: A Book of Verses

HEYWOOD, J. C.: Salome

HOLE, W. G.: Procris

HOPKINS, TIGHE: 'Twixt Love and Duty

HOUSTON, MRS.: A Heart on Fire

HUNT, MRS. ALFRED: That Other Person

IRWIN, H. C.: Rhymes and Renderings

KEENE, H. E.: Verses: Translated and Original

KELLY, JAMES: Poems

K. E. V.: The Circle of Saints
The Circle of Seasons

KINGSFORD, DR. ANNA.: Dreams and Dream-Stories

KNIGHT, JOSEPH: Life of Dante Gabriel Rossetti

KNIGHT, WILLIAM: Wordsworthiana

LAFFAN, MRS. DE COURCY: A Song of Jubilee

LANGRIDGE, REV. FREDERICK: Poor Folks' Lives

LAUDER, SIR THOMAS: The Wolfe of Badenoch

LEE, MARGARET: Faithful and Unfaithful

LE GALLIENNE, RICHARD: Volumes in Folio

LEVY, AMY: The Romance of a Shop

LINDSAY, LADY: Caroline

LINTON, W. J.: Poems and Translations

LLOYD, J. SALE: Scamp

LYALL, EDNA: In the Golden Days

MACEWEN, CONSTANCE: Soap

MACK, ROBERT ELLICE: Treasures of Art and Song

MACKENZIE, GEORGE: Highland Daydreams

MACQUOID, KATHERINE S.: Louisa

MAHAFFY, J. P.: Greek Life and Thought
The Principles of the Art of Conversation

MARTIN, FRANCES: Life of Elizabeth Gilbert

MARZIALS, FRANK T.: Life of Charles Dickens

MASSON, GUSTAVE: George Sand (Elmé Caro)

MATTHEWS, BRANDER: Pen and Ink

MCKIM, JOSEPH: Poems

MOLESWORTH, MRS.: A Christmas Posy
The Third Miss St. Quentin

MONTGOMERY, FLORENCE: The Fisherman's Daughter

MORINE, GEORGE: Poems

MORRIS, WILLIAM: A Tale of the House of the Wolfings
The Odyssey of Homer done into English Verse

MOULTON, LOUISE CHANDLER: Ourselves and Our Neighbours

MULHOLLAND, ROSA: Gianetta
Marcella Grace

MUNSTER, LADY: Dorinda

NADEN, CONSTANCE: A Modern Apostle

NASH, CHARLES: The Story of the Cross

NESBIT, E.: Lays and Legends
Leaves of Life

NOEL, HON. RODEN: Essays on Poetry and Poets

NOEL, LADY AUGUSTA: Hithersea Mere

OLIPHANT, MRS.: Makers of Venice

OLIVER, PEN: All But

OUIDA: Guilderoy

OWEN, EVELYN: Driven Home

OXONIENSIS: Juvenal in Piccadilly

PATER, WALTER: Appreciations, with an Essay on Style
Imaginary Portraits

PEACOCK, THOMAS BOWER: Poems of the Plain and Songs of the Solitudes

PERKS, MRS. J. HARTLEY: From Heather Hills

PFEIFFER, EMILY: Women and Work

PHILLIMORE, MISS: Studies in Italian Literature

PIERCE, J.: Stanzas and Sonnets

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Footnotes:

[\[119\]](#) See *A 'Jolly' Art Critic*, page 112.

[\[189\]](#) Shairp was Professor of Poetry at Oxford in Wilde's undergraduate days.

[\[198\]](#) *The Margravine of Baireuth and Voltaire*. (David Stott, 1888.)

[\[289\]](#) February 1888.

[\[334a\]](#) September 1888.

[\[334b\]](#) See *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, chapter XI., page 222.

[\[374\]](#) *The Queen*, December 8, 1888.

[\[411\]](#) From Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends of Ireland*.

[\[437\]](#) See page 406.

[\[452\]](#) See *Australian Poets*, page 370.