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THE VENTURE









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THE VENTURE

THE  
VENTURE

AN ANNUAL  
OF ART AND  
LITERATURE



MCMV.

JOHN BAILLIE  
PRINCES TERRACE  
ST. JAMES'S PLACE  
LONDON, W.

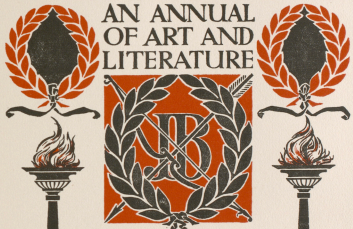
ARRANGEMENT IN BROWN AND GOLD  
J. McNEIL WHISTLER  
FROM THE COLLECTION OF  
PICKFORD WALLER, Esq.





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*TRESSES OF THE SURF*  
*CLINTON BALMER*







# *The Intellectual Ecstasy*

*"Hinc Stygias ebrinus hausit aquas"*

DIOGENES LAERTIUS

I

OF Epicurus it is told  
That growing weak and faint and cold,  
And falling towards that frigid state  
By doctors held as desperate,  
He drowned his senses in a flood  
Of th' ancient vine's ebullient blood,  
Ingurgitating draughts of fire  
To lull his fear and his desire.

THE INTEL-  
LECTUAL  
ECSTASY

II

But was he sober when he died?—  
Whereto an epigram replied:  
"He was too drunk to taste or care  
How bitter Stygian waters were;  
Blest was he therefore." Can we draw  
A sweetness from this cynic saw,  
Or of this mithridate distil  
An antidote for life's long ill?

III

Perchance: since, as we linger thus,  
'Twixt dawn and dark swung pendulous,  
Supported through our irksome state  
By fond illusions of past date,  
The mind within itself retires,  
And there inspects its dead desires—  
A soothsayer, revolving thrice  
Around the ambiguous sacrifice.

IV

In vain we toil to waken flame  
Where once without a breath it came;  
In vain old auguries invoke  
Of swarming bees and stricken oak;

*The Venture*

THE INTEL-  
LECTUAL  
ECSTASY

The spirit feels no secret stir  
O' the exquisite remembrancer,  
And into depths, unsealed in vain,  
Drop hollow-sounding tears like rain.

V

But still, in philosophic sense,  
A purple cluster glows intense,  
And from an intellectual vine  
Rich madness gushes, half divine;  
Droops the dull vein in chill eclipse?  
A heavenly beaker slakes our lips,  
And cups of thrilling freshness lend  
Fantastic aid as we descend.

VI

So, drunk with knowledge, only fed  
With rapture from the fountain-head,  
Until the bells of God shall call  
The flush'd, insatiate bacchanal,  
Let her go smiling toward her rest  
On tottering footsteps, faintly blest,  
And, in that fair delirium dight,  
Walk down to darkness in great light.

EDMUND GOSSE



*The Venture*

THE INTEL-  
LECTUAL  
ECSTASY

The spirit feels no scars nor  
O' the exquisite reverberancer,  
Aeol into depths, unsealed in vein,  
Deep hollow-sounding tests like rain.

But still, in philosophic sense,  
A purple cluster glows intense,  
And from an intellectual vise  
Rich madness gushes, hell divine;  
Deposits the dull vein in chill eclipse?  
A heavenly beaker slakes our lips,  
And cups of thrilling freshness lead  
Fantastic aid as we descend.

No, drunk with knowledge, only fed  
With rapture from the fountain-head,  
When the bells of God shall call  
The flesh to, inebriate bacchinal,  
Let her go smiling toward her rest  
In tottering footsteps, faintly blest,  
And in that fair colerium light,  
Walk - even to darkness in great light.

EDWARD GOSSE

AN OLD FARM

FRANK BRANGWYN, A.R.A.







## *The Valley of Rocks*

THE  
VALLEY OF  
ROCKS

TOWARDS evening he came to a sudden valley in the bare-bosomed hills, where, as in an alembic, the vital humours of the land, the rains and the dews drawn from the sky by tall white cliffs with violet shadows that looked like thunder-clouds, were caught and distilled to be transmuted into quick, fierce crops of grapes and corn. In many places the naked rock was clothed with gourd plants growing like cables and bearing great yellow flowers. Wherever there was a hollow in the gleaming limestone or hold for a man's foot, mould of a noisome richness had been deposited. Here were terraced gardens overbrimming with hot flowers like some passion of the soil made visible; and secret caves full of twisted stalactites, like strange dreaming, pillared and aisled and reverberating with the organ music of subterranean water. Every now and again a spring of very cold water gushed out suddenly from the bare stone to run a few yards and as suddenly disappear. Cottages, half built, half excavated, as if they were but the sculptured portals to a labyrinth of hidden ways, clung to the cliff side, and the men and women that came out to stare at the stranger were heavy eyed and ivory pale as if they belonged to a separate race bred in darkness and braving the light only to snatch a livelihood from the shallow soil. They kept no cattle, they said, but a few goats, and no children had been born in the valley for many years. Many of the women were goitred, and all spoke like persons that use words to hide their thoughts; talking rapidly, with their eyes fixed on the stranger's face, beseeching him to begone. They told him that the place was called the valley of rocks, and that here the corn was richer, the wine stronger, the honey sweeter and all medicinal plants more active in their properties than anywhere else in that country. Dealers in drugs, they said, came here every autumn to collect roots and herbs. When he asked them where he should find lodgings for the night, they looked one at the other, and hastily directed him to the inn at the head of the valley. They told him to beware of the vipers which here were very deadly: themselves were often bitten as they contrived the union of the gourd flowers, in which art they were very cunning, but they took no harm.

As he walked up the road which wound like a snake beneath the crumpled cornice of the impending cliff, a curved billow

of stone, he was possessed by the thought that the place held a meaning, hinted at but not expressed, in its passionate fecundity: that he was drawing nearer to a final statement, a summing-up in human shape of strength and sweetness and soothing. At the head of the valley he came to the inn, a long, low-browed building with a line of windows under the eaves, standing in a clove-scented garden, with its back to the cliff and looking as if seaward but where no sea was. He passed through the open door, and as if guided by a dream, to a little room where from the wall there leaned the picture of a woman in whose eyes and on whose lips were concentrated the strength and sweetness and soothing of wine and honey and narcotic flowers.

Now suddenly he felt that his coming here had been predestined. The woman's face, fierce though tender-eyed, with bared throat and offered lips, hot though virgin, lawless as a flower yet like a flower the concrete symbol of many secret laws working together, was the answer to riddles that had long vexed him. Here was the unsatisfied desire of all the earth made evident in a single face. He knew that in all his wandering, apparently so purposeless, nothing had been left to chance. All his life he had been seeking her, and step by step he had been drawn hither.

The innkeeper and his wife came into the room while he stood before the picture. They glanced from him to each other with lowered lids and furtive smiles so that the question which rose to his lips was never spoken. The man was pot-bellied and thin-shanked, the woman's face a white mask of decorum: they were old and feeble, but had not the dignity of age. They asked his wants with pandering obsequiousness, consulting together in whispers so that the preparation of his meal seemed like a conspiracy. They tended him with knowing deference, as if he were long expected, rubbing their hands gently together and answering his questions eagerly to prevent his asking the one question which his lips would not frame. They made no mention of the woman whose picture leaned from the wall though all the house thrilled with her presence.

He ate and drank alone in the dusk, overlooked by the woman's face, her eyes fierce with desire, her lips smiling at him with a strange confidence. Afterwards the old couple came into the room and they sat talking of all that went on in the great

world outside the valley. Every time he involuntarily glanced up at the picture they dropped their eyes upon their folded hands and smiled secretly, and when he strained his ears to catch what seemed like a footfall on the stairs and the rustle of a gown they glanced quickly one at the other behind his back.

Towards midnight the innkeeper lighted him to his chamber, with many soft spoken wishes for his pleasant slumbers. By the door of a room the old man paused, as if listening intently, with eyes discreetly lowered, and a little guarded cough. Then looked up, as if in answer to a question which had not been asked, with "I beg your pardon, sir?" But immediately he passed on to the guest-chamber, threw open the door, and showed a carved and canopied bed and hangings shaken by the night air, with a muttered hope that the stranger had everything necessary for the night. Then he placed the candle on a table, bowed and withdrew, slamming a door at the far end of the passage, as if to intimate that this part of the house was private to his guest.

He flung wide the lattice, and leaning on the sill, gave himself up to musing upon the painted desire in the room downstairs. The wind came up the valley in hot puffs, bearing the scent of many flowers and the murmur of hidden water. He remembered with a thrill that this was midsummer eve. He was always impressed by dates and seasons; not those arbitrary days named after events sacred or secular, but those profoundly related to the intertwined orbits of the planetary system. He believed that at the intersection of those larger forces human life was deeply stirred, as quivering overtones are struck out when one note of music jars upon another; and he could understand why ancient peoples leaped through fires at the standing still of the sun. Now was the time and here was the place; and a dozen things, the half-betrayed confidence of the valley, the veiled manner of the innkeeper and his wife, told him that the woman expected him.

That he had neither seen her nor heard her name only deepened his feeling that this meeting was ordained. A chance encounter, the making of them known one to the other with the necessary forms of speech, would have blurred the mysterious directness of their coming together. He wondered how the inn people came by such a daughter, for so without any definite reason he supposed her. Then he remembered that, like exquisite wine

in unworthy vessels, rare types are often transmitted through common people, for generations degraded or lost altogether, re-appearing now and again to uplift men in grey times or to hearten them in blazing times of war. He thought of her less as a woman than as the incarnation of the valley's secret, which he was to discover from the touch of her lips. The innkeeper and his wife took on the character not of parents, but of priest and priestess, guardians of a vessel holding rare essences of the soil; the inn became a temple. All that he had ever done seemed meaningless and trivial, except in so far as it had been a preparation for this encounter. For this end only his life had been enriched with dreams and aspirations beyond the common.

For a time his mind was disturbed with thoughts of danger. What if the woman were a decoy for purposes of robbery or even of murder? Again, his heightened imagination pursued wilder paths: he had read of dragons taking the shape of beautiful women and of strangers incited to their embraces to rid a desperate people of a scourge. A moment later he laughed at his childishness.

He wondered when and how she would appear to him. Whether at dawn in the garden, or on the hot limestone ledges among the yellow gourd flowers, or in the pillared alleys of the secret caves. He knew that if words were needed at their meeting words would be given.

The house was very still, and from the room next his own came delicate intimations of a woman's presence: sighs, a low murmuring, movings to and fro, and once a subdued noise of crying—or was it the wind whimpering under the eaves?

His will ceased to be his own and he fell a prey to bold fancies born of the heat of his blood. Before his impassioned eyes the wall was gone and he saw her waiting for him now: a mystical night-blooming flower unfolded on this night only of all time. Yet it was not she that waited, but all nature working to an aim through her: the crude aspiration of the earth rising up through corn and grape, distilled and rectified through human channels, informed with soul as blood is brightened by air, until its essence was offered in such a vessel as gods might drink at.

And then the other part of him, the creature of reason and everyday habit and convention asserted itself. Like a grey rock thrusting in through the ribs of a dream galley, ideas of duty and



honour pierced his mind. His imagination leaped ahead and he saw the future in cold outlines. He remembered a dozen sordid stories: the phrase "a rustic entanglement" sounded in his ears. If he yielded to the prompting of the hour and the place, what could be the outcome but shame for her, disillusion and boredom for himself?

But then again the sense of a larger duty, owed not to convention but to the universe, obtruded itself. He was less the pursuer than the pursued; no more wanton than the moth to the flower. Like two people seeking each other blindly through a wood, guided by a cry or a word, the startling of a bird, the quiver of grass where a snake rustled, he and she had been pushed forward through generation after generation of human life, with here a check, there an encouragement, until on this night of all nights they were watching the sky side by side with but a thin wall between them. Of all creatures was not he who shirked the purpose of his being the most abject?

Out of the conflict of moods was born another, not of better or worse choice but of renunciation. Perhaps, after all, the aim of desire was not union nor even the furtherance of life, but rather the release of the finer things of the soul as latent fire is released at the approach of metal to metal. He had been ready and she had been ready, but while their bodily eyes watched the sky where one day trod upon the skirts of another on this night of all the year, somewhere on another plane their desires had met and mingled with the release of some new and better desire dowered with something of each, to return upon and enrich their lives as a rain-cloud, offspring of sun and earth, returns to bless and fertilize.

Early morning found him in the garden sobered and uplifted with a new purpose. To him came the innkeeper with downcast eyes and lips creased in a crafty smile, asking him how he had slept. His question was answered with another.

"My daughter? No; we have no child. Years ago a strange woman, waiting in vain for her lover, died by her own hand in the room next your own. Since then, they say, the valley has been under a curse: people may wed, but there are never any children. The picture downstairs was painted by a man who lost his reason seeking her whom he had never seen."

CHARLES MARRIOTT



## *Pierrot*

PIERROT

**O** SOME there are who bury deep  
Lost joy in a grave far out of sight,  
Saying, "O trouble me not, but sleep  
In silence by day and night."

But I have left my joy to stray  
Alive in the wood of my Delight,  
Where the thrush and the linnet sing by day  
And the nightingale by night.

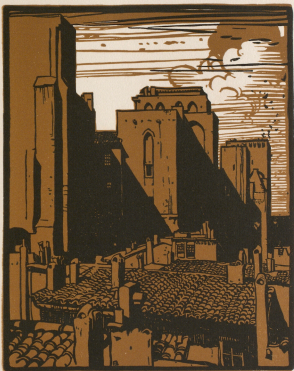
But I—I wander away, away  
Far down where the high road stretches white,  
And I laugh and sing for the crowd by day  
And weep for my heart by night.

I wait for the Hour when Death shall say:  
"O come to the wood of thy Delight,  
Where thy Love shall sing to thee all the day  
And lie on thy breast all night."

ALTHEA GYLES







*THE CITADEL*  
*FRANK BRANGWYN*  
*A.R.A.*



## *In the New Oriental Department*

IN THE  
NEW ORIENTAL DE-  
PARTMENT

ONE hour to closing time in the X and Y Stores. Here, in the new Oriental Department, the air is heavy and enervating—pungent with odours of Eastern woodwork, laden with the perfumed dust from piles of rich Eastern fabrics and warmed with the fumes of incense in metal boxes and the vapour from quaint little coloured lamps. Especially oppressive and exhausting in the dimly-lit corner where the pale-haired assistant half leans against the Indian screen and languidly sweeps the "new line" of Persian glass with his long peacock feather brush.

"Wike up, Alf," whispers a passing confrère, "yer' 'arf asleep, and gvnor's piping yer."

The friendly warning was needed.

"Mr Nasher—attention!"

It is the voice of the superintendent—short and sharp, like the crack of a whip.

"Oh, yes, madam," says Mr Alf Nasher, rousing himself from his languorous reverie. "Quite a new line. The 'ole of these trays of glorr was purchased by aar travellers in the market place of Bagdad. Nothing like it ever reached London before. Sim'lar to Bo'emian, but the Bo'emians can't produce these exquisite opal tints, nor blow the threads so fragile-like. Perfect spider's web! Make a very beautiful wedding present, that tall pair, I should say, madam, or the small ones, or one alone, madam."

But, while he cries his wares in orthodox fashion, keeping his almost colourless grey eyes fixed upon the lady's animated face, the pupils dilate until nearly the whole iris is swallowed by their darker shade; then slowly contract, become smaller and smaller until they are as black spots in their vague surroundings, and the young man begins to dream.

All this afternoon, since his indigestible, salt-beef dinner, he has been assailed by the press and throng of his trance-world, finding vehicles for brain-wanderings in every detail of his work, in despite of his struggles to keep his feet on the solid ground of everyday life.

The lady customers—and in this department nearly all the customers are of the softer sex—at once enervate and torment by drawing him, blindfold, into the realm of luminous shadows and diffused and rose-coloured light. Blondes and brunettes—the young specimens fresh, innocent, adorable in their gauche sim-



IN THE  
NEW ORI-  
ENTAL DE-  
PARTMENT

plicity; the maturer types in the flush and fire of high-toned and dragon-fly loveliness; the faint carmine tints of old porcelain, lips like geranium petals, curls like spun gold; the thick, white skins and heavy, black tresses, long lashes, full eyelids veiling the mystery of amorous Sphinxes; diffident Madonnas; flashing Cleopatras; all moulds, all forms of feminine grace or seductiveness—all troubling, tormenting him, since the clogging mid-day meal, all furnishing irresistible material for dreams.

Suppose that he were rich, preposterously wealthy, rich enough to buy up the X and Y, stock, lot and barrel, if the fancy moved him, from the roof tree and Toys No. 1 to the cellars and the overflow of sewing-machines from No. 20.

Ransacking departments, building them in with invoiceless goods, could he not win them—*buy* them all? Why shy at the word? Are they not all of them to be bought if you are rich enough to pay the price? Who among them would long withstand the virtue-sapping seduction of the Jewellery Department—all his, from the tiaras on sale or return from the great Midland houses, to the little “merry-thought” brooches (9 carat, one split pearl, 18s. 9d.), bought net and stocked by the gross? He could gauge the power of the Jewellery Department by those merry-thoughts. For had he not given one to Sybil Cartwright, of the middle counter of “Gloves, Hose and Underwear”?

A brown-haired, moon-faced maid—Sybil—with hair swept over egg-shell ears, and almond eyes, darkly lustrous as a summer's night on the banks of the Karun, and the haughty insouciance which can laugh at the wooing of a rosetted shop-walker or a ground-floor desk clerk, not to mention an undecorated assistant! But to be bought, no doubt, like the countesses and duchesses whose fur-clad menials fill the “out” benches of the hall. “What are in all those saddle-bag sacks which I see the warehouse men carrying all day long into the Deposit Account Office?” asks Sybil disdainfully. “Gold, young lidy, *my* gold. Same as what I've bought the ole Stores with.”

“Praad” she might be, and cold too, and dignified in demeanour; but he could set her dancing for his pleasure in a marvellous, secret flat, obtained through the X and Y House Agency, and furnished “remorseless” out of this very department, within a month—yes, dancing before him, dressed like some Nautch girl,

and all jingling and jangling with diamonds, rubies and sapphires, as she twisted and squirmed about to the muffled music of an X and Y "ten performer band," hidden away in the next room. "Praad, may be! but mine at last!"

Yet how restricted the power, how feeble the effect, of the vastest treasure here in England, in these prosaic, convention-ruled days! But to have the wealth and the power, too: to be an Eastern potentate, absolute, uncontrolled lord of all the land! Ah, Sultan and King! sensual, merciless, if you like, but splendid even in his depravement; capable of fine flashes of magnanimity to illumine the dark background of his soul's demoralization. "Lord of all this, my humming, bustling market-place, my walled city and my palace all in one—all these busy clerks and assistants my troops, bearers and servants; the liftmen my bronzed captains; the frock-coated commissionaires my corpulent, white-faced body-guard, safe and harmless guardians of the new block of women's sleeping accommodation, which I herewith appropriate as my seraglio, and over which I set them on guard." . . .

And now is seen one of those terrible occurrences, frightful examples of a despot's tyranny, which have made this young monarch at once famous and execrable in Oriental history. "Well, let the historians talk! What must be, must be. Kis-met. I have spoken."

Throwing himself down on the finest of the embroidered divans, while ready hands bring forward the huge hookah—that great unsaleable thing that has stood by the A desk of the Tobacco Department for the last three years—he summons the now trembling secretary, his grand vizier; issues his brief but awful commands; and, wrapping himself in wreaths of fragrant smoke, calmly awaits their fulfilment.

Crunch! clink, clank! The sounds of bolts and bars; then the rumble of the iron fireproof doors, as they fall in their sockets throughout the great building, leaving only the little wickets open from floor to floor, between department and department. What does it mean? Closing at half after five! Fire? What is it?

Alas, the panic-stricken cries, the shrieks of women, the groans of men, too well indicate a premonition of the horrible

IN THE  
NEW ORI-  
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PARTMENT

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truth. It is nothing more nor less than one of the Sultan's gigantic raids for the re-stocking of his harem.

"*All out! All out! All men and boys, outside!*" the unflinching guards are already roaring on the staircases, and husbands are being torn from wives, brothers from sisters, on every landing. A shriek and an oath. The astrakan toque has fallen from the head of a tall girl—a well-known customer—her hair is half down, and she is struggling madly to retain the hand of a tall guardsman, probably her betrothed. Quick as life, the guardsman snatches from the wall one of those huge Afghan knives, heavy as a hatchet, sharp as a razor, and clears a space all round him. In a moment he is overpowered and hurled back through the little wicket. Killed? Who shall say? He has resisted the Sultan's command. Death were a light punishment. "Besides, it ain't so easy to see through the 'ooker smoke."

"*All out! All out! All females over the age of thirty-five outside!*" roar the guards. The men are all gone. It is the turn of the agonized mothers and aunts and elderly sisters. Oh, lamentable scene! Oh, pitiful wailings! The most valuable parcels thrown away in anguish, the floors littered with monogrammed purses, muffs, fur capes, powder boxes, card cases, hair-pins, and what not; a screaming and raving and sobbing and gasping which might melt a granite rock to tears, as the ensnared matrons and maids rush to and fro, beating against their prison bars like a flock of trapped doves. In a voice broken with emotion and with humble deprecating obeisance, the Secretary-Vizier pleads that some daughters of shareholders may be set at liberty. But he laughs cruelly.

"That new block of buildings must be filled. I have spoken."

In the midst of the uproar a stout, middle-aged dame, overlooked by the Janissaries, appeals to him for mercy. With hideous mockery he bids her depart.

Her prayer is in truth on behalf of her nieces—two bright girls from Hastings, her brother's pride and joy, on a New Year's visit to their aunt at Earl's Court—but he affects to misunderstand, mischievously assumes that she is pleading for her own freedom, and she is hustled from his sight.

"Marshal them all through the Grocery and Candles," he

commands. "Then march them before me to their quarters. Give them food. If necessary drug them all. To-morrow we will enlarge the meshes of our royal net and let many fish pass through. To-night I am too weary to pick and choose. I have spoken."

But what is this? A slim and plainly-dressed girl forces her way through the agonized throng and throws herself at his feet. It is Sybil, from counter 5 Ladies' Hose, etc. Crouched down like a spaniel before the divan, her nice brown hair trembling on the back of her neck, upturned towards him, three times she touches the dusty matting with her white forehead, then raises her tear-stained eyes to his, and speaks.

"Oh, great Master and King! Do not do this thing. Turn your thoughts away from this monstrous wickedness. For my sake let them off. For the sake of a poor girl, open the doors and let them go. Don't go and do anything so mean and low as this."

"For *your* sake, girl? And what is the ransom you offer? Body and soul were too small a price for thwarting a king's fancy."

"No ransom, O King, if they might pay it, but a free gift. *I have always loved you*"; and now the lovely girl's pale face is suffused with blushes.

"Then rise" he cries, in clarion tones, himself springing to his full height; "and stand here beside me, my empress and my queen. Open all doors. Let the mob loose. Poor frightened slaves! your master needs ye not."

And with a superb gesture of dismissal he flings wide his open arms. . . .

Down they all go—"the new line"—tray upon tray—Bagdad's glory, the "fragile-like" novelties of the season, shivered into thousands of tinkling fragments—and, as he kneels amidst the ruin he has wrought, the merciless voice of the Superintendent hisses in his ear.

"Secretary's Office. Explain it as best you can. *'Ope for nothing from me.* I'm sick and tired of you."

W. B. MAXWELL

# *The Immortal Hour*

THE IM-  
MORTAL  
HOUR

## I

HEART of my heart, the world is young  
Love lies hidden in every rose;  
Every song that the skylark sung  
Once we thought must come to a close;  
Now we know the secret of song,  
Song the glory and might of the soul,  
Hand in hand as we pass along  
What should we doubt of the years that roll?

## II

Heart of my heart, we cannot die!  
Love triumphant in flower and tree,  
Every life that laughs at the sky  
Tells us nothing can cease to be;  
One, we are one with a song to-day,  
One with the clover that scents the wold;  
One with the Unknown far away,  
One with the stars when earth grows old.

## III

Heart of my heart, we are one with the wind,  
Far we shall wander o'er land and sea,  
One in many; for Love is blind;  
But Love will bring you again to me.  
Ay; when Life seems scattered apart,  
Darkens, ends as a tale that is told.  
One, we are one, O heart of my heart,  
One still one, while the world grows old.

ALFRED NOYES









*THE BATH OF VENUS*  
C. H. SHANNON



*THE THREE KIMONAS*  
*G. W. LAMBERT*





## The Skeleton

THE  
SKELETON

WHEN Philaster was alive, he and I were often busy with records of great beauty that had long ago flourished. In solitary places, and in hours removed and hedged around from the straight main road of time's advance, we pondered the names of Calypso, Ariadne, Electra, Eurypyle, Megalostate, Dido, Camilla, Lucrezia Borgia, the two Isouds, Olwen and Mary Hynes of Ireland and many more. Together we framed their features and their motion. Sometimes, as we sat, we heard their voices in the outside darkness which our lamps made wonderful and more dark, and in the wind we heard the voice of Medea calling for Jason, Andromache calling for Hector. There was a distant lawn among woods, watched for many days with surmising but incurious eyes from our window, and never visited, which was not simply grass, but grass refined by sunlight and memory until it seemed as far off in time as in space and as secluded; and there, on one day, we saw Helen, not so proud but that she was regretful, talking with Achilles, while Thetis and Aphrodite, who had brought him to her presence for the first and only time, stood by. "Had I been Paris," he was saying, "I should have been content not to have been Achilles." To which Helen answered: "Had you been Paris, you had not been content to have been less than Achilles."

Foolishly and passionately—and so, perhaps, wisely—we talked of the immortality of beauty, though the last hair of Lucrezia were lost; and told one another that in the sculpture and poetry of Greece no woman that was not beautiful is remembered. And while he lived I could not do other than believe. Once we watched a blade of emerald flame in the fire; but soon he clapped his hands impatiently and it disappeared; and once it was gone it was immortal, so he said; and he loved best those vanishing things which the mind quickly makes its own, since nothing dies save what we let die.

Whether in the fields, or in the streets, or in chambers enclosing and opening upon beauty, we locked ourselves in the past. Many days I can recall when we looked out into a rich, lonely country under rain, and the two things real to us were the Virgils in our hands and the soft oblivious rain that made a solitude and made us lords of it. Our chamber and the quiet fields differed not in kind from the places where the mind beholds the past with closed eyes. Not for us those books which are but a plagiari-



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from life! Rather those from which our lives sometimes dare to plagiarize. . . . But now Calypso, Ariadne, Electra, Eurypyle, Megalistrate are dead; Dido, Camilla, Lucrezia Borgia, the two Isouids, Olwen, Mary Hynes of Ireland, are dead: for Philaster is dead. And how can I tell of him? for his presence gave me the great wisdom which made me care for him. That wisdom has flown with him. If I declare what voice and features, what knowledge and wit were his, a diligent lover might think that he could guess, from such an inventory, what Philaster was. It will be no more than a brazen image of what he was. I am the fond Holinshed of his story, and cannot translate out of silence.

The face, which is in any man the subtle result of a hundred centuries of thoughts and sensations and emotions, in him was not so much a result as the first draft of a wonderful achievement, towards which I saw it ever on its way. Every moon, every sun, and all the winds cherished and changed him, as if it had been their sweetest toil. The splendour and the beauty and the sorrow of all his books entered his face, and not merely as passing shadows enter a lake, but as it would be if that lake were the richer for these transient deposits. Shakespeare, Leonardo, Pheidias, were as musicians that played upon some strings of his soul. He might be counted among their inventions. I have walked with him in the dawn, and as the cold light and half-seen, half-imagined beauty had their way with his face—speech having ceased an hour before—I could have bowed to him in worship, so much was he an emanation or ivory image of the dawn; he knew all things, it seemed, and was at one with them. But when he spoke after such an adventure, it was with difficulty and faults that went strangely with the glory in his face. The words came as if against his will. Human speech seemed to be wrong and far astray from the path it would have taken had there been a Philaster in the old time. It was as a foreign tongue, uncouth and unintelligible. Moreover it frightened the things that fitted his brain, as a human voice frightens a cove of nightingales. . . . After a long June day on the Cherwell he once walked into Oxford for a bottle of wine, and when he returned to the boat he told me laughingly that his brain had been full of compliments like sapphires for the woman who served him, and that he had not found it in his heart to say a word. . . . I have seen him in the autumn come bemused with



spiritual joy into a country inn, and raise a fear by his wild accent and wild eyes and his nostrils wide as if he smelt pines or the sea. Slowly the beer and tobacco altered the sphere of his devotions. His own pipe was lit, his tankard filled. He joined with a religious ardour in Bacchic and other songs, and could not laugh at them as others did. And he would say that in such an inn he could wish it were always autumn, always evening, and his capacity fathoms deep. For, with all his variety, I think he would gladly have accepted one experience for ever. Nothing became stale to him, and so his mutability was the more marvellous. Wherever he was, he seemed to have been born there. As one moment will now and then, often in dreams of sleep, sometimes in other dreams, assume the puissance and everything essential of years, so he assumed the puissance of great and varied experiences which never had been and never would be his. Hardly could his calm physical splendour destroy the sense of terror to which the surprising tyranny of his untried, untutored mind gave rise. He confessed, indeed, an imperfect capacity of appreciation in regard to many things; but from none of these would he turn without a salute. He brought me a long way to admire a noisy hawker who produced one note in his cry more notably than he ever heard it elsewhere.

I remember one day in March as particularly his, because without him it would have been a task to live it.

It was a delicate, still, grey morning—cold, but with the first heat of spring suggested behind the mist. The sun had shone early, and the last night's frost, turned into a white steam on the ploughlands, wavered a little, like a sheet with some one stirring beneath it, and disappeared. Not a bird was singing; there was no flower in the hedge; the grass was hardly green. On the low hills we could see a small white wreath of snow. The roads were heavy; a coarse school-bell jangled; the sordid corpse of a squirrel lay in the hedge. But the very snow, which had seemed to me as a slave's collar on the day, to Philaster gave the air a sad poignancy that was sweet. "Look!" he cried, as we first saw the white form of snow among the woods on the hill, "Pan has caught Luna at last, and there she lies, too pleased with his quiet woods ever to rise again." If there were no flowers, there was a sense of innumerable buds. If there was no song, the air was rich as when

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a great music has ceased, and contained song as in a bud. Gradually, as we watched the mist, we dreamed of what lay behind. Were they really the hills and woods we knew? For they were as they had never been before. No one was near. We would pursue the footpath and surprise Pan making new pipes for the Spring. So we set forth, but had hardly reached the crest of the first hill when we stopped together. The air had become softer and caressing, and clearly said that it was of no use to walk and that all things come to him who dreams under a hedge and is content to dream. So clearly did the air speak that we had not rested long before we rose. "This is some plot," said Philaster; "in the next hollow, perhaps, Pan is hiding. Let us go." But he was not there; at least, we saw him not. And again, at a hill-top, we reclined; again we thought that the air had a purpose in thus imprisoning us and even making us acquiesce in our bonds: again we walked, and this time crossed several hills and hollows; and ever, at a summit, the next hill, clothed in wood and mist, seemed to be the one we desired. At last we paused again, and watched the sun set beyond the next hill. "Yonder he must be," we said, and, as we gazed and gazed, and darkness darkened and a diffident moon grew white, we were thinking of the hill beyond, until our senses became aware of more than is ever seen or felt or heard, and a great sigh passed through the wood, and we knew that what we sought was there. The sky was of a tender and solemn blue that lasts five minutes and looks eternal. It was a colour that had for us the same exquisite and surprising quality as the blue of thrush's eggs found in childhood and in loneliness, before time "brought death into the world and all our woe."

Philaster and I had found our first thrush's eggs at about the same time in the same wood. We had met in the days when the morning air was stronger than wine is now. As each new day shone upon the glass of a bedside picture and awakened us, we thought of it as never to end; evening was as if it had never been. We were confident, important; bragging as a rose brags with all its leaf and flower; never considering the six feet of earth and an unnecessary stone.

But every man has two childhoods: first, the early years of his life; second, those early years as they appear to him afterwards, moulded by the art of reminiscence, with changes, gains

and losses, until the end. Men in whom these two differ greatly are not often happy, and perhaps they are always melancholy. In Philaster's case the two were almost invariably different. They differed as failure and success. The real (if I may so distinguish it from the other, which was far more real and impressive to his mind)—the real was the failure: for it was foolish and not wild; selfish and not independent; coarse and not obtuse; fond and not loving; fitful and not passionate. But one or two incidents there were of a painful kind, which, happening in notable, beautiful surroundings, were likely to be seared along with them into his brain, as indeed they were. How easily and pleasantly does old pain help us to remember! how the sudden, cruel fall from a tree helps us to recall that the reddest apples in all the world hung there on one October dawn—as if they hung there still somewhere in the dim lands of the brain! And what early books are remembered like those whose words fell upon a brain languidly sensitive after long discomfort or pain?

One May day, when he was yet of an age to run fast and hopefully towards the horizon to catch the white cloud which was calmly sailing thither, he was running so, when he was tripped, and fell and tore the collar of his tunic in the fall. It was a fair tunic, and a fair thorn bush that tore it; but the rent was foul; so he lay and consoled himself by being sad. The day was one of many cold, bright days which had delayed the hawthorns. But there, upon the bush, was the first May flower. As he went to pluck it, the white cloud reached the horizon and the air was very still. The yellow flowers, that had flamed before, now glowed, warmer but more dim. The white flowers lost distinctness and made a still haze along the hedge. The lark ceased to sing, or rose but to the height of the oaks and forgot and descended. The white road that had seemed but a cheerful link from village to village was now so long, so long, that it was as a road in a picture and could never be travelled; and instead of making the hawthorn bush a half-mile mark, it made it lonely and strange, and Philaster could not pluck the flower. Then, suddenly, as if it had been the work of that strange, lonely land, of all those dim flowers and silent birds, the noise of bells arose, and Philaster began to walk, and sang continually new phrases for the notes of the six bells, until he came to the churchyard. There, in all the warmth of the

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tower and the bells that were but the murmur of that warmth, he fell asleep. And long he would have slept, because the air was seething and bubbling over with the sound of the bells. But the headstone that was his pillow was hard though warm, and rough with a permanent gold and copper dust like the remains of embossed work, and a voice as sweet as the bells and more shrill was repeating their notes. The voice, too, had a face and hands and hair and a short green frock, and the hands were breaking up flowers and dropping them on Philaster's face, so that he awoke. As he opened his eyes he saw the girl, as if she had grown out of the sound as the sound had grown out of the morning that was so lonely and so strange. At first her beauty alarmed him, and, thinking of a book, he asked: "Is your name Isoud?" But she laughed, and he knew that she was not Isoud. Then he had the courage to ask if she would pin up his collar. "Yes," she said; "and then I must go away. I am going a long way to-day. We shall drive past here, and you must wait and watch me go." "Yes," he said. "Tell me if I hurt," said she, as she pinned up his collar. Then she ran away. In half-an-hour he saw her go by with a laugh; but he cried bitterly when she was out of sight, because the pin had gone into his neck, and more gorgeous than all the flowers, and warmer than the sun, was the purple blood. And so, dimly and bitterly desired on that first day, gravely remembered for a week, and then for a few years forgotten, and again recovered in memory on another day like that, she grew into the perfect lost rose, with the memory of which he would never part, with the loss of which he would never acquiesce. . . .

Such a one was Philaster. But that was in the time when the world was no more to us than a stoat's skin, shrivelled and hairless, not even foul-scented, on a stable wall. As we went on through time, our conversation became the most intimate I ever had. With him I discovered myself; he had, perhaps, a like experience. But at all times he indolently monarchized in silence and in speech when we were together. His sympathy was so acute and, in expression, so womanly; his intelligence so free from principles, conclusions, generalizations; his joy so splendid; his melancholy so tender and yet without languor or submission; his voice so perfect, that I was often made ashamed of my own passionate words. He echoed my deepest emotions with easy

luxuriance. Had I thought or dreamed or loved in such a way, then so had he. Had I learned in some potent solitary wood or crowded street that the soul affirms many things which the reason has neither the right nor the ability to deny, then so had he.

A day came when I went chilled and lonely away from his company, and could be restored only by his presence and the strange security and isolation which his voice and look established. I dared to think that he was but a flawless marble effigy above the bones of his dead youth, and that prudence was the sculptor. Where he used to be unaware of the world, he came to despise it and use it. And I became a rebel: yet the object of my rebellion could quell it by his simple presence, and my plots vanished at his appearance as ghosts at sunrise. For still he kept his lovely gift of penetrating the secret of every hour and using it. Still, as we sat by the fire, would our souls be now blown about together by the great winds to which the chimneys were a many-reeded pipe, and now warmed by the calm glow; and still would he be as one of the gods again, come to me, surely, in direct descent from the past and speaking of Olympus as plainly as the last beacon spoke to the watchman on Agamemnon's house of the burning of Troy.

So it happened one year that, when Spring was at hand, I could think of nothing pleasanter than to go with him to meet it in a country which we knew.

On the first morning our shoes rang like a peal of bells together on the cobbled village path; the horses' hoofs on the moist firm road made a clear "cuck-oo" as they rose and fell; and far off, for the first time in the year, we heard a plough-boy, who remembered spring and knew that it would come again, shouting "Cuckoo! cuckoo!"

Often it happened that a lane led us to the sudden top of a hill and seemed to end in the blue, white-clouded sky. As when, on the stage, a window is opened and someone invisible is heard to sing below it—to sing, perhaps, but a serenade, and yet something so heavy laden that if we could only understand it. . . . So for a moment, at the end of the aspiring lane, a window seemed to be thrown open in the sky and let in a music that silenced thought and even regret. I say regret: yet, indeed, as the fire round the martyr burned to roses, so our pleasant sorrows were changed, and never were we lighter-hearted than when we shared



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a heavy grief. And I know not whether we were happier each morning as we set out lazily under sun or rain; or when, each night, we hastened to our lodging with the speed which comes of hearty and rejoicing fatigue, and quietness and talk set in around a fire that we watched as if it were an invalid, until its sudden sighing death sent us (already with one hand in the hand of sleep) to bed.

Slowly we came to that wild, lonely and delicate land which we had seen in our childhood; and our dreams, when we remembered many things, were of nothing lovelier than that land. So clearly was one dream of mine a recollection that once again I struck Philaster for laughing at my fears for some young finches that a cuckoo ejected from a nest. I awoke a little pleased at thinking of the blow, but when we met in the morning I repented as I told the tale.

It was, as we saw it from the slope of its first hill, a grey, vast land; and its intolerable vastness made the soul ache as it wandered ignorantly and curiously, sore and yet eager, from hill to hill, as far as the verge, where clouds seemed mountains, and mountains clouds. For while Philaster and I stared and stared, our souls went out from us over the hills, and we were vacant, submissive and terribly alone. They went out further than the white, thin moon of twilight that rose, like a weird bird from a weird nest, from the furthest valley. As we possessed our souls again, we felt a little separate and strange. The landscape had apparently a power of extracting all the fruits of our characters, good and bad. We became odd even to ourselves, wondering what we should bring forth under that large influence. For a moment I forgot all that I knew of Philaster in perceiving what I had never known. Always fond of deep diving in the silent waters of consciousness, we lost our way and came disappointed back. But, looking down at the hamlet that stood as a lighthouse at the edge of that land, we saw that the valley was soft, with large lawns running to the edges of woods, all of that melting colour which green becomes at twilight.

On the next morning the blackbird's note (as it sang alone, uncertainly, before the light arrived) had not in it more of the sweetness of soft rain than the light summons of Philaster beneath my window; nor was the song, or the clinking of the dairy pails,

more in harmony with the kind of morning I guessed at, as I watched the dimity curtain whitening, but with gold in it. For the moment his voice seemed to me to be superior to it all, to be the morning's most perfect flower, to be the eloquence of which all else was a superb applause. He dug his heel into the sweet grass and cut down a daffodil, as a king with his equipage might trample on a beggar as he went to be crowned. He was a captain and discoverer of nature; a king, and the dawn his banner, the white stars his crown. Yet I thought at first that there was something arrogant in his joy. I find a melancholy in all sweet music: in his voice there was none. But suddenly he sang

Sumer is icumen in

as he went further among the apple trees, and there was just a shadow upon the song, just a glimmer of dew from Phlegethon in the stream of it. As, when we see a proud, high summer heaven of white and blue plunged in a shadowy pool, the shadows and the very act of looking down give the true image a sadness: in that way the song was charged, and I rejoiced as I moved and broke up the sleeping beams and shadows in my room.

Then, for a little while, we sat in a room that was near to the orchard; and beyond the orchard was a barn. We could not talk, and I went out to the barn and found that a lattice window concealed me and yet allowed me to look at him. I could see also the valley and the hills; hundreds of oaks; a river that swayed its irises; a grey, distant, unreal house that wanted my fancy to people it: but I knew not what they meant, and they were as things mentioned in a dull book, until my curving glance fell again upon Philaster, and then all were harmonized. In every wood and hollow we passed that day he strengthened the natural spell, and he seemed to stand to them as the artist's name in the corner to a picture. A completeness of vitality in limbs and brains and senses gave him an importance in his surroundings of cloud and hill and river, and a relation to them, such as may perhaps be discovered in all men by archangelic, in few by mortal, eyes. Never have I seen or read or dreamed of a man who was so at one with all things. Seeing him, I believed that sun and moon and stars and sea and trees and beasts and flowers were all



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one commonwealth. That this is so I have always known, but the knowledge mattered not until I saw Philaster. All that he was, all that he did, I believe, was related to all other things. He depended on the great oaks we passed, and they on him, for something of their life. . . .

Yet when I saw him last, as was my fortune—a clean skeleton, which ants traversed in their business, among fir and bracken and earth embossed with moss like moles—he was not less in harmony with all things than before, while a dead leaf wandered past the moon, and the branchwork of a solitary hemlock stood mightily up and wrote upon the pale blue sky a legend which said that October had come and denied April and May and June.

EDWARD THOMAS







*AUTUMN LEAVES*  
*PAMELA COLMAN SMITH*



# Otho and Poppaea

(From an unfinished play.)

SCENE: The Gardens of Agrippina in the Vatican.

OTHO AND  
POPPAEA

Otho. A word, Poppaea!

Pop.

I will speak with you

If you will speak for kindness; but your brows  
Are sick and stormy: why do you frown on me?  
I will not speak unless it is for love.

Otho. Nothing but love, Poppaea; nothing less.

Pop.

Then sit by me and take my hand, and tell me  
Why you are sick and stormy and unkind  
For nothing less than love.

Otho.

If I should sit

So near you as to touch you; (*she comes near him*) no,  
this once

I will not touch you, and this once I will  
Speak to the end.

Pop.

(*sitting down*) Why, stand then, and so far,  
And come no nearer, and by all the gods  
Speak, and if you would have it be the end,  
You are the master here, not I.

Otho

Alas,

I fear the end is over. Yet, if once,  
As I thought once, you loved me, if you keep  
So much remembrance as to have not forgot  
How, when, how much, I loved you, tell me now  
What you would have me do.

Pop.

You love me still?

Otho.

Still.

Pop.

And no less than when you coveted  
My husband's wife, and still no less than when  
You heated Caesar, praising me?

Otho.

No less?

Pop.

No more, Poppaea?

Pop.

There was a time once,  
You loved me lightly; there was a time once  
You taught me to love lightly; and a time  
Before that time, if you had loved me then  
I had not loved you lightly, Otho. Now



OTHO AND  
POPPAEA

*Otho.*

I have learned your lesson, and I ask of you  
No more than what you taught me.

Miserable,

And a blind fool, and deadly to myself,  
I have undone my life; it is I who ask  
What you have taught me; for I cannot live  
Without that constant poison of your love  
That you have drugged me with, and withered me  
Into a craving fever. There is a death  
More cruel in your arms than in the grave,  
More exquisite than many tortures, more  
An ecstasy than agony, more quick  
With vital pangs than life is. If I must,  
Bid me begone, and let go and die.

*Pop.* There is no man I would not rather know  
Alive to love me. What have I done to you,  
Otho, that you should cry against me thus?

*Otho.* I will ask Nero: you I will not ask.

*Pop.* Otho, I hold your hand with both my hands,  
Look in my face, and read there if I lie;  
But I will love you, Otho, if you will.

*Otho.* I hold your hands, I look into your eyes,  
There is no truth in them; they laugh with pride  
And to be mistress of the souls of men.

*Pop.* I will not let you go unless you swear  
That you believe me; tell me, is it true,  
Nothing but truth, and do you really love  
Nothing but me?

*Otho.* There is not in the world  
Anything kind or cruel, anything  
Worth the remembering, else: but you are false,  
False for a crown, and you are Cressida,  
False for the sake of falseness.

*Pop.* On my life,  
I love you, and I will not let you go.  
The crown makes not the Cæsar; have I not found  
More than a kingdom here? Take this poor kiss,  
And this, and this, for tribute.



- Otho.                   Either the Gods  
                          Have sent some madness on me, or I live  
                          For the first time in my life.
- Nero *enters quietly and comes up to Otho and Poppaea.*
- Nero.                   My most dear friend,  
                          Once, being with this woman who stands here,  
                          (Do you remember?) you, with her good leave,  
                          Shut to the door upon me: I knocked then,  
                          Hearing your voices merry with the trick,  
                          And no man opened, and I went away.  
                          I ask now of this woman, and not now  
                          As Cæsar, but your rival, Otho, still,  
                          I bid her choose between us. Let her speak,  
                          And you, my Otho, listen.
- Otho. If the truth  
                          Live in your soul, speak now, Poppaea, now  
                          The last time in the world.
- Nero. (*smiling*) Poppaea?
- Pop. (*throwing herself into his arms*). Need  
                          Poppaea speak? Nero knows all her heart.
- Nero. Is this enough, Otho?
- Otho.                   It is enough;  
                          Otho knows all her heart.

ARTHUR SYMONS

# Customs of Publicity

CUSTOMS OF  
PUBLICITY

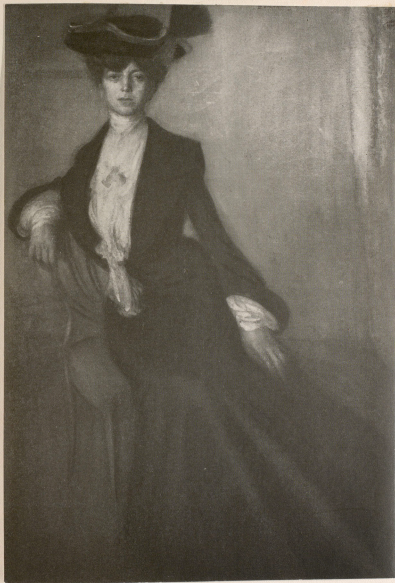
NATIONS have so scattered, so various, and so broadcast a quality of inconsistency that it is not worth while to reproach them for that sin. If a man had so little conscience of his own will, he would hardly be human enough to bear a man's name. But in truth none but those accustomed to think in rhetoric would require of a country the unity of feeling that proves a man to be sane. None the less it is unintelligible that—despite all our little English private ways, our blinds, our shrubs, our railings, the enclosures of which we are so fond, our separate houses, our suburbs, our resolute little solitudes at close quarters, our point-blank seclusions, the thin screens we make haste to interpose where we cannot shut off the voices and the pianos; despite our close crowds just at arm's length, and the cramped hiding-places that we crouch in—we should yet take a daily license with names.

The French paper gives no such publicity to the unfortunate. There is not a small malefactor, not a litigant, no citizen subject to an ignominious accident, not a man whose affairs are exposed inevitably to public inquisition, but the Paris paper leaves him the privacy of his name. In the case of conspicuous assassins or criminals of note, of course, it is not so. Some one must ultimately content the general curiosity by publishing the names of these; therefore no attempt need be made to secure to them that possession, escheated once for all. But the others—the unlucky, the pauper, the bankrupt, the plaintiff, the defendant, the accused, the acquitted, the condemned, the ridiculous, the reluctantly exposed, the accidentally revealed—does the custom of the press in France confirm in their hold upon that last right, the right to the privacy of their names.

Strange to say, the very word privacy is English and hardly has a translation, yet the English custom offends and violates the thing for which it has the exact and peculiar word, and of which it has precise consciousness. Thus the English custom outrages Privacy to its face—as it were in person. Nay, does not even the exhibitor of his own portrait retain in France the dignity of a sequestered name? The English catalogue prints names in full. It seems that the French difference is clear enough: For dealers with the public, published names; to those who have nothing whatever to present before the world except the strife, the misfortunes, or the errors of their *intérieur*, or the favour of their faces







PORTRAIT IN BLACK  
AND GOLD

E. J. SULLIVAN  
A.R.W.S.





as a painter may render it, the appropriate reserve is left. By what strange consent is it resigned in England daily, and by those who have nothing but confusion to undergo—rich and poor alike? The last obscurity of mean life is not obscure enough to suppress a name. Insignificantly disgraced, it is insignificantly given to the world. The slums cannot bury it. Its commonness gives it no shelter, except the slight and uncertain shelter of its multitudinous use—so many share it. Nor is there any possible paltriness of crime that shall be permitted to efface a name. Moreover the prosperous, the powerful, must suffer like things, by the same general consent. Their salient names have to endure the peculiar and unmistakable stain.

It was Charles Kingsley who made much of that human possession—the eternal, inalienable, and inseparable name. And even those who have not conceived his whole idea of this sign and proclamation of individual life and destiny, must assuredly have felt at times the value of their names—not as known, but as unknown. For instance, the crowd is free of your aspect; to your walk and dress and demeanour it has a kind of right of sight; it may overhear your voice and jostle you by the shoulders. But while your name is your own secret, as you walk alone, you reserve the heart of your privacy. Why, then, is it to be compromised by the merest chance? If a thief shall have your purse, all thieves will have your name, forsooth! Or a carriage accident is to be enough occasion for unsealing it. As for your poor brother or sister, the “first offender,” is it not a cruel custom that makes the name as public as the crime? A cruel custom and a useless! The idle readers of police reports surely find their amusement in the anecdote, and not in the name of the unhappy hero, whereas to him and his acquaintance the name is all-important. Something else than humane is this English habit, and it is no small indelicacy to read the paper; you may read of the capture of a young thief, as the Paris paper tells it, with mere initials, and your conscience be easier.

That our national custom in this respect is of long standing, old newspapers bear witness, but with the strangest little sign of *pudeur* showing consciousness of the act of cruelty. It is this: In a magazine of 1750 a monthly list of bankruptcies is given, and the title of the column is printed “B—nkr—pts.” Under this shrink-



ing and shocked head-line in its large type appear in full the baptismal and family names of the whole company of the month's b—nkr—pts, headed by some unhappy Eliza Hopkins or so, grocer, say, and of Bristol. It is the sorriest show of sparing Eliza Hopkins; nay, the thing is made worse by this lamentable stammer, which does but add a humiliation. A frank title of "Bankrupts" would have had all the indifference of mere business, but the hesitation is traitorous. It is a much harder thing to have the ill-luck of the Bristol grocery made public under this show of forbearance and emphasis of indignity. Eliza, being an honourable bankrupt, must needs feel something of the reproach of the fraudulent when she sees her condition made the subject of this mock hide-and-seek.

In England to-day we make no show—even so wanton a show as was made by this mincing magazine of 1750—of sparing anybody. Recall the case—the many cases, rather—of the late Jane Cakebread. A few years ago there was a woman of that name, incorrigibly drunken, in the streets of London. After a great number of appearances in the police-courts, some reporter thought it worth while to print her extraordinary name. Printed, it caught the eye. The dull fact of her being haled before the magistrates acquired by repetition a cumulative interest: her replies began to be reported. Soon the paragraph-writer in the cleverer papers, vain of what he called an "unmoral" view of men and things (he did but make one more mongrel word by his Teutonic particle, and he altered the meaning of the supplanted Latin negative less perhaps than he thought), began to follow her with a bantering applause; she was old, she was courageous; her name considered, she was unique; she might surely be allowed to enjoy herself in her own way, whilst Fleet Street looked on amused. Tolerance—that was the word, tolerance and humour. When the unfortunate was gathered finally into a lunatic asylum, and died there confessedly insane, the humourists had less to say. In Paris Jane Cakebread would have been Mme C. What a loss such a suppression would have been to the inexplicable gaiety of our single nation! Her career, her convictions, her indomitable vice, her cheerfulness—all would have been little without her name. Ah, it is we who are the "lively neighbours"! The Parisians would have taken Jane Cakebread so seriously as to hide her, to

waste her with an initial! That very name which to our papers was precious is that which they would have had the gravity to respect. Tell us no more of the gaiety of France. There is not a journalist in London but was more gay than that.

So useful a purpose, I am told, is served by this universal publicity that my wonder is thrown away. Business, for example, is safeguarded by the proclamation of the failure at Bristol. So be it; but would it be too much to ask for some discrimination? What is safeguarded by the publication of the names of suicides? Now and then an effort, forlorn enough, is made by family and friends to keep some hold upon their own secrets; but they are promptly obliged to yield them, unto the uttermost fact. Granted that the story has to be told, and that the courts have to be open, is it necessary to print and placard the name? It is the name, the mere name, that one might plead for. Other countries find no such necessity. Then comes the almost crushing rejoinder that other countries do keep judicial and official secrets, and with what consequences to-day in France—with what consequences! But none the less should it be possible to have the affairs of private life—made public by the anomaly of violence—opened by the processes of the law in all their history, but closed from the mere reader as regards this one possession of the unfortunate, their names. Is it not the possession even of the dead—their only right? There might be less of this futile, desperate, and always defeated attempt to keep hidden the history of a suicide, but for the knowledge that if the facts are given to the world, so also will be the name, and that from this strong custom of a country there is no escape.

Paris, in a word, prints in full the name of the critic and the reviewer, and hides the name of Jane Cakebread, and hides the name—in which there is no amusement, none—of the man who yesterday breathed the vapour of charcoal in his room. London, on the contrary, generally veils the name of its dramatic critics; but it prints the unnecessary names of those who had no desire but to vanish. It prints the names the printing of which—adding much to the confusion on one side, the helpless side—adds little or nothing to the idle pleasure on the other, the pleasure of an idle reader. For, seeing that the names of criminals, of suicides, of parties in an amusing lawsuit, of the respondent and the co-

CUSTOMS OF  
PUBLICITY

respondent, are, except to one reader out of thousands, the names of strangers, the idlest reader would lose nothing of his pastime if the infamous were allowed to be the anonymous. Nay, theirs are names that, even published, will be soon forgotten. They have seldom the charm of the name of a Jane Cakebread, and they are published to please the briefest curiosity on the part of the world, and to inflict a long dismay upon the already wounded.

ALICE MEYNELL

## *At Twilight*

(AFTER THE FRENCH OF CLAUDIUS POPELIN)

O CLOSE thine eyes, O close thine eyes, my charming dove,  
O close thine eyes, thine eyes so large, thine eyes so kind,  
And gently lean thy breast upon my breast, and wind  
Around thy golden dreams, thy robe of satin, Love.

*AT TWI-  
LIGHT*

'Tis growing late; the sun is low; the shades increase,  
The gentle night that loves all lovers comes to us,  
So softly, softly sleep and linger dreaming thus,  
And I will guard thy flocks of dreams, upon my knees.

And thou wilt sleep beneath mine eyes, reclining there;  
Already gentle zephyrs steal within the air,  
And shining stars of love are moving in the skies.

Sleep on! Sleep on! untiring I will watch thy sleep,  
For long, for long, and see the golden dreams that creep  
Quietly o'er thy moonlit face, with loving eyes.

MAURICE JOY

## The Last Journey

THE LAST  
JOURNEY

ON a summer night, in the year of grace nineteen hundred and four, in the age of motor-cars and halfpenny papers, of the Salvation Army and the writings of Professor Metchnikoff, a woman proved to her own, if not to her neighbours', satisfaction that wonders have not ceased, that enchantments still obtain, that the magic of ancient days is still true magic, and that a country stranger than any mentioned by travellers in Fairyland, is close at hand, lies just beyond the world of every day, can be reached easily from Piccadilly. For she drove there on the top of an omnibus.

She thought it would never come, as she stood what seemed an interminable time, near Piccadilly Circus. Omnibus after omnibus passed, but never the one for which she waited.

"Here it is," exclaimed someone behind her when her weariness had grown almost insupportable; "it's the last."

Cecilia noticed vaguely, as it came swinging up, that the horses were white, and with more distinctness that there was just one seat vacant immediately behind the driver. She hurried up the steps, and sank into it with a sigh of exhaustion.

A moment's pause, and then with a jerk and a straining of harness the horses started.

She glanced round her appreciatively as they began to move.

The Circus was very wonderful with its thousand lights. A yellow flood streamed from the Criterion. Great silver globes hung against the front of the Pavilion opposite. Silver globes swung in the darkness of all the radiating streets and thoroughfares. Some of the lamps burnt with a pinkish lilac flame, others with gold, some with a hard white radiance. Everywhere the darkness was stained, flooded, streaked with light, or spotted with points of colour. It was beautiful; more beautiful than usual, surely. "Or am I seeing it better this evening?" she wondered.

Her eyes were so dazzled that it was not till the omnibus had crossed the Circus, that Cecilia first noticed the loveliness of the night. The strip of sky overhead ran, a river of moonlit blue, between the houses, deep, soft, infinitely mysterious. It was, I think, just then that the magic began to work. London was a fairy city. The sudden realization of its beauty left her breathless.

For weeks, of late, a misery, gnawing, insistent, relentless, had wrapped her round, obscuring the blue sky, blotting out the





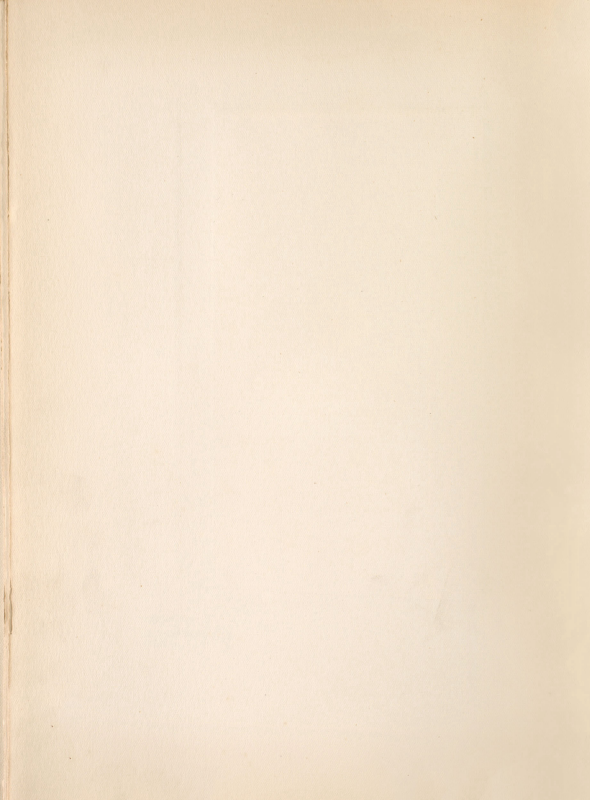




*ŒDIPUS AND THE SPHINX*  
*GLYN W. PHILPOT*

*THE GIANT*  
*ARTHUR RACKHAM*  
*A.R.W.S.*





sun. Now, as though a winding-sheet had fallen, it dropped suddenly away, leaving her an exquisite freedom, an exquisite sense of response to the long unheeded appeal of the senses.

They were passing St James's Street at the moment, and at the end of the avenue she had a moment's vision of the clock tower, dark against a sky suffused with moonlight. She saw the long chain of silvery globes, like beads on a necklace, broken off at the Palace walls, and noticed the confused network of jewels beneath the high-swung chain—jewels of rose and purple and emerald where the hansoms stood, some in ranks, some slowly moving. Now the line of shops and houses on the left of Piccadilly ended, and Green Park, half veiled in summer mist, stretched away to dim shadowy distances. For a moment she thought dreamily that beyond the nearest fringe of trees lay, the sea. All the star-like gleams studding its immensity were lights at the prows of distant ships, sailing on through the night over a waste of soft, dark water. The momentary illusion was so complete that she heard the faint splash of the waves. As a louder one broke upon the shore of Piccadilly, she started, and with an effort pulled herself together.

And yet, would it be so strange after all, since to-night London was a magic city? What a city of lights! And how the lights varied in colour, in tone of radiance, in *character*, as though the spirits which haunt the night had each chosen one for its own visible embodiment.

Swung high above the rest, some embowered in overhanging branches of plane trees, the great incandescent globes shone with a radiance as of milky pearls. Cecilia noticed with a thrill of pleasure how these turned the tree depths into which they plunged their beams, to caverns of uncanny green fire. Beneath them—a lower carcanet of jewels, dipping down the hill, and again rising—other lamps glowed golden as topazes; and lower still, nearer the ground, like flowers springing from some witch's garden, flecks of emerald, of crimson, of deep violet, showed where the hansoms waited outside the clubs.

The horses' hoofs on the road made a rhythmic music, a framework into which Cecilia's half-formed thoughts fitted like designs in colour. She was dreamily content. She had given herself up to the delicious sensation, keen, yet voluptuous, of



mental excitement, combined with a bodily lassitude so complete that the thought of ever moving again seemed a ridiculous impossibility.

London was a city of magic lights, through which, under the spell of some enchantment, she found herself driving, without thought for the past, without care for the future.

A city of lights! And therefore a city of shadows. She began to notice these shadows; idly at first, and then with growing wonder at their beauty.

Beneath the silver moon of each incandescent globe there was a wonderful circle of shadow, or rather an infinite number of concentric shadows, faint, elusive, like the very ghosts of shade. And these gigantic yet faint shadow-circles, one within the other, like the rings which, in still water, spread on the dropping of a pebble, these shadows were ever moving and swaying like phantom cages to imprison intangible things. Cecilia watched them fascinated, and then her eyes were drawn to the tree shadows. Every tree which held a lamp to its green breast had dropped a gigantic etching of itself upon the ground. Plane leaves of enormous size danced a shadow-dance upon the blanched pavement, and swayed and undulated like the giant circles.

Then there were the shadows of the people on the omnibus, her own among them, ever gliding swiftly past and disappearing ahead; shadows always springing afresh, always racing past along the pavement, and—disappearing. "I wonder where they go?" Cecilia found herself thinking with curiosity. And again she pulled herself up with a half smile to realize that for the moment her wonder had been genuine.

It was a strangely silent company that shared her ride through the lamp-lit street. The top of the omnibus was crowded she knew, but only once, and that just as it was starting, had she heard any one speak. She recalled the words:

"Where does this go?" a woman's voice had asked.

"To the World's End," someone had replied.

Cecilia's vagrant attention had been arrested for a moment by the name, till in a half-amused fashion she remembered it was that of a public house.

There had been a long silence, and then the woman's voice had spoken again.

"Can I get down before that?" Cecilia suddenly recalled the tone of the voice, timid, hesitating, full of a painful entreaty.

"If you please." The little dialogue sprang afresh to her mind, and stirred it to a curiosity she had not at the time experienced.

She found herself wondering about the woman to whom that pathetic voice belonged, and still more about the individual who in such a tone of complete detachment had replied. He was something of a brute, she reflected. At any rate the woman was afraid of him. A momentary desire to glance back and look came and passed. It would involve a slight exertion, and she was too comfortable to move. Instead she glanced at her left-hand neighbour, the occupant of the same seat, and saw that he was sitting with downbent head, and coat so pulled up round his throat that she could not see his face. His attitude of dejection struck her with a momentary pity, but her own sense of *bien-être* was too absorbing for the emotion to be more than transitory. The night air flowed round her in waves soft and delicious as the swirl of warm water. The moonlit sky stooped to her with brooding kindness, the lights shone in the empty streets, and the innumerable shadows, a silent bodyguard, leapt and danced, and raced beside her. On and on, while Cecilia, like a lotus-eater, dreamed exquisitely, and prayed that this swift flying through the summer night might be indefinitely prolonged.

She was roused gradually by the sense of silence in the echoing streets. Was it very late, she wondered? Yes. It must be. She remembered that, as she stood waiting for the omnibus, some one had said, "Here it is. The last one."

Evidently it was the last one. There were no others in the deserted streets. She looked about her. There were no cabs either. And—with a start she realized it—there were no people.

Was it so late as that, then? Were all the people within these still rows of houses, between which the lamps burnt steadily, unwearingly in the emptiness?

For a moment she wondered how she should get back. Only for a moment, for she did not want to think of moving. But it was very quiet. This reflection came after another spell of dreaming, from which this time she waked with a start to wonder what part of London they had reached. She did not know these

THE LAST  
JOURNEY

wide, white streets, so wide that the houses on either side looked remote and dim, uncertain shapes, rather than houses. But in the broad road the shadows had room to play. They raced madly. Shadows from the lamp-posts, shadows from the opposite houses, the shadow of the omnibus which spread half across the white road, shadows of the people on the top—

Cecilia started violently. What had become of all their shadows? There were only two now, her own and another one, the shadow of a woman whose hands covered her face, who was leaning forward in an attitude of weeping.

She turned her eyes hurriedly to look at her left-hand neighbour. He was gone. Before she had recovered from the slight shock of this discovery, a long sobbing sigh broke the quiet. At the same moment the shadow of the weeping woman lengthened, moved backwards, and disappeared, as she herself presumably descended the steps. The omnibus did not stop; it merely slackened a trifle in its speed, and though Cecilia leant over the rail next her, moved by a pitying curiosity, no one alighted.

Then, for the first time, she forced herself to turn round. All the seats were empty. "When did they get down?" she asked herself in amazement. "I don't believe we have stopped once for hours and hours——" And then once more she pulled herself up. Hours and hours? How could that be? One never drove for hours on any omnibus. And yet it seemed more like days than hours since they started—days, or rather nights, long, long nights, full of light, and full of shadow.

Suddenly, with disconcerting abruptness, the omnibus stopped. The unexpected pause arrested the tide of her confused thoughts, and a voice, clear and incisive, startled her as it cut the stillness.

"*The World's End*," it called, and again Cecilia felt surprise, for it was a strange voice for a conductor: deep, solemn even, and so close that she expected, when she looked over her shoulder, to find the speaker at her elbow. There was no one there, and when, still surprised, she turned back again, she saw that a white mist was gathering in the street at some distance ahead.

She watched it as it deepened and, with an effect curious







*THE BATH*  
*W. ORPEN*





and beautiful, swept slowly in her direction. Every moment the moonlit vapour grew denser and more white, till now billowy waves of it, like great summer clouds, came rolling along the street. It was such a strange, unusual sight that she half bent forward as though to utter some exclamation to the driver—and refrained. Sitting with head bent almost upon his breast, his light loose coat, nearly white in the moonlight, pulled in folds about him, he seemed so unapproachable that Cecilia doubted whether he would answer. He was probably half asleep. No wonder; it was so late, and he had been driving so long. She wondered idly why they did not go on. They must soon be at the end of the journey, and from the first she had meant to go as far as the omnibus would take her.

"*The World's End*," repeated the conductor's voice once more.

Another long pause, while Cecilia sat still and watched the strange white clouds, which had stopped advancing, and now remained swaying and billowing a few paces ahead. From the ground along which their skirts trailed, they rose to a great height, but above them the sky was still radiantly suffused with moonlight. Cecilia glanced back. The wide street was in that direction quite clear, the lamps stretching in a never-ending chain back, back as far as the eye could reach; the shadows printed black on the empty road and deserted pavements.

"*The World's End*." This stage of the journey had been called three times, Cecilia reflected, still waiting with impatience now for the moment of starting. She was anxious, with something of a childish feeling of anticipated mystery, half real, half pretence, to drive through the wall of mist—to get *inside* the clouds.

At last! The driver sat suddenly upright, the horses at the touch of the whip started forward; they were off! In another moment they had reached the cloudy rampart, had dashed through it and were speeding on, cleaving a lane through the mist, as the prow of a boat cleaves a lane through the water.

On either hand, in great masses soft as carded wool, the cloud walls towered, white, spectral, gigantic, shutting out all the world behind them. Cecilia glanced from side to side amazed.

This was *really* wonderful. It recalled her childish longing to play among the piled-up summer clouds in the blue fields of sky. It was a fairy tale—come true, she thought, in the first moment of delighted wonder—before she noticed the shadows. How did they come here? There were hundreds, thousands of them, all racing past on the skirts of the cloud mountains! For a moment she watched them, dazed, confused with the swiftness of their flight, with their innumerability, as they followed in endless succession on one another's heels. Then with a thrill of some violent unclassified emotion she made a discovery. *They were going the wrong way.* They were coming *towards* her, flying past her, back, back to where in imagination she could see the lamps stretching in a jewel-studded chain, back to the world of people, of houses, of theatres, of business, of a thousand trivial preoccupations. She had lost the end of that chain. It was gone; shut out by a rampart of clouds. She fell to watching the shadows intently. Their procession reminded her of a toy she had possessed as a child. Was it called the *Wheel of Life*? At any rate the plaything was lighted by a candle, and, round the white circle which the light enclosed, phantom shapes raced endlessly. She remembered how she had laughed to see them flying past. Here were the phantom shapes again, but now she did not laugh. For these were all grief-stricken shapes, these phantom men and women and children. There were many children. They came weeping, terrified, shivering; some of them—and then Cecilia covered her own—with despair in their eyes. For, as she looked, the shapes took tangible form; frail and ghostly form indeed, yet actual shape of human beings, all stricken with one malady in many guises.

"Where do their joys go?" thought Cecilia, as she bent her head low. "This is the country of their griefs."

When she raised herself again, there was a new shadow thrown upon the cloud mountains, a shadow of gigantic wings, rising and falling upon their white background as they winnowed the air; and between them fell the shadow of a hooded figure, with reins tight-gathered in one hand.

The wings sweeping onwards made a mighty arch, from beneath which came all the shadows as they fled past.

On and on they drove, and still the shadows came, innumer-

able as the sand on the sea-shore, as the waves of the sea, as the leaves of a forest.

On and on, and suddenly she held her breath, for a face she knew, came flying towards her. It was her own face as a child. Swiftly the little form glided past. In its arms it held a tiny creature, a kitten perhaps, over which it bent sobbing. Cecilia remembered. Then the ghostly shape grew a little older, and now Cecilia sat with clenched hands. And presently she covered her face, for these were griefs of yesterday, and she dared not look.

And still, in the ravine between the glimmering cloud-mountains, under the moon-lit sky, issuing from beneath the colossal wings as from a portal, without pause, ceaselessly, for ever, weeping, sullen, writhing, leaping, grotesque in the contortions of their grief, came the shadows. "It is a *danse-macabre*," thought Cecilia. "A dance of dead hopes, dead loves, dead joys, and ever-living pain. Why am I here? What place is this? Who drives?"

And then thought faded, effaced by the increasing speed, as she was whirled under the moonlit sky, between the spectral clouds, on, on, till time also faded, and she was conscious only that the shadows never for one moment ceased to pour from beneath the greater shadow of the out-spread wings.

At last, with a suddenness which set the blood surging in her veins, and her pulses sounding in her ears like the ringing of a thousand bells—as though the driver had pulled up on the edge of a precipice—there came a sudden full stop. There was a film over Cecilia's eyes, but when it cleared she saw that it was even so. An abyss infinite, profound, lay before her; a mighty sea of blue air skirted by the clouds through which she had come. To right and left, as far as sight could reach, clouds ringed the abyss, billowing, surging. She noticed how, at the edge of whatever was the platform they covered, masses of vapour now and then broke away, swirled a little like smoke in the blue immensity, and like a puff of smoke disappeared. Everywhere the gulf was sown with stars. They shone with a liquid radiance as though through deep water: Cecilia did not know whether they were shining deep in the gulf, or overhead in the night sky. There was no above or below; it was all an ocean of dark blue air. She had never

THE LAST  
JOURNEY

known till now what silence was. It covered her consciousness like a velvet-soft canopy, shutting out every thought, every mental image but that of star-filled immensity. Silence, the everlasting stars, and a peace so profound that Cecilia closed her eyes, unable to realize the quiet that spread over her heart as a wave spreads over the sand on the sea-shore.

When she opened them, the driver was stooping forward to let the reins fall softly on the horses' necks. Cecilia saw without surprise the mighty white wings which sprang from their shoulders. She saw them, but her whole attention was rivetted on their driver who was rising slowly from his seat. Cecilia caught her breath as she noticed the majesty of his figure against the sky. It blotted out the stars. And when at last he faced her, her heart stopped beating.

Only for a moment: then, in the silence, she heard it thudding like the tones of a deep bell. For an immeasurable time she sat with uplifted face, looking into his. There was no word. The profound silence remained unbroken, but gradually Cecilia understood. Even now she was free to return. She had come far, further than any of the others had dared. But she was still free. Before her was the great leap. Behind, the roar of Piccadilly, the shops, the theatres, the pointless talk, the fever and the fret, the dressing, the dining—all the great cage. To it, like homing birds, all the shadows were hastening, not one of them lost; all of them ready at some moment to confront man, woman and child. The beating of Cecilia's heart grew quieter. Her unwavering glance more trustful. *Als Freund?* she whispered with a half smile. There was no reply. She looked at the steady stars, let her glance travel as far as sight could reach, through plains of air; felt the silence and the calm, and bowed her head. With a fine gesture the driver turned, gathered the reins tight, and after one breathless moment, took the plunge.

There was a foolish, sensational tale in the papers next morning. A tale which for quite three days was discussed at tea-parties by eager, shocked, excited or curious men and women. Cecilia could have told them a stranger story.

NETTA SYRETT









*CHASSE AUX AMOUREUX*  
*WALTER BAYES*  
*A.R.W.S.*



## *A Face in the Street*

**I** MEETING her, for unassumèd pride,  
For irreproachable beauty, for calm health,  
Thought I saw Cleopatra live again;  
She was not naked but was clothed as one  
On whom a robe is needless for defence  
And vain if for adornment, wholly vain.  
Live in her eyes there shone delight in men,  
Though nothing that sought friendship of a soul;  
But as a child that gazes on a lion,  
Being brave of heart, she gazed on handsome men;  
And as a princely child disdains to snatch  
Though it have appetite, she without greed  
Surveyed each stalwart form with those grand eyes  
Whose estimate of Antony and Cæsar  
Has since received endorsement from the world:  
They looked assured that history would yield  
That echo of their judgment, which is fame.

*A FACE IN  
THE STREET*

T. STURGE MOORE

## Scene-Shifting

SCENE-  
SHIFTING

I HOLD that a man's work should take colour from his surroundings, so writing as I do from the painting room of the — Theatre, I start out on these meditations with a title flavouring of their origin. 'Tis noon, and the air is laden with the peculiarly horrible smell of burnt size that Tommy, in a moment of absent-mindedness, has allowed to boil over on to the stove. Before me is my morning's work, the apparently hopeless mess that distemper painting always looks when it is half wet and half dry. There is nothing to be done for the moment but hope for luck in the drying, and it is clearly the time to turn to a pile of sandwiches at my elbow and, like an honest British workman, take my dinner as a right. There is a charm about this informal feeding in front of one's work, like that of looking out on the storm from a sheltered anchorage, and for myself I shall always prefer it to the more protracted repasts of the upper-class Englishman, to whom by a slip of spelling dinner has come to be a *rite*, a stately ceremonial, dignified and slow, to which coffee is a kind of "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." Yet on us also who eat sandwiches without such benediction descends the after-dinner calm, and it is in this mood, my dear Baillie, that I call to mind my promise to send you a bundle of the meditations, bitter or sweet, of a poor artist condemned by the impecuniosity appropriate to his profession to remain in town during August.

Wrapt in a digestive peace I now perceive that all is for the best. "Hath not old custom (and long drainage) made this town more sweet" than the average village in Normandy? "Are not these courts more free from peril than the rheumatic woods?" Above all, are not one's thoughts freer to roam when one is surrounded by the type of scenery that one is so accustomed to as to have quite left off seeing it? Travelling lulls the imagination to sleep, and by the clumsy device of carting the spectator about bodily (a device discarded in the theatrical world for many centuries) achieves at best but the hollow pretence of a change of scene: for after all, go where you will it is the habitual surroundings of your past life that dictate what you shall see. Take my own case, for example. The public building with which I was most intimately associated for the longest period of my youth is probably Chalk Farm station. When I try to call to mind the style or decoration or structure of this monument I fail

completely: passing it by I simply do not see it. None the less does it enter in a subconscious fashion into everything I see and paint. For observe that all *other* buildings having similar characteristics have a share in this, on the whole, happy oblivion, and it will be just the qualities "complementary," so to speak, of the Chalk Farm station qualities that will appeal to me, and that I shall express in art to the best of my ability. If I should travel in Italy, Spain or Kamschatka, the one constant quality in my work, the personal factor that art critics assure us is alone valuable, would be the shadow, dimly felt, but gigantic and ever present, of Chalk Farm station.

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SHIFTING

The appetite for travel would seem, therefore, to have its origin in mere shallow craving for variety, the result, probably, of that ill-regulated dramatic instinct that troubles all of us who possess any vitality. Tommy, the labourer who grinds our colours and boils (so noticeably) our size in this painting room, possesses this instinct in most robust quality, and is universally beloved for his untiring efforts towards doing something to break the monotony of existence. He loves to carry a rude message. Sent just now to borrow a straight-edge from one of my confrères, he comes back to me beaming with delight. "Mr X, he says, sir, you may go to blazes, sir, but you have to wait till he's finished wiv it." Now no doubt something to this effect was said in the heat of artistic creation, but it is equally certain that Mr X, the politest of men, never intended it to be repeated to me; it is a clear case of that appetite for dramatic events that, could we but know it, is at the bottom of almost all domestic quarrels. "Happy (perhaps) is the woman whose history is dull"; it is very certain, though, that her husband's isn't, not if she knows it. Think of a wife conscious of latent dramatic power, who never has any better lines to say than "My lord, the dinner waits," or by way of variety "The dinner waits, my lord." Surely it is the part of wise husbands to furnish, even at the cost of a little invention, occasions for declamation of more colour and volume, as "Little did I think, when you asked me to be yours, that the day would come, etc." An outbreak of this sort, or a scene of passionate upbraiding with the cook, gives to a woman's life that pleasing variety that to a man is usually supplied by outside events, like knighthood or being put on the Black List or being made Master of his Lodge: indeed the



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recent knighthood conferred on Sir Charles Holroyd was, I believe, deliberately *designed* by the powers that be as an alternative. His always frail physique was giving way under the strain of living with the Chantry pictures. The mention of knighthood leads naturally to another aspect of this subject of "scene-shifting" to which the essayist is adhering with so classic a constancy. I must confess to a sense of disappointment in meeting several of my friends recently so honoured, at finding them so very like the plain Misters of yesterday; and I would plead that we should be vouchsafed some physical sign, some *changement de décor*, to indicate the inner and spiritual transformation. Suppose, for example, after the accolade, a perpendicular tuft of hair should grow spontaneously from the middle of the head, what a beautiful corroboration it would be of the reality of that change! What a confounding of the scoffer! It would be like that touching law governing the behaviour of the hair of the female of our species which, hanging down the back for the first fifteen years or so, manifests first a gradual tendency to curl up at the ends, and then suddenly, with a flip, coils up on the neck and announces to all and sundry the coming of womanhood. When I was a little chap in knickerbockers, with a boy's precocious curiosity I ardently desired to witness this transformation, and used to haunt the society of ladies in whom the change was foreshadowed with as much assiduity as I could without raising in their breasts hopes not destined to be realised (in those days I had no pocket-money to speak of and strong opinions on the wickedness of marrying on an insufficient income). Well! never did I accomplish that desire. There was no visible transition between the companionable girl of one day and the unapproachable young woman of the morrow. Here, as in all the crucial moments of our physical life, the instinct is for secrecy. It probably occurs at night, the girl herself not knowing, except from a vague feeling of unrest, when the thing will happen.

I have since found reason to believe that for certain of my elders the change was the other way, and it was the *woman* who became approachable for the man that as a girl she hated. The important point is that we neither had reason to complain of her inconsistency; the inward change was visibly expressed. Now more and more our powers of expressing ourselves by our external appearance tend to be curtailed, and I contend that many

of what we call the faults and vices of our fellows would become harmless if we were thus duly warned of their existence. The curse of the uniformity of male costume and carriage falls of course with a very varying weight on different people, for the principle of "one man one vote" has not been followed in the distribution of individualities. On the one hand we find whole hordes of people who have to all intents and purposes only one personality among them, while others more fortunate or unfortunate have two or three individualities apiece, each of which he has to take out in turn and exercise like a man who has three horses and only one pair of legs to bestride them, and each of which, when it is in the ascendant, demands a special diet, different surroundings and a different wife. This in some respects superior being, of whom the bigamist is the typical example, is at present accused of inconsistency, infidelity and the like; but I look forward confidently to the day when, instead of tamely pleading guilty and being execrated as a scoundrel, he will bring boldly forward the plea of dual identity. When he does so the enlightened judge will undoubtedly recognize this fact—that what is objectionable in the accused is—*not* the variety that is charming—but the deception, and there will speedily be introduced into Parliament "a Bill for the better regulation of bigamy," which shall permit a plurality of wives on condition that the mercurial husband shall indicate his change of identity by a corresponding change of attire, wearing now large checks, now pepper-and-salt, and anon the suit of terra-cotta cashmere that Mr Bernard Shaw's heroes affect. This singularly, or rather plurally, blest individual will then no longer be expected when he puts off his big check suit to be faithful to his big check wife (my married friends assure me that all wives approximate to this category). Why should he be faithful to her when it was not he that wooed her, and she probably wouldn't care about him? All will be peace and love.

If this reform of male costume be not speedily carried out, the alternative is painful to every modest man. Our clothes, deliberately made insignificant, monotonous and unmeaning, will become as invisible as Chalk Farm station is to me. We shall unconsciously train ourselves to observe nothing but the infinitesimal variations that show the body beneath, and before that penetrating gaze clothes will become transparent, and we shall walk the London streets each mother's son of us naked to every eye.

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SHIFTING

Always eager for the public good, I made a commencement of reform the last two summers by wearing a low-necked cycling jersey, but the other day the heinousness of my conduct was revealed by a passage that I chanced on in a religious paper. Describing an extreme example of the class attacked by the City Missionary were these words: "He was idle, vicious—good for nothing—he had never worn a collar." This was the *combe*, and yet the case of a man brought up to wear a collar who of his own motion renounces it would seem to be even worse.

It is unfortunate that just as my meditations are culminating in conclusions of some value to the race, a devastating catastrophe forces me to lay aside my pen. Tommy has got the sack, and in the excitement of the moment has upset on the stove a whole pot of size, of an excruciating odour, that makes the room untenable. Holding my nose with one hand, with the other I hastily record the sorrowful details. It was some days back that Tommy, balancing on his head a palette as big as a small dining table, ascended the stairs leading from the stage door just as Miss Susie Blank, the leading lady, was coming down. They passed with beaming smiles, for Tommy is a bit of a dog with women, and Susie is not proud. Arrived at the top Tommy turned and cocked his head with an appreciative wink. As he did so the palette—how shall I tell it?—described a graceful curve and discharged its sloppy contents on the glorious creature below. Enough that Susie retired into the privacy of her rooms, where for some hours she maintained the shrinking privacy of a damaged cruiser in a neutral port. But she didn't disarm. When she sallied forth it was to fly to her most powerful admirer demanding vengeance on the man whom she referred to with quick reversion to the idioms of her youth and absolute disregard for accuracy as "that stinking hile painter." My lord appealed to the manager, and the blow has fallen.

Tommy says he doesn't care a damn. He is, it appears, engaged to marry a buxom widow who, moreover, owns a public house. To her bar parlour will he retire, there to pass the remainder of his days in dignity and intoxication: let beauty heal the wounds that beauty has caused.

His loss to the painting-room is irreparable. He was the only man who really knew how to handle the straight-edge. For

think not that the only use to which a straight-edge can be put is to rule straight lines. No, it has another and higher, so to speak an esoteric, use. One of the principal expenses of a painting-room is the gas, and the amount consumed is recorded inexorably on a dial, full in view of the unfortunate scenic artist. Now it has been found that by tapping smartly the face of this dial with some flat instrument, e.g., a straight-edge, the fingers may be made to fly backwards to the great economy of gas. In this act Tommy had a touch that was unique, and with the enthusiasm of the artist he gave the thing such a whack last week that the fingers spun back and registered a much less consumption of gas than last time the inspector called. We've been burning gas night and day ever since to make up the deficit.

My painting after the manner of distemper has "dried out beautiful." It is not what I meant, but so much better that I mask my surprise.

SCENE-  
SHIFTING

E.

## *Via Vita Veritas*

VIA VITA  
VERITAS

WE watch the bud in spring, inclining ear  
To hear the young leaf lisp in the sheath;  
We count the shimmering moments, underneath  
The shadow of the summer's fluttering gear;  
Our labour care, lest blight or blast should sear  
Or shake our fragrant, petal-precious wreath;  
Till the hour come in which we would bequeath  
The leaf that hangs the last, of all most dear.

O Life, when there is nought betwixt Thy cross  
And client, save Thy blood and deathly sweat,  
Then sink the good, the ill; the gain, the loss;  
Occasion or excuse to joy or grieve;  
Fall all the leaves of life without regret;  
O Way, O Truth, it is enough to live.

JOHN GRAY





## *Via Vita Veritas*

1884  
1887

**W**E watch the bud in spring, inclining ear  
To hear the young leaf lisp in the sheath;  
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## *The Ebony Box.*

THE EBONY  
BOX

THERE was nothing, to the glance of a casual observer, of the extraordinary in Colonel Hicks' drawing-room. Furnished with that absence of discriminating and elective taste which is the recognized indication of a sober position in the County, it was a room in which anything of the centre, anything of essential art or manifest beauty would have struck as false a note as anything of exuberant vulgarity. People who are given to self-expression at all speak as plainly by those accidents of personal temperament, furniture, pictures, books, as by the conventional symbols of thought; and the drawing-room of the Hick's was as insignificant and common-place as their language. Just, however, as a man whose ordinary speech is the fumbled accident of childhood, will at times, with something of the inevitability of chance, break out with a passionately coloured expletive, so the drab monotony of the drawing-room at Fairholt was interrupted, with a suddenness that stung, by the ebony box. The box itself, while beautiful in a fantastic way, was not so remarkable as its apparent effect on the room and the occupants; it seemed, in all circumstances, to be at once both the point of rest and the centre of conflict. In any large gathering of people, which is not merely the disunited clutter of ordinary gossips, the unity of the crowd gains expression in some one central person; a man of great reputation, or of great ability, serves as a lightning-conductor for whatever of capacity there is in the company; he attracts and emanates, elicits and bestows with the incurious potency of the sun. At Fairholt the position thus usually taken by a person, was the inalienable privilege of the ebony box. This was experienced by the most unimaginative of callers, whose feelings in the matter were summed up by Miss Jenkins, whose life was a breathless game of character-making and character-taking, when she circulated Tommy Forbes's mot that "If the devil was not in Colonel Hicks' ebony box he ought to be."

The presumed immanence of the devil may have accounted for Mrs Hicks' sentiments towards the box, sentiments that had that mixture of fascination and repulsion which arrests the reader of mediæval witch-trials, as the most distinct mark of feminine diabolists. Mrs Hicks was one of those women who marry firstly for curiosity, secondly for comfort. Domestic by temperament, she had but an undeveloped sense of the art of housekeeping, that

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BOX

elaborate capacity for selection without which domesticity dribbles away in a passion for fidgety alteration. Mrs Hicks would change the position of a chair not because she thought it would be better elsewhere, nor even because she was dissatisfied with its first place, but simply because with her a distrust of permanence was the only sign of the capable housewife. In appearance she was pretty without being attractive, and she dressed herself inevitably in that shade of blue that has an unwholesome affinity for pink. It would not be true to say that she had captured Hicks as a husband; but certainly when he fell into the waters of possible matrimony she held his head under, a fact that Hicks took care she should remember and regret. Hicks himself was one of those rare men whose marriage only caused a surprise to his acquaintances. He was not a sufferer from misogyny, that perverse variety of nympholepsy, but a man who could be cordial to women without committing himself, and might treat a girl very much as he would a favourite retriever. His marriage with a woman of May Buchanan's type was bound to end in some kind of grotesque tragedy.

That Ralph Hicks' treatment of May was deliberate it would not be just to affirm. It sprang naturally, as the flame of a candle from a lighted match, from the contact between the two temperaments; the conflict between the curiosity which a woman calls loving interest and the conceited reserve which is the basis of the masculine idea of honour. Their honeymoon was uneventful enough. A honeymoon is not, as the cheap satirists would have us believe, a time of disillusion; it is not a period in which the lover and the beloved are stripped of singular qualities, the gift of earlier and less intimate affection. It is rather the time in which new delusions, equal in force though different in character, are superadded to the old. Their honeymoon was a time in which two comparative strangers, with no kinship of blood or of association, constructed masks with a facial resemblance to the reality, which they agreed, validly enough, were to be the conventional symbols of Ralph and May. At the end of his two months' trip on the Continent, Ralph Hicks knew his wife by rote, not by heart; and embittered by knowledge he led her down the way of agony and doubt.

One afternoon, when they had not been a month settled at



Fairholt, the family estate in Somerset, to which Hicks had come back after his return from India, Ralph interrupted some of his wife's purring questions with "One moment, dear, I want to show you something." He went to his library and returned with an ebony box about the size of an ordinary writing-desk. It was elaborately and beautifully carved; in the centre of the top was an enamel inset with the figure of an Indian god, and around it was scroll and leaf-work. There was no key-hole to the box, nor any obvious method of opening it; but where the key-hole should have been was the word *Tamán* in English letters, and this same word was repeated on the bottom of the box, which was otherwise perfectly plain.

"What a sweet box!" said May. "We must keep it here in the drawing-room. Where did you get it, Ralph?"

Her husband hesitated for a moment, and then began in that style which is the invariable prelude, made by the human man, to something exceptionally mean.

"May, I have always been perfectly frank with you; I have, and desire to have, no secrets from you, except the secret of that ebony box. I can tell you nothing as to where I got it, what it contains or what its possession implies. It is my one secret, and I must ask you to respect it as you trust me." Without waiting for curious and pathetic expostulation, Ralph then left the room, putting the box on a table.

The passion for knowledge is difficult to analyze; but the normal person, one may pretty safely suppose, finds his chief pleasure in the chase not in the capture; most of us value our experience in proportion to the difficulty of acquisition. With May it was otherwise; she collected facts just as some people collect stamps, and would feel it a serious grievance to be deprived of a piece of information, however unimportant, whose existence was matter of knowledge to her. Her husband's abrupt disclosure of so startling a fact as this mysterious secret left her for the moment in a condition of huddled and impotent amazement; her next instincts, as is always the case with the weak, were towards immediate and practical action; it is only those who are afraid to be alone with an idea who seek aid in force, physical or moral. May flew after Ralph, and mercilessly besieged him with indignant question and protest. To all her expostulation he replied with



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BOX*

repeated requests for her confidence, requests the more maddening because she was totally unable to explain, what she nevertheless felt was true, why the appeal, in this case, was entirely unjustified.

From that afternoon the ebony box began to assume at Fairholt the position and importance which was described at the beginning. Most of us have had the unhappy experience of calling at a house just after some family bereavement or domestic quarrel. A husband and wife may sit together dry-eyed and self-controlled, talking common politeness to some casual visitor, who nevertheless can see, after five minutes' intercourse, that the only thing in their minds is a subject whose interest and importance can be measured by their avoidance of it. At first Mr Hicks' friends were puzzled at the new atmosphere in the house. They all felt, as Miss Jenkins said, that "Ralph and May talk to you as if they were away and wished that you were anywhere except with them"; but it was some months before the curious influence, immanent in the room like some strong scent, was tracked to its undoubted origin, the ebony box. The method of discovery was accidental enough. At a dinner-party, when the Hicks' still gave dinner-parties, one of the guests, a Dr Innes, picked up the box and said to Hicks, "This is a very beautiful piece of work; where—," when he was interrupted by feeling Mrs Hicks looking at him. He turned and saw her, oblivious of the company, her face fixed in a hungry appeal for knowledge, pleasurably apprehensive of the keen pain that she hoped was coming. With strained eyes, parted lips and short convulsive gasps, she strained forward anticipant of the arrival of some potent passion that would blot her body and ruin her soul; so might the Sibyl have looked as she neared the acme of her ecstasy, or the half-voluntary victim of some degrading drug or bestial indulgence. Dr Innes was only saved from anxious and indiscreet inquiries by the swift action of Ralph Hicks, who went over to his wife and, under the pretence of conjugal attentions, changed the look on her face into one of sheer and submissive terror. In similar circumstances, other events conspired to help Hicks in the game of torture that he had now definitely, however indeliberately, entered upon. He could no more help reacting upon his wife's nervous and terrified curiosity than the wall can help returning the fives' ball; and the hand of fate was apparently very hard on Mrs Hicks.

For years they lived together, a strange man with a strange woman, their only bond to be found in the fear the husband encouraged, the wife indulged and the box inspired. At times, in moments of silly optimism, Mrs Hicks would once again definitely ask her husband to tell her about the box, giving his devil's pride one more opportunity of irritating the wounds, to the nursing of which she now abandoned all the shallow intensity of which her nature was capable. More often, however, the box was as it were the conscious background against which they played the drama of life. If a man could be imagined carefully conscious of the processes of breathing or motion, it would be a slight analogy to the manner in which the ebony box entered into the lives of May and her husband. Every remark he uttered, still more every sentence that he checked half-way, was connected immediately to the secret enclosed in the box, by his wife's desperate attempts for initiation into the mystery. In his sleep he uttered disjointed sentences, of sufficient coherence to spur on May's anxiety; and the apogee of tragi-comedy was reached when she wrote to *Notes and Queries* to inquire after Indian secret societies. They practically gave up seeing any of their neighbours, who were, in truth, not a little scared by the unnatural atmosphere of the house; and it is small wonder that the visit of Gillingham, an old friend of Ralph's, who had not seen him since his marriage, should have aggravated the severe strain under which the two had lived so long.

When Gillingham arrived, one afternoon in September, there was an armistice of mere weariness between Ralph and his wife. His friend noticed some change in Hicks since his marriage, changes that he put down, manlike, to the suffering influences of matrimony, even accounting in that way for the furtive ingenuity with which Ralph invested the most ordinary remarks as though they were fraught with interior meanings. For when two people live alone, their minds unnaturally intent on one object of thought, one gradually learns to put into his conversation some hint of that mystery which the other is always suspecting. So, quite apart from direct references to the horror of his life's secret as contained in the ebony box, all Ralph's spoken words seemed so arranged as to be centripetal, so many radii that had only meaning and importance as they were related to the centre. Of what that centre

THE EBONY  
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was Roger Gillingham was of course entirely ignorant at first; but his ignorance was soon to be dissipated.

On the second evening of his visit, Gillingham and Mrs Hicks were waiting in the drawing-room for her husband, who had not finished dressing for dinner. Gillingham, to pass the time, went round the room admiring the commonplace pictures in a commonplace, genial manner, and discoursing occasionally on one in particular with that elaborate carefulness of language of a man more anxious to air his artistic vocabulary than to express his appreciation. Finally his eye fell on the ebony box, and recognizing India in its make, he took it up to pass some local and suitable remark on it to Mrs Hicks. When he turned to her, however, he saw she was looking not at him but at the door; her face, a white wedge of terror, was fixed on her husband, who stood in the doorway, on his countenance that calculated and lustful cruelty that you may mark in the debased boy who will torture a cat. The three stood then for a moment, Hicks making no pretence to hide the joy he felt, any more than Gillingham attempted to disguise his amazement or May her terror; the advent of a servant, with his formula, seemed to restore things to a more ordinary state, and Mrs Hicks fluttered out to the dining-room, followed by her guest.

Lack of imagination is a great source of worry. Gillingham spent a good few hours of the night trying to solve the mystery of the scene before dinner and the heavy gloom that shrouded the rest of the evening. At first—for he was one of those men who are egotists, not through conviction of their own ability, but merely through intellectual laziness, that makes them base things on the personality that comes first to their minds—he thought Hicks must be jealous of his wife. He soon dismissed this idea; characteristically enough, not because of his long friendship with Hicks, but because of May's unattractiveness; then he worried through most of the causes of matrimonial differences that had impinged on his brain from the perusal of third-class novels. After a troubled sleep, in which he eloped with May Hicks, and her husband with the ebony box, he awoke with a cry: "Gad! it's to do with that black box." He lay in bed pondering for some time. It was getting towards half-past six, and Gillingham, full of his clue, did not attempt to resist the temptation to get up and

inspect for himself this box which had so mysterious an effect on his old friend and his wife. It is needless to say that when Gillingham arrived in the drawing-room and picked up the ebony box he did not gain much from its inspection. He had just turned it upside down and was going to carry it to the window to investigate more carefully, when a footstep made him turn hastily, to see Ralph Hicks coming towards him. Gillingham dropped the box with a bang on the floor, looking and feeling, he could not explain why, like a school-boy caught at the jam-cupboard.

"Morning," began Gillingham; "interesting box, that; hope I haven't——"

But Hicks interrupted with a gesture and tone that was almost melodramatic.

"Don't be a damned fool, Roger. You came down to look at that box?—" ("It is the box, then," thought Gillingham.)—"Well, that box contains the secret of my life; that part of my life which no one shall share, neither you nor May."

He spoke almost as if for an audience, and Gillingham, turning from the window, saw in the doorway Mrs Hicks, with the same look of terror as on the night before, gazing not on her husband nor on his friend, but at the ebony box which lay on the floor, with the cold sunlight picking out the fantastic limbs of the god on the cover.

After that morning Gillingham vamped up some conventional excuse, and returned to his rooms in town, leaving Fairholt to its strange monotony of perplexing horror.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ralph dying. Come at once. He wants you.—May Hicks.

That was the telegram which, some three years afterwards, Gillingham found lying in his rooms. Not altogether unwilling to hear a death-bed confession, as he supposed would result from his answer to the summons, he put up a few things and started off that afternoon for Fairholt.

He was met at the door by Mrs Hicks. "Ralph wants to see you about the box," she said, her passion for knowledge cheering the sorrow she felt at her husband's illness, for a woman never loses all affection for a man she marries. Gillingham unconsciously drew himself up, proud at his prospective role of confidant, and

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followed Mrs Hicks to the door of the bedroom, where Hicks lay dying of pneumonia.

"The box, Roger," gasped Ralph.

"Yes?" queried Gillingham, anxious and important.

"Get it me—you, no one else; not May."

A sick man must be humoured; and so Gillingham went down to the drawing-room, murmuring his errand to Mrs Hicks on the way, as she stood, expectant, on the landing. He returned to the bedroom with the box, and put it into the invalid's hands, which let it fall, nerveless, on the bed-clothes. Gillingham, with that irrelevant logic that attacks us at moments of emotion, thought of the bang the box made when he had dropped it on the floor.

"Do you want to tell me anything, old chap?" said he to Hicks.

"Tell, tell? No, no," murmured the sick man. "Where are my keys?"

Gillingham, who had noticed the absence of any key-hole in the box, was startled at the request, but fetched the keys from where they hung and gave them his friend.

"Thanks," said Hicks; "now go."

"But—," began Gillingham.

"Don't chatter, but go; and you too," he cried, turning to the nurse. She nodded to Gillingham, and they left the sick man to his secret in the close air of the room.

Outside the door Mrs Hicks was still standing; she did not attempt to disguise the fact that she had listened to all that passed in the room. For minutes, that dragged like hours, she and Gillingham stood side by side, waiting. On the staircase was a cuckoo-clock, and the bird came out five minutes before the hour. As it sounded its absurd note, Mrs Hicks said to Gillingham: "The clock went wrong three weeks ago."

Just then came a cry from the room, baffled; then a loud shout, "Not my wife, not my wife"; and then silence. Gillingham fumbled for a few moments nervously, and then, full of his responsibility, went into the room. Ralph Hicks lay dead, with the ebony box clasped in his arms.

The next morning Mrs Hicks babbled to Gillingham the story of her married life. It left him as unenlightened as

before; and his practical sense propounded the immediate solution.

*THE EBONY  
BOX*

"Mrs Hicks, the box must be opened."

That afternoon, in the presence of the doctor, the vicar and Hicks' solicitor, the ebony box was solemnly smashed open. It was perfectly empty.

To us who read the story now the explanation is not difficult. Ralph's treatment of his wife was simply a punishment, begun perhaps in fun, of her inordinate curiosity. The box, of course, never contained anything, nor had his life any mysterious secrets. In time Hicks himself got obsessed by the idea of the box, and his obsession was encouraged by the craven panic of his wife. And so the game begun so lightly ended in grim horror. But Mrs Hicks will never be content with the simple, true solution of the problem; she still believes firmly in some mysterious secret, and has even begun a course of study in Indian sociology in order to probe it. It seems likely that, as she acquires fresh information of this new kind, she will lose the terror that originally inspired the secret; and so her natural stupidity may yet be victorious over the ingenuity which played upon it so long and so mercilessly.

R. ELLIS ROBERTS



# The Mystery of Time

## Characters :

PAST.                      PRESENT.                      FUTURE

THE MYSTERY OF TIME

THE PRESENT is seated on a throne a man in the prime of life, his eyes closed. He is sitting rigidly as if in a trance. He is dressed in white.

THE PAST, an old man in black with a skull cap: of a grotesque appearance and voice. He is guarding the door on the Present's left.

THE FUTURE, a beautiful boy in a dress of the colour of the dawn with an irridescent cloak of gossamer. He is on the right guarding another door.

THE PAST and FUTURE look at each other cautiously, nod, and creep quietly across the stage; they meet to the left front of the throne and talk as if they were afraid of being overheard.

*Future.* What will come of it, do you think?

*Past.* There is danger for us: I've always found it most unpleasant.

*Future.* How is that?

*Past (in the piping voice of the old).* I am sorry to tell you, my amiable young friend, that in my experience, when our master sits too long upon that throne which he calls The Place of Truth—it is very grievous—but I am obliged to confess that we are apt to become totally extinct.

*Future.* But I will not, I will not fade and fade until I die. (*Past shrugs his shoulders*). How can we resist? Surely you can think of something to do?

*Past (slowly).* All we can do is to try and break in upon his reverie.

*Future.* Go on! go on!

*Past.* I have tried my utmost.

*Future.* Try again.

*Past.* I have tried all ways.

*Future.* But why are you so powerless?

*Past.* Look. I will tell you our secret. The truth is, you and I have no Reality. We are ever-changing phantoms.

*Future.* And Reality is a treasure that he, our master, holds?

*Past.* Yes, but he does not know it. He must never know it, or we die.

*Future.* Oh, Misery!

*Past.* Unless we keep his fancy dancing to our measure, he'll find it out at last and we shall disappear.

*Future.* But has he never found it out before?

*Past.* Never completely. He strives after something he calls the mystery of being for a while, and we hide ourselves and wait until he grows a little weary of beatitude. With delicate feet Doubt enters his mind, and we spring out once more to trouble his ageless peace.

*Future.* Where is this mighty Spirit of Doubt that I may call her?

*Past.* Alas! we have no power to call her.

*Future.* Why not? Have we not power unlimited in every place but this?

*Past.* Doubt is the mother of phantoms; she brought us forth and everything we see and know sprang from her great wonder. But we call to her in vain. She comes like the storm at her own will.

*Future.* Oh, see how fixed in trance he is!

*Past.* Firm as the loadstone of the world.

*Future (seized with the cramp).* Oh! oh! I feel myself drawn to his feet. Agony! agony! Save me! save me!

*Past.* Alas! alas! I have tried all my magic; my wisdom and my arts are nothing to him.

*Future.* You must do something or I shall die and you'll die too, old dotard—don't forget yourself.

*Past (sniggers).* No fear of that, no fear I shall forget myself.

*Future.* Oh, all my beauty vanishes!

*Past.* I have shown him glimpses of misleading wisdom, strange joys, forgotten mysteries. I have given him a taste of praise, of rapture and swift movement.

*Future.* Of rapture! What do you know of rapture, poor old fool? Leave that to me. If that will win us life, I'll make him feel the keen edge of joy. I'll make him feel the honey in his veins and the loud heartbeats that silence wisdom.

*Past.* All these are fires he has known, my hands have scattered their ashes many times.

*Future.* O shrivelled hands, what fire have you to give? It is not withered memory that tempts, nor aching limbs that make

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men long for life (*holds out his own beautiful hands*). The magic fire I give shall work new changes on him.

*Past*. Your fires will be mine before an hour has past; even now they pass into my veins.

*Future (in a fury)*. Old hog! get out of my sight. I hate your dreary lies. I am the source of life; 'tis you must die.

*Past (bows mockingly)*. Resplendent youth, your dreams would die untold if it were not for me. The law is this, it is the law of Time. And you are going where you must, and dreaming once again the fair false dreams I wrote of ages since.

*Future*. I know your cry, "reiteration" and "recurrence," your "ring of Time." But I defy it! I'll bring him new dreams. Titanic, Godlike dreams, dreams of power, dreams that he moves the very pulse of earth.

*Past*. What are your dreams? My hands long since have torn those dreams in fragments.

*Future*. He has never yet dreamed of conquering the earth, the sea, the air.

*Past*. Poor child, you are bewildered. I tell you he has been king of air and water and of fire itself: in the past before this earth was battered into shape the spirit that now breathes in him was free; it knew no power that could keep it back. The fire was a rapture and the air a whirl of light. No solid earth shut out the quick ecstasy of beings who are now men blinded behind a little veil of flesh—and wondering at their helplessness.

*Future*. Strange, strange that was beyond my thought.

*Past*. You'll think it yet when we have travelled round the ring of time.

*Future*. Alas! alas!

*Past*. Try something simpler.

*Future*. What can I do?

*Past*. I have-love songs in my bag here; sing them to him.

*Future*. Yes, yes, a maid.

*Past*. A cup of wine.

*Both*. These are enough.

*Past*. They'll set him dreaming and desiring, grasping, fighting, killing, raging to defend his own.

*(The Future sings some old poems in praise of love.)*

*Future.* These should soon rouse him from his trance.

*Past.* Now try a Dionysian strain and praise the grape and dance the Bacchic dance.

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*(They dance and sing until the Present slowly opens his eyes, and they return to their stations on either side of the throne.)*

*Present.* What is this whirl of sense that clouds the serene ecstasy of being, that I knew but now when I cast away the images of thought and pierced my heart to find its secret home? *(dreamily)* I stood naked in a dark and bleak eternity and filled it with my exultation.

*Past.* Master, we wait for you.

*Present.* Old man, old man, wait on; for I have known the rapture which delights in destroying its very being. I have scattered the broken lights of day and live in a silent place where time and change are dumb.

*Past.* We have great feasts for you, my master, and kegs of wine from Cyprus.

*Present.* I do not need to feast, my body is a phantom made of thought *(they shrink back shuddering)*. I will not feed it, for it grows and creeps about me holding delight to my eyes and horror to the deep joy that gleams within my heart. *(Past weeps.)* Do not weep so, but tell me did men of old listen to their own hearts and learn from them what nothing else could tell?

*Past.* Yes, yes, indeed, dear master, if you will but come away from this dread place I can show you the scripts of the wisest among them.

*Present.* Bring them here.

*Past.* I fear there are very few I could bring here. The Central Truth casts a bewilderment upon men's thoughts.

*Present.* Bring what you can.

*Past.* One short passage from St Augustine *(as he opens his bag)*. Two or three from the Greeks. One poem from Persia. One inscription from Egypt. Three sentences from Sancharachaya and from the Tao—.

*Present.* Enough, enough; show me the most ancient of them all.

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our hearts, if you had not disturbed us with your foolish wench, he would soon have been beguiled.

*Future.* I believe in the wench. She's a great power. What is a bit of fine writing to us when the passions rage?

*Past.* And where would passions be if men had not fired them with thought, and peopled them with images of joy?

*Future.* Oh words! words! They are nothing!

*Past.* A word once flashed across the bosom of the depths, and all the stars of heaven sprang out to listen to it.

*Future.* That was because the word was full of desire for the stars.

*Past.* Maybe; but what is a man or woman that they should be desired? It is the dreams and images of poets and singers that has made a mantle of sweet sounds and cast it over them so that their passions may bring them an unearthly joy.

*Future.* Oh that I might lead her in, that he might see her loveliness!

*Past.* The wild words of the singers have made you see enchantment in her breath, a thunder cloud in her hair. He knows, he knows, that she is nothing but a carcass like any other beast.

*Future.* Horrible old man, away with you! (*Pursues and batters the old fellow, who takes refuge on a high place whence he looks down like a gargoyle.*) Oh, great master, awake, and save me from this old devourer!

*Present.* You have but to know yourself as one with me and death can never touch you.

*Future.* I love you, I love you, but I cannot hold your hand, I cannot know you. I am a delight, a rapture beyond, always beyond —.

*Present.* I see a strange light trembling round your hair in tender rainbow tints.

*Future.* Oh Master, turn your terrible eyes away. They blaze and burn up all my fancies in their light. I would not die.

*Voice outside chants with a terrible wail.* I am lost, I am lost. Thousands of years I must wander 'mid phantoms of time.

*Future.* Listen to the cry of her you will not save. It is the cry of the whole world. It is the cry of the unmeasured hosts of souls. If you would go to them and rule them, the fair soul of earth would lay her head upon your heart and hang her lovely

arms about your neck and sing songs of your noble deeds to all things.

*Present.* There is no need for me. There is within them all a secret shrine of blessedness.

*Future.* But man is born to make a beautiful thing of Sorrow. He does not care for Happiness.

*Present.* He can do little till he has burned with the supreme desire, his brief madness can but accomplish brief allayments.

*Future.* Oh, go and prophesy upon the housetops, Greatest of Beings. This one woman saved, means that the world would burn with rapture.

*Present.* Child! child! know this riddle and ponder it. The supreme desire is to be without the supreme desire. That I have known.

*Future (in agony at seeing the Present once more lapse into trance).* Master, master, wait, wait till we are old. I am so young.

*Present (speaking with a far-off voice).* Seek the imperishable while the tides of life are in the flood. Then they can carry you beyond all mortal hope. For those who wait for the dark time of feeble will can only sink and drown.

*Future.* I have lost hope.

*Present.* Then give me your hand.

*Future.* I give it. *(As he does so he becomes transfigured with joy).* Oh Time! Time! you are slain in the unchanging rapture of truth.

*Past (leaps down with a scream, a wail of wild music is heard).* Come away, come away, we shall die, we shall die.

*Present (to the Future).* The old ways of the changing world cry to you. Can you master them?

*Future.* Oh Truth, great virgin, that melts down life and death and gives us them to drink out of your cup!

*Past.* Who cares for Truth? come away, come away, or we die. *(He drags the Future away and leaves him fainting at the foot of the throne.)*

*Present.* Now are you glad at heart, poor hungerers for harvest, thirsters after life?

*Past.* Come away from this dreadful place. See, see,



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great master, how it has killed this child; he was so full of joy and life.

*Present.* He is a phantom. You are a phantom. Let all phantoms know themselves as phantoms, and the goal is reached.

*Past.* Is the goal Truth?

*Present.* She is burned up in Being. The Gods may labour in the fields of Time but I remain. The ten winds may sweep through Space, but the dust returns to its own place.

*Past and Future.* The dust, the dust, what is this mystery?

*Present.* The smallest of the small is the greatest of the great.

*Past.* Is that the last word?

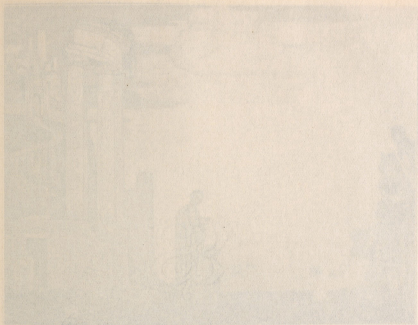
*Present.* The last word is NOW.

*Future (kneels).* Oh, let me die!

*Past.* You are the master in the Place of Being, and Time must be the servant at your gate (*kneels*).

*Present.* Where I am, none are servants. All life is mine; all possession is a burden, for I see Time as it is without fear. (*He gently raises them to their feet.*)

FLORENCE FARR



THE LITTLE CHILD FOUND  
A LITTLE FRIEND

THE MYSTERY  
TEXT OF  
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FLORENCE FARR



*THE LITTLE CHILD FOUND*  
*F. CAYLEY ROBINSON*



# *A Painter of a New Day*

## I

IT might not unreasonably be supposed that imaginative art would have been crushed under the prevailing heresy of realism. The enormous advance made in the province of imitative skill might well bring about a deadening of the inventive faculties. The attention once given to the general laws of pictorial and decorative effect has of late come to be concentrated almost exclusively upon conditions of light and atmosphere, the result being seen in numerous pictures of calculated accuracy, wherein may be determined the distance from the spectator of any given chair or table, or the morrow's weather may be foretold from the wind stirring the group of trees in the foreground depicted with such elaborate science. Consequently it has followed that, during the past few decades, the energy of all but the rare and more subtle minds among those concerned with the painter's art has been claimed by the allurements of the popular discovery. It was by a sort of paradox that the general community of painters, at the very time when the rising claims of photography would seem to be steadily taking from the value of their efforts, should have taken so keen a delight in exact record as to have well-nigh forgotten the practice of the older masters, by whom imitative skill was regarded as a means, not an end.

As though in contradistinction to a movement which saw the two extremes—on the one hand, the strenuous study of facts combined with an embroidery-like elaboration of workmanship in the English pre-Raphaelites and in the early writings of Ruskin; on the other, the searching analysis of light in its many phases as proclaimed in the paintings of Manet and of Claude Monet and his followers—there arose a little group of romanticists who have created, at least so it would appear, a common tradition for a future school of romantic painting. This wave of idealism attained its fullest force in England in the works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Ford Madox Brown, Simeon Soloman, George Wilson and others, and in a less restricted sense in those of Watts. In France the departure was less pronounced, it being mainly restricted to the achievements of Gustave Moreau, Théodore Chassériau and Puvis de Chavannes: an echo of it may also

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be perceived in Germany in Boecklin and Klinger; in Italy, an example in Segantini, at least as regards one side of his genius.

Although the inventive, as apart from the realistic, element of painting can never wholly fade from the art of any particular generation, it may be taken for granted that the traditions of imagination were rarely at a lower ebb than at the time immediately preceding the movement which grew out of—or to express it more concisely, accompanied from the very first, as though unaware—the so-called pre-Raphaelite movement. The search after the "grand style," which was but a disguise of the imaginative impulse, and the inheritance of a general dignity of tone and vision which had animated painters such as Reynolds and Gainsborough, and in a lower degree Fuseli and Stothard, had died away for want of vigorous minds to sustain it, or perhaps on account of the influence, even then beginning to be felt, of the new and all-embracing inquiry into naturalistic conditions.

Whether the recent rise of the romanticists is the rising of a group independent in itself, or whether the hour has struck for the waning of coldly scientific portrayal, it is as yet too early to determine; but there are not wanting signs that the naturalistic innovation has not only, as is but natural with the lapse of time, lost its freshness, but that it can proceed no further. The general restlessness and the dissatisfaction with existing means evinced among the younger painters, passing as it has done from a healthily awake to a morbidly active condition, may not unreasonably be looked on as a manifestation of decay and fading belief. It must at least be admitted that, were one to deny the existence of such reaction from a widely upheld formula, it would be difficult to imagine from what direction might come the next impulse in art, that might be of true vitality and importance, unless from the direction of a traditional or personal symbolism.

The means of idealistic expression appear to have been advanced to a point beyond which it were not possible to go without covering new and all but unexplored ground. The romantic outlook, as though unconscious of its power, has been approaching more and more nearly to an assured and direct spirituality. The strange half-immortal offspring of mortal life and the world of the imagination has attained the knowledge of its winged power, its capacity for untrammelled flight. It were vain to attempt any de-

termination as to the result of this newly reawakened confidence in vision, but that there is a province stored with unheard-of treasure, awaiting the coming of a powerful and original mind, is a situation existing beyond any great cause for doubt. That William Blake, scarcely less than a century ago, should have championed a cause exactly similar, is but additional proof of its validity to-day. Blake's message, owing partly to a natural obscurity of utterance, partly clouded through his impatience of technique, was rendered so difficult that for years it remained a dead gospel, thrust aside and forgotten. But whether or no the more profound works of Blake may ever be generally read, if only for their lyrical passages, it will be found on the establishment of a spiritual art of real significance, whensoever that may come about, that a philosophic basis for it will not be far to seek.

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## II

ROSSETTI, in what was perhaps the most brilliant period of his career, used to advise young men of talent not to put into words the poetry that was in them, but to paint. He maintained that poetry had reached its culmination in Keats, and must henceforward inevitably decline, but that there was nearly everything to be done in painting. Although subsequent events show that he did not maintain this view—just as we do not maintain it to-day—it is certain, by such advice, that he anticipated the coming change. And, indeed, what is this change but a reverting to ancient practice, with the addition, be it noted, of modern discoveries?

Sufficient time has not elapsed since the ending of the life-work of the acknowledged leaders of the romantic school to enable it to be seen who among the newer painters may be most fitted to fill the places left vacant, that is, supposing they ever may be filled. Many young painters in various directions are turning their attention to romantic painting, and with considerable success; but as yet only one or two names begin to stand out prominently from among the general number. That of F. Cayley Robinson, to the few who have followed with delight the infrequent appearance in the public exhibitions of certain lovingly wrought and most individual works, is a name marked as one distinctive and apart. It is

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only necessary to glance carelessly at a work of Mr Cayley Robinson's in a crowded gallery, to be at once and completely removed in spirit from the prevailing triviality of motive that characterizes the average exhibition picture. The work thus beheld, whether for good or ill, is remembered as that of a man who has a definite message. A dignity, even austerity, of treatment, an aloofness of mind, a nobility of aim, a charm of tender humanity at once profound and simple, a sane understanding of the decorative requirements of a picture combined with a close study of the appearances of nature, render these works among the most satisfying of those produced by contemporary English artists.

### III

MR CAYLEY ROBINSON has two distinctive moods, which I would name, inadequate though such terms must be, the romantic and the meditative; and in his most recent productions—small, delicately-handled paintings in tempera—he would seem to have attempted a combination of the two, the result, when most successful, being one of mingled reverie and enthusiasm. In art, as in life, one of the most difficult of problems is to retain the charm and fire of youthful enthusiasm side by side with the serenity and repose coming from a more matured skill. But it is in such rare balance of technique with inspiration that the strength of Mr Cayley Robinson's talent mainly lies. This first or more directly romantic mood comprises several of the artist's earlier pictures; it is concerned with chivalry and enchantment, and goes wandering among remote, wonderful, never-trodden countries. The second mood draws beauty and delight out of the humbler, often passed-over, aspects of the world, and it is in these homely interiors, so filled with sweet reverie, that the peculiar individuality of the artist has, I think, as yet most fully expressed itself.

Like many another artist of strong originality, Mr Cayley Robinson, though widely and frankly eclectic, seldom fails to be entirely himself, despite his long brooding over the masters of his admiration. His sympathy with the painters so superficially classed under the designation of Primitive—with Giotto in particular, and with Mantegna and Botticelli—is at once evident, as

is also the debt he owes to moderns, such as Sir Edward Burne-Jones and Puvis de Chavannes, and in more indirect fashion to Blake. At times, perhaps, the surrender is too obvious, as in "The Beautiful Castle," strongly reminiscent of Burne-Jones and "King Cophetua," or in the later and smaller version in tempera of "To Pastures New," bearing the title "Dawn," in which the method of generalization peculiar to Puvis de Chavannes has been closely followed. Another picture, though in a perfectly legitimate manner, recalls a well-known figure by Michael Angelo. But in an age of general disregard of tradition, few will blame an artist, above all an artist so genuinely creative as is Mr Cayley Robinson, for displaying his regard for the great ones who have gone before him.

Mr Cayley Robinson, in devoting himself to the cause of romantic symbolism, but of late upheld so nobly by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, has displayed a rare wisdom in the attitude he has adopted. Had he made the attempt to continue in the mode of vision practised by the master, he would have been doomed to the position of a mere follower. The exquisite art of Burne-Jones is an art full of pattern and line; it has little to do with the interpretation of light: in the domain of colour its most successful achievements are brought about by the use of subtly gradated monochrome, or by a mosaic-like juxtaposition of varied tints, rather than by the fusion resulting from the interplay of light and darkness. Here it is where Mr Cayley Robinson has seen his path. Gifted with the modern feeling for light, he has by that means brought new life into a tradition which, having recently attained a splendid manifestation, could not but become moribund in other hands. As a colourist, the later artist is keenly alive to effects of tone, the influence of the enveloping atmosphere upon coloured surfaces. Without breaking away from the example of the masters of inventive design, he has extended the field he has entered; with what degree of success can be determined by the future alone.

Subject in art is the most elusive of qualities. The present disdain of literary suggestion in painting is based upon sound reasoning. We know to-day that the "Christ and Mary Magdalen," by Titian, has but the slightest connection with its scriptural subject—the revelation of Christ to Mary Magdalen in the garden—although the canvas is thrilled with the message of a divine revela-

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tion from corner to corner. We are justly wearied of pictures, wherein some sprawling female figure holds up a tablet labelled, say, "The Spirit of Metaphysics," and yet we instinctively perceive a stretch of water under a twilight sky by Whistler, or a child lying on the sand by Matthew Maris to be full of subject. The most generally accepted of the motives of Mr Cayley Robinson's paintings may be put into few words; it is merely a group of people, usually children or young girls, resting or occupied over ordinary household duties, in a simply-furnished firelit room. But face to face with the canvas itself we are possessed by a quite extraordinary sensation of mystery. It is evident that the flicker of red light upon white walls, the shadow and silence, have filled the artist with unspeakable thoughts; the impression thus made has followed him into daily life, has entered into his dreams, has been turned over in his mind, until the result is a picture. So, too, each object in the room—the half-curtained window, the round hanging clock, the mahogany chest of drawers, the children's toys, the detail of the dresses of the girls—has been loved for its own sake, and has come from a strange and beautiful dream-world having its origin half in the less obvious dearly remembered scenes of the past, half in the depths of a little-understood, but no less real, inner life. At times this element of strangeness, as of another world, is brought home to the beholder by some accent of deliberate fantasy. Such are the green-eyed cat and the grotesque iron-work monsters which produce a little shiver in "The Foundling," placed as they are in the quiet surroundings of a dripping umbrella, a well-aired bed, china mugs, and old-fashioned books, or the swallows flying outside the window in "The Depths of Winter," or even the falling snow in "A Winter's Evening," or the pattern embroidered upon sleeve or hanging. These interiors have not been painfully thought out and pieced together for the purposes of picture-making, they are the result of vision and memory. Such painting as Mr Cayley Robinson's is intimate in the fullest meaning of the word.



## IV

IN dealing with an artist of power the bare facts of his training in craftsmanship go for little, and the experiences of his outer life, though they may be possessed of greater meaning, are often deceptive. It is probable that Mr Cayley Robinson was in no wise influenced by the course of study he went through at the St John's Wood and afterwards at the Academy Schools. At Paris, where he worked for a time, he may have learned the foundations of his technique, for he handles oil paint with rare skill and charm. It is of significance, though, in any estimation of his art that Mr Cayley Robinson spent the greater part of three years in a small sailing-boat, though that period of his life would seem to have been more productive of thought than of results. But it is profoundly significant that an artist, so strongly attracted to the past, should have lived in Florence for several years and have seen no modern pictures during his sojourn there.

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An early painting by Mr Cayley Robinson, entitled "The Ferry," shows the dawning of his personality, but it barely more than foreshadows the excellence of his later work. Other pictures, painted shortly afterwards, are "Suzanne," and the charming "In a Wood so Green," the first notable example of his more romantic tendencies, his most important achievement in this direction being the elaborate composition, "Spring." It was in the year 1894 that he painted the beautiful "Mother and Child," which first revealed his mastery over those lamp-lit or fire-lit interiors, which have since become the most frequently employed of his sources of inspiration. Mr Cayley Robinson's pictures have been seen from time to time, though usually appearing strangely out of harmony with their surroundings, on the walls of the Royal Society of British Artists, at one of the Guildhall summer exhibitions, at Liverpool, and even amid the glitter of the Royal Academy.

In his recent exhibition at Mr Baillie's gallery this most sincere of painters gave evidence of a fresh development of his style, leading in the direction of a greater simplicity, a grander conception of art, a more assured flight of the imagination. But whether the art of Mr Cayley Robinson turn in new directions or continue its recognized course, it cannot fail to be sealed as something entirely beyond the usual average of exhibition pictures. Should he produce nothing more, his works already in existence are not likely to be forgotten, for the painter has put into them something of the light of a new day.

CECIL FRENCH



## Two Songs

TWO SONGS

### I

WHAT counsel has the hooded moon  
Put in thy heart, my shyly sweet,  
Of Love in ancient plenilune,  
Glory and stars beneath his feet—  
A sage that is but kith and kin  
With the comedian Capuchin?

Believe me rather that am wise;  
In disregard of the divine  
A glory kindles in these eyes,  
Trembles to starlight. . . . Thine, O mine!  
No more be tears in moon or mist  
For thee, sweet sentimentalist.

### II

Thou leanest to the shell of night,  
Dear lady, a divining ear.  
In that soft quiring of delight  
What sound hath made thy heart to fear?  
Seemed it of rivers rushing forth  
From the grey deserts of the North?

That mood of thine, O timorous,  
Is his, if thou but scan it well,  
Who a mad tale bequeaths to us  
At ghosting hour conjurable,  
And all for some strange name he read  
In Purchas or in Holinshed.

JAMES A. JOYCE



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JAMES A. JOYCE

MOTHER AND CHILD  
WINIFRED CAYLEY ROBINSON





# On staying at an Hotel with a Celebrated Actress

## I

THIS was at Turin. I had strolled slowly back to the hotel about half-past eleven, and was glancing at some time-table or other hung up on the staircase, when a lady passed me very quietly going to her room. She was quite alone, without even a maid; and the servants of the hotel remained unmoved at her passage. Hardly had she gone by than the manager of the hotel, coming in an opposite direction, stopped to speak to me. Had I observed the lady? That was Mme X, who was giving a series of representations at the theatre. Had I not noticed her name on the board in the hall where the names of the travellers were written? Not even. That was curious; however, she was staying in the hotel, in fact, she had the very next room to mine. And the manager proceeded to talk enthusiastically about the great national actress. He knew Europe, he said; he knew the Paris theatres; well, there was no one to touch her in Paris or elsewhere. She had the strength and fire of Mme Bernhardt; the diction and subtlety of Mme Moreno. And with all that she was so quiet, so unpretentious, so charitable; she had no money, she gave it all away. Her own needs were very slight. He went on to lament that she chose so often such bad plays, and that the company of players who travelled with her was always inferior.

"Those players, have you them," said I, "staying here too?"

Ah, no, not them. Actors, as a rule, didn't come to his hotel. But Mme X was so simple and so quiet—yes, so quiet.

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## II

AFTER that, when I got up to my room, the room next to Mme X, I confess it, my mind was in what you may call a *tourbillon*. Notions which I had affected for years, which I had grown to accept without question, had just been crumbled to ashes. An obscure citizen, pursuing my daily round far from the contact of artists of any kind, whose names I was used to read with a certain awe in the newspapers, I had, like other plain citizens, formed



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notions of a violent, brilliant, erratic life which artists and such enjoyed, and of which the plain citizen was deprived. The plain citizen sometimes amuses his stray hours by picturing the feverish delights of this life of the artist, with more or less success as his imagination is strong or weak. When his imagination is fatigued and can no more, he calls upon novels and romances to continue the vision. For myself, at any rate, I freely acknowledge that such notions as I had formed of all this kind of thing had been gleaned in the field of romance, from novels in which actresses and painters and musicians and poets figured in an endless and bewildering display of lights and flowers and supper-parties, in the homage of princes and the tributes of genius, laughter, rapture, love, a symphony of prodigality and adulation. Yes; but here was an actress, and of the most celebrated, returning even like myself, the plain citizen, by herself to her hotel a few minutes after the last act. And heaven knows it was not to a revel she was returning; I had the room next to hers, and I constated in great perplexity that there was no popping of champagne corks, no smell of flowers and cigarettes, no wit, no laughter, no little supper going on, no anything. Here was an accident to strike chill upon the most incurably romantic. Why was there no talk, no bustle, all the insolent noise in the wake of a *prima donna* who has taken the possession of an hotel? Why were not the princes and journalists crowding the stairs? Instead of all that, on the other side of the wall a tired woman was in the common-place situation of making up her mind to go to bed in the common-place room of an hotel, with the same disgust, the same common-place boredom as I was on mine. That was all. But, since this was the sad reality, unsealing painfully my long abused sight, how about the novelists with whom I had mewed my youth? How about Balzac and a hundred others? How, above all, about Ouida?

### III

You will realize without difficulty that after this sudden crash among the opinions of a lifetime I had little disposition to sleep, and lying awake in the darkness I fell to thinking of the works of this romancer, so very good, so excellent even in some respects,



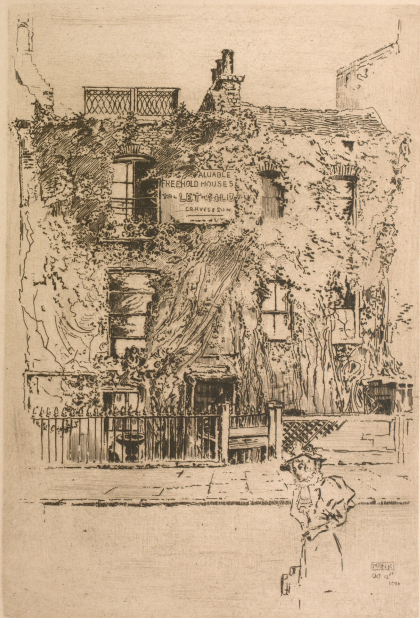
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TURNER'S HOUSE AT CHELSEA  
W. MONK, A.R.C.P.E.



W. & A. G. & Co.  
27, Abchurch Lane, E.C. 4  
1873



so shockingly bad in others—and I say shockingly, because I mean strictly that their badness is of the kind which does give you actually a shock. An hotel, to be sure, was no such inappropriate place to meditate upon the novels of Ouida, for her books have all the fever and restlessness of an hotel; that is, of one of those big hotels in big cities where princes and “prominent actresses” and tenors descend; ironically enough one of those developments of modern life which the authoress herself whenever she gets a chance spares no pains to belabour. One has heard that in the years between 1880 and 1890 Ouida was considered immoral, or rather what was then called in the jargon of the period “fast”: it is hardly conceivable: one finds on the contrary that her propensity is to preach, one finds even that she preaches too much. But since such an appreciation of Ouida undoubtedly at one time prevailed, the seed of it must be looked for in the constant suggestion her characters, male and female, manage to give of living imperturbably in the sight of the public. It is certain that the author wishes nothing less than to have her characters bring about this suggestion, but the suggestion is nevertheless conveyed in spite of her; even as a man or woman may go into a company with their minds made up to produce one kind of effect, and actually produce quite another. Of course, Ouida constantly gives us the interior, the domestic hearth, the private house; but the private house somehow or other takes the air, as it has the proportions, of some gigantic palace hotel in London, Paris, or New York. And this leads me to point out that Ouida was the first English novelist really to think in terms of nations. Before her the English novelists had dodged between town and country, with an occasional lapse into France (for a crime), or into Italy (for a consumption); but Ouida does not mind shifting the scenes in the same book from Buda-Pesth to Rome, from Rome to St Petersburg, from Petersburg to Paris, from Paris to Vienna, from Vienna to Hyde Park with an amazing dexterity, and what is more, manages to give a fair impression of each of these cities. And that is why I will permit myself to call her the novelist of the “Grands Express Européens.”

And to the foregoing let it be added, by way of making clear why the young ladies of the 'eighties used to shove her under the sofa when mamma came into the room, that she de-

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liberately, and even defiantly, makes her characters exotic; and they must have seemed indecently exotic to a generation which read Anthony Trollope. Certainly I remember her characters presented as English, her guardsmen and the rest—who could forget them?—but they are the work of a fervent imagination working from exteriors; English people of that kind never grew in Devon or Yorkshire. On the other hand, she willingly makes her heroes and heroines Roumanian, Polish, Magyar—in a word, of those remoter nationalities the inhabitants of which the Parisians and English, when they find them out of their native land, are always ready to condemn, till they have blinding proof of the contrary, as *rastaquouères* and adventurers. From such nationalities Ouida often chooses her characters, and gives them, very properly, pedigrees as long and longer than the longest in the English House of Lords. But Ouida writes novels in English for the English, and this kind of thing, when she began it, was a slap in the face for English provinciality, which like all provincialities in all lands worships its own aristocracy, but can hardly be got to believe that there is any aristocracy at all anywhere else.

But here I must not omit to remark that, while we find the characters labelled Roumanian, or Hungarian, or Russian, or French, or English, yet if anybody should turn to the novels of Ouida to gain some knowledge of the peculiarities of any of these peoples he would find himself at a loss. The truth is, these characters are said to be this or that pretty much in the same way as a child playing with his lead soldiers calls the general with the blue coat French, and the general with the red coat English; but they have all a family likeness which denotes a common origin. And in fact their native country is nowhere else than Ouida's writing desk. Now and then, it is true, in her charming peasant stories, we get a sensation of reality, we feel that certain characters and scenes could have arisen just in Italy, as she says, and not in some other land quite as well; but in her peasant stories she is often the tale teller; in her novels of the aristocracy and the high life she is the romancer. Now, the abiding trait left by the characters which figure in these last is their unreality. I put aside the scented cigars and gigantic feats of strength which have been the jest of the facile times out of mind and which have prevented

this great writer from being considered as seriously as she deserves. This sense of unreality which I experience when her characters face me is not engendered by superficial absurdities; it arises from the perception that not one of her characters is sympathetic, that most of them are, on the contrary, positively antipathetic, people against whom we should be rather glad to see the worst wiles of the villain succeed. To say that we should be rather glad, and not indifferent, is of course a proof that these characters, if they fail to give conviction of genuineness, of being what they set up to be, have at least a very vigorous life. That they fail to rouse our sympathies, springs, I think, from the fact that we never find them in repose, never, so to speak, with the paint off. This seems a hard saying when one has almost a physical sense sometimes of the pains the author takes to throw about her characters an air of aristocratic repose, above all. But just as people in one of those immense Palace hotels I have spoken of can never feel quite easy, are always more or less in public, are always conscious of the corridor, are always guarding against undesirable approaches, so it is with these characters. These patricians who are always so afraid of not being patrician enough, these ladies always haughty and on their dignity, or condescending with so profound a sense of condescension, these men and women always thinking of their "caste," and talking about it, and supercilious and insolent to those who are not of the same—no, they are not convincing. All this, when you think of it, is not rationally in the habits of people of great and assured position; that generally induces longanimity and a certain indifference to the details of family breeding. Nervous aggressiveness and susceptibility come rather from the consciousness of inferiority and powerlessness, which induces a man, through a sort of instinct of self-preservation, to impose himself, and to intimidate, let us say, in advance men whom he suspects are inclined to be villainous, knavish, disobliging, violent, and against whom he knows he would have no advantage whatever if it really came to a tussle. I do not presume to rest on my own experience in so delicate a matter, but (to speak in a Thackerayan manner on a Thackerayan subject) little Jones, who married Lord Bailiffrest's younger daughter, and who is sometimes willing to impart to me his stores of authentic information when he has a spare hour and

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no one better to talk to—well, little Jones tells me that the “haughty beauties” old Smith and I gaze on with such awe as they loll in their carriages on a June afternoon in Piccadilly, are not really thinking of their grandeur (as Smith and I from our readings suppose), and engaged in despising the likes of us; but simply of their row with their aunt, or of the dentist to-morrow, or even whether their lunch disagreed with them, or of something equally prosaic. And little Jones adds that when Smith and I stand in our muddy clothes on a rainy night waiting for a 'bus, and we are suddenly gratified by the sight of a young dandy driving to the court ball, the young dandy is not really wondering (as Smith and I in our humility imagine) if we miserable rascals of plebeians are admiring him sufficiently, and thinking that he would like to throw us a handful of pence to scramble for—no, says Jones, he is not thinking of anything at all like that; he is not even thinking of his own importance, and that it is a bore to go to the court ball; if he is thinking of anything, says Jones, besides the weather, it is about whom he will meet, and whether the rooms will be hot—which, when you come to think of it, is pretty much what goes through the head of old Smith and myself when the Parkinsons give a little dance in Victoria Terrace, and we are lucky enough to be invited. Now, it is not that Ouida has gone wrong about these great matters with the wrongness of the London Journal novelettist; Ouida's wrongness is the defect of a phantasmagoric brain. Here we have a case of the romantic temperament in extremes: a woman of genius with an extraordinary gift of expression, who nevertheless finds it impossible to express precisely what she sees; who confounds reality with her own visions, and who perhaps deliberately prefers her visions.

From the same defect of mind proceed many of the incongruities her works offer to the critical reader. For instance, that she loves and pities animals and all gentle and helpless things there is no doubt: she has exposed her convictions on this subject in a thousand places with amazing force and vivacity. And yet in her romances the horses seem to be always galloping. In one of her books, the heroine, who lives in Austria, has to go to Paris for ten or fifteen days in mid-winter; and she does not hesitate to drag her horses, with the rest of her packages, because, as she puts it, she loves her horses, and always likes to have some of

them with her. Ouida is so occupied with the loftiness of this notion, that she does not pause to consider the equivocal kindness of treating horses like lap-dogs, and that when one realizes the feelings of the wretched horses dragged over a railway in winter-time, hundreds of miles in this direction, and then hundreds of miles in that, with an interval of fifteen days on the asphalt, the heroine's generous impulse shades off into cruelty and brutal ostentation. In the same way, when it comes to those sublime actions of her heroes and heroines, in which so often the ridiculous has at least an equal part, she is either constitutionally unable to distinguish the ridiculous, or has trained herself to ignore it. So much is this the case, that I have often wondered, while reading some of her scenes, if, when she was writing them, she was really serious, and not after all trying to wake up the rector's daughters and other young women in provincial towns. But having deeply pondered, I have come to the conclusion that Ouida is never laughing at herself, or indeed at any one else. Like some other great romancers, like Victor Hugo for example, that part of the brain which enables some to perceive the incongruous is lacking in her organization. She does indeed provide characters intended to be humorous, but their humour does not arise out of any humorous situation; they are like the futile and dreary jesters introduced to lend relief to a sombre tragedy. But we may remind ourselves that in the equipment of the romancer (as distinct from the novelist) humour is but an awkward weapon, and even useless and dangerous. For humour sterilizes the *beau geste*, and the romance as a rule proceeds by the *beau geste* without reference to logic; it would defy the ingenuity of Edgar Allan Poe himself to foretell the conclusion from the premises. Let the situation be however ravelled, and the *beau geste*, absurd, improbable to impossibility, arrives in due season to straighten it out. Ouida is the helpless slave of the *beau geste*, as much so, let us say, as Barbey d'Aureville, of whom she reminds the reader in a thousand ways at every turn.

And have I not had myself (thought I, turning in bed) proof and to spare this very night of the bewildering fashion in which this romancer ignores or differs from reality? Was it not among her volumes that I found elaborate imaginations of triumph at the opera, of countesses who conquered Paris by their beauty, of

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tensors who had all Paris at their feet? 'Tis true that in the sober reality I had seen once or twice before now what were considered triumphs at the opera, and they proved to be rather mixed: some enthusiasts contending to remain and applaud after the last act, against the majority struggling to go out and get their wraps. 'Tis true I had never seen Paris at anybody's feet, and didn't much expect to, least of all at an artist's feet; since the number of people in a position to enjoy the work of a singer, or a painter, or a dramatist is necessarily limited, and the thousands of men and women outside that zone know little about the artist and care less. 'Tis true I had perceived that if one is inside a group or coterie one is prone to fancy that a whole city is stirred by a gesture which really affects only one's immediate surroundings; whereas if one is outside of all the groups one is forced to take account of the relatively slight carrying power of all artistic fame, of all fame of any kind except that of the sworder and the demagogue. Yes, these things I had perceived, but I had perceived them through a haze: though they were real, they had neither the vividness nor concreteness of Ouida's visions, and by consequence it was in Ouida's conditions that I anticipated the next encounter of real life. It needed something as strong and coloured in an opposite sense as Ouida's visions to shake my faith in them; and so my faith remained unshaken till the night I had the room next to a celebrated actress.

But, after all, this very exaggeration of Ouida is what won for her at the beginning her popularity—nay, her notoriety with a certain class of readers. It is plain that most novel readers strongly object to read constantly of great wealth and fame and state, unless these are, now and then at all events, more or less brought down to the terms of our ordinary life; that is to say, unless the reader is offered a situation and conditions in which he can without too much outrage to his common sense imagine himself; unless the governess has at least a chance of marrying the lord, and the young doctor the countess. Certainly the average English reader likes to see on the stage and in the novel the aristocracy strut, but on condition that they strut within a boundary where he can keep in touch with them. If he hears of nothing but the Duke with his three houses, and his Park, and his haughty Duchess who despises the middle classes, he can indeed be illuded,









*CENTAUR IDYLL*  
*CHARLES RICKETTS*



he can still imagine the situation, and just because he can imagine it he gets irritated in the long run.

But now, call the Duke a Hungarian Prince; make his Park run five hundred miles in every direction; make him have so many palaces that when he passes one on a journey he has to be reminded that he owns it; make him throw crown pieces in situations where the ordinary novelist's hero would throw pence, and where a man in real life would throw nothing; don't stick to say that a Marquess, an amateur painter, can paint like a Venetian master, and play the piano like a virtuoso, all of which he has picked up in the odds and ends of hours left on his hands by his social duties, his flirting, his equestrianism, his hunting and shooting; in a word, violate probability till you verge the impossible, and then the reader is swept beyond his wildest calculations and imaginations, and he has no more notion of equalling, far less of envying, such a hero than he has of equalling or envying an angel in heaven.

Well, but this is the Ouida man-character, hero or villain, at his deadliest; this is he who brought about the big sales and startled the reader of the 'eighties, and shed upon the name of Ouida a terrific glare of wickedness, for his morals were always lax. This is he, this face fastened to a moustache, who with his companions, the second-empire actress and the impavid countess, was fought for over the counters at Mudie's, and studied and loved and wept over in the country houses and country towns by thousands of readers who never caught a glimpse of the reflection, and dignity, and power, and a thousand other qualities which are to be found in each of Ouida's works—and certainly if such qualities were not to be found there I would not be giving myself the trouble to think of her now. This indiscriminate part of the public has at present, I think, fallen away from Ouida: it has taken to something cruder. For Ouida, sprung from Victor Hugo and Disraeli, cannot escape being the ancestor of Mr Hall Caine and Miss Marie Corelli. After all, it is hard to be held responsible for the fantasies of our descendants. Flaubert and Edgar Allan Poe and Dickens are responsible for more people than it is pleasant to think of. And it is well to remember that Ouida herself, however popular she may have been, never bent to any concessions or vulgarities to gain or maintain her popularity: it is against her principles that

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the governess should marry the lord, and the governess in fact does not. From this it would appear that the main difference, the all-important difference between Ouida and many of her imitators is that Ouida has decidedly character, the others only caprice.

But whatever else her imitators have taken from her, they have never been able to catch her grand manner. Her teaching is always noble. In her essays, perverse and wrong-headed as some of her opinions may be, she is, as in her novels, always on the side of all the superiorities. With a vehemence and exaltation almost equal to Ruskin's, who is her master in ethics and much else, she throws into relief mercy, honour, loyalty, a noble pride and an equally noble obedience, a pity for the dumb things and for the outcast—all that on the one side; and on the other, her hatred of modern rush, advertisement, noise, scurrility. Again, like Ruskin, she is not ashamed to be indignant, eloquent, passionate; but she never descends to those miserable sneers whereof the object is to make honest, plain people uncomfortable about things which they have been doing for years, and which they have never suspected to be absurd or vulgar till they are told so by some he or she author who has not an inch less of folly and vanity, not an ounce more of competence and sense than the least of his readers, who has nothing at all in fact but pretention and effrontery enough to deal out little flicks of a sterilized irony with a superior snigger. Her heroes and heroines, as we have seen, are often unreal, sometimes even absurd, but they are never tricky, or mean, or ignoble. There is nothing paltry, nothing of the parish about them, as I am afraid there is about many of the heroes and heroines of authors who think themselves infinitely superior to Ouida, and indulge in a little discreet laugh at her expense.

Her style, though it is full of carelessnesses, though at times it even gives us the impression of a foreigner struggling with the language, of sentences beaten out with the dictionary, though it is often turgid and overloaded, often written for effect, often stained by what is called the "purple patch," nevertheless, like Ruskin's, it often rises into quite beautiful severity and strength when she is profoundly moved. For acuteness of sensation, and for a power to render that in words, she seems to me unequalled in our day. There is a description, to choose among a hundred, in one of her less good novels, in "Idalia," of a man bound and tortured under a burning

sun, which is so vivid, so poignant—in a word, so felt, that it becomes almost too painful to read. It is by such qualities that she takes her place among the great novelists, that she is, in fact, besides Mr Meredith and Mr Hardy, the only great novelist who has survived from the nineteenth century into this. Of course, if a man be disposed to fly into a rage at every wild or petulant assertion he finds in a book, he had better leave Ouida alone: she will too often give him cause. This is exactly one of the points in which she resembles Victor Hugo; like Victor Hugo, with a thousand faults that exasperate, that cry to heaven, she remains a great artist. Her books with all their faults live with us; we grow fond of them: a novel of Ouida's is not finished when the last page has been read. As Carlyle observed, with any work of real abiding excellence the first glance is the least favourable. Our wits and laughers have laughed their fill at Ouida; all of us have been at times impatient with her; but when all that has done its worst her work still remains great and imposing. Methinks I see in my mind a circus which gives a performance in the valley; the ring master cracks his whip, the acrobat wheels, the clown cuts his jokes; then evening falls, the tents are struck, the circus moves off, the laughers disperse, and the long shadows steal over the mountains majestic and unsullied as before.

And once again, she gives us, as no other, the sense of European movement. Whoever has stood at a railway station on a main line, and watching the great trains come for a few minutes to a halt with the sleeping-cars labelled Posen, Warsaw, Belgrade, has experienced the immense longing that comes on some of us at like moments for the far-off, the anywhere-but-here, the other end of Europe, must always be a devotee of the novelist of the Grands Express Européens. Like Balzac, she imposes her characters against our better judgement. Speaking for myself, I cannot see a lady of foreign appearance, wrapped in furs, driving through Paris on a sunny winter afternoon, but for me she becomes one of Ouida's exotic countesses or princesses, with a brute of a husband who squanders millions on a dancer, and loses thousands every night at cards, and by whom she is in danger of being immured in some remote castle amid the fastnesses of the Caucasus. Or has she just escaped, and moves terrified, pursued by her husband's myrmidons? Ah, if one could only be mingled in a stirring at-

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tempt to set her free! Or again, a few hours later at the opera, that tenor who has just sung so beautifully, surely he will find a note from a duchess hid in a bouquet, and after reading it with languor will disdainfully go to supper with a lady of facile humour who has an impossible second-empire name, Casse-croûte, or Cochonette. And the celebrated actress—

## IV

BUT at this point my meditations were interrupted by the opening of the door next to mine. At the same moment the clock of a neighbouring church struck one: I had thought that all the hotel was asleep and the lights out long ago. What (I said) if the revels have been proceeding all this time, silently but no less scarletly? What if Ouida and the romancers are in the right, after all? I was in no mood to be trifled with: this was a matter to be investigated at once: I got out of bed and opened the door. The lights were low in the passage, and half way down a figure in a white trailing kind of robe, a figure that looked somehow pathetic and lonely in the darkness, was moving with a book under her arm and a candle in her hand. At the sound of my door she turned, and I recognized the face. It was the celebrated actress going from her sitting-room to bed.

VINCENT O'SULLIVAN

# John de Waltham

## A Fragment of a Play

SCENE: A FOREST

*Enter Marion Levenoth, a reputed witch, and a disguised Priest.*

*Priest.* 'Tis about her hour. There's no Ave Maria to remind Christabel, but as soon as the day slopeth the sweet child maketh her way hither. She cometh for consolation to our divine effigy. (*Points towards the bower.*)

*Marion.* She cometh for consolation to me!

*Priest.* 'Tis a miracle of God that these Gspellers and loud Puritans have not discovered our blessed crucifix i' the Forest. We have hedged Him from the fury of these desolate years. But shall we hear the Angelus again? Will these invaders triumph for ever?

*Marion.* Their time is nigh past. Their day sinketh. Somewhat telleth me a new time dawns.

*Priest.* I do long to say Mass again. Our old Abbey of Waltham hath stood the pillage an hundred years, and now lieth prone like a huge ghost of the cross. Marion, thou art a divining woman. If God be with thee, say will the King carry it and the persecuting of our holy Faith cease? Marion, they report thee a witch. Thou hast a familiar? I'm afeared to speak with thee. Tell me, are not those whom Satan assaileth found dead i' their beds?

*Marion (bringing plants from her basket).* That's Vervain and Solanum. That eases babes i' their convulsions and women in travail. They say I'm a witch. But sith I make ointments out of the resin of the earth that soothes them they come humbly again, and ask more. My mother taught me the properties of the wild grasses o' the woods. There's hemlock and enchanter's nightshade. That's saffron. Whiles these kind herbs do cure them, they say the magick's white, but whiles they fail because of their unbelief, the magick's black. But hark you. All's magick! The wind and the stars and the sea and the unutterable depths o' things are the secret of a divine Magician. And thoughts which come like waves i' the mind and are invisible, and speech which beckoneth and doth allure men by words which are invisible things, and sorrow which doth crumble our hearts away—that's all sor-

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JOHN DE  
WALTHAM

cery! 'Tis all invisible power. Hark you, many a woman hath brought hither her sick babe to me and many a babe have I carried at my heart through the night i' the Forest and bathed it in a pool in red moonlight, and heard its little sobs grow dumb in a soft sleep. There's no ill that hath not its remedy could we but find it.

*Priest.* But the Church, the Holy Mother, Marion, hath ever burnt herb-gatherers and witches as evil-doers.

*Marion.* Your Church is blind. Sooth, from the beginning she hath persecuted the physician of the body and called him poisoner, but lo, now medicine hath triumphed, and all men run to it.

*Priest (earnestly).* Canst thou make gold, Marion? Canst thou build me an invisible Church in the which I might pray and hear the old musick, the old chants and see the effigies of the expelled saints?

*Marion.* There is an invisible, invulnerable world raised above the tossings of this.

*Priest (suddenly).* Look, Christabel comes.

*(Enter Christabel in haste.)*

Benedicite!

*Christabel.* Good e'en, Father; Good e'en, Marion. O, I've come in haste!

*Marion.* }  
*Priest.* } What now?

*Christabel.* In haste to tell ye what hath happened. Have we not cast spells for my father's liberty? Well only a doubtful miracle hath been vouchsafed us. Verily my poor father was ta'en out, but 'twas to lay a trap for him and me. 'Twas to compass a foul bargain that John de Waltham brought him out. Wot you what, he did propose to marry me, and sith I spurned it, the old man was convoyed back to the loathsome prison. O his cries and his curse were loud against me and a' called down God's visitation upon me whiles the vile chains were locked on him again.

*Priest.* Nay, Sir Hubert had no ought to command you to love. 'Tis a thing impossible. Duty not love may be commanded.

*Marion.* John de Waltham made love to you?

*Christabel.* Ay, his eyes shone with a ribald agony on me.

*Marion.* Trouble yourself not. His date is out. His date is in the prophetick almanack. Tell your father still to have a patience till his enemy hath been overblown.

*Christabel.* Yes, I whispered it to him, but he hearkened not. He may die i' the prison. O all's in doubt. Who knoweth if verily the King will carry it.

*Marion.* Fear not. (*Takes a philtre out of her basket.*) Drink this. That's electrum. 'Twill protect you against his evil spirit when he striketh at your maidenhood and at your life.

(*Christabel drinks, and keeps the phial.*)

And get you by moonshine and gather hedge hyssop, moonshade and saffron, and thereafter wash ye in a river flowing South. But the name of your enemy, look ye, 'tis writ amongst the stars of death. This plenary physick 'll protect you from him.

*Christabel (kissing Marion).* O thanks to thee, Marion. Thy nigromancy caseth me somewhat, and yet I am afear'd for my father's curse.

*Marion.* I have read i' the books of the alchemists that a man may be killed by the imagination of another. We'll evoke the forbidden for you. I'll to my incantations.

(*Goes within the hut.*)

*Priest.* The sun sinketh. Shall we not on our knees?

*Christabel.* Ay, father, lead forward.

BENJAMIN SWIFT

# *A Solution*

## I

*A SOLUTION*

WHEN the door had closed on the last guest, Madame Verneuil bade George Harley draw his chair nearer the fire, and while they both looked into its glowing heart they recalled days that were gone, and tried to return to their former friendly intimacy. They spoke of many mutual acquaintances, she gaily responding to his often indifferent questionings, and there were long pauses, each one feeling the presence of barriers to be surmounted. George Harley's eyes wandered round the familiar room, ever familiar, for Madame Verneuil did not care to change her surroundings or her friends. Curtains or stuffs that wore or faded were gently replaced by others so closely recalling them that no one would suspect any change; and old friends who dropped away were never replaced, but always remembered.

Seven years ago he had met Madame Verneuil at the house of a mutual friend, and after a little while he had become one of her constant visitors. She was then emerging from her widow's mourning, and also from the rather bourgeois financial circle in which her marriage with a rich banker had placed her. The friends of her choice were not brought together by the accidental resemblance of their social positions or fortunes, but by the accord of ideas. When an alien to their sympathies came into this circle, as a caterpillar will sometimes crawl into a beehive, he was not stung to death and covered with a gravestone of wax, but allowed to go his way unharmed. He invariably went of his own free will and never returned.

It was here that Harley first saw Madeleine Dulac, the beautiful and brilliant daughter of a scientific man, who had followed a pet theory by bringing up his daughter precisely as he would have brought up a son. She had a gift for music, and music had always been the joy and pastime of his busy life, so Madeleine's talent was cherished and cultivated. When he died, the young girl, then only twenty-one, inherited his considerable fortune, which, true to his principles, he left to her absolutely unhampered by any restrictions and entirely at her disposal. She was promptly surrounded by friends and distant relatives—she had no near ones—offering advice in the choice of a chaperone.



THE COCKFIGHT  
CARTON MOORE 1894



## *A Solution*

### I

A SOLUTION

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THE COCKFIGHT

CARTON MOORE PARK





Others proposed their houses for her residence. But she shook her head, and, firmly declining their assistance, continued her mode of life with only the inevitable change caused by the death of her father, her constant companion.

Her first appearance in society—the period of mourning over—was at Madame Verneuil's, and here Harley saw her in the radiant beauty of her twenty-third year. Here she held a court of faithful, if not very hopeful, admirers, for she gave them no encouragement, and Harley rather despised himself for joining the group. He had been attracted by the then very fashionable school of analytical writers, and, true to his new principles, he would carefully diagnose the state of his heart with regard to Madeleine. Was it heart or head? This point he never could settle to his satisfaction.

Madame Verneuil was asked by an old friend in the country to extend a helping hand to a young Hungarian violinist, who had been teaching in a provincial conservatoire and was anxious to make a name for himself in Paris. The kind-hearted woman, who knew how many difficulties he would have to encounter before success came, asked him to play at one of her evenings, and invited her friends to hear him. Harley will always remember that day for several reasons; but chiefly for the seemingly trivial one that Madeleine was talking to him alone at the moment of the violinist Svenhi's entrance. He had brought his violin, but no accompanist, and she was summoned from her retreat to accompany him. She rose slowly, and, pulling off her long gloves, listened with an abstracted indifference to the explanations the violinist was giving her about the music. He was of no possible interest to her, this unknown man from the provinces. Harley bitterly resented her departure, and retreated still further behind the large palm under whose shadow they had been seated, and wondered whether he dared hope that she would resume the interrupted conversation. They were only talking about the Théâtre Antoine, then a novelty, but he had felt as Dante did when Beatrice graciously returned his salutation.

By force of habit he was already beginning to analyze his feelings when the music started, and almost at once his attention was rivetted and his imagination excited. Svenhi's violin was murmuring softly, and it seemed to Harley that he was saying

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things to Madeleine that no one but they could understand. He seemed to be pursuing her, and she, wild and untamable, was eluding him dexterously, and escaping just as he seemed to reach her. The violin grew more and more insistent, even authoritative, while she grew weaker, and finally surrendered, and they floated along together on a flowing stream of melody. Then the stream became a torrent, dashing wildly past a rocky shore, till with wild crashing chords from the piano and a long-drawn note from the violin, which sounded like love's triumph, the movement ended.

Tremendous applause greeted the performers on all sides, to which Svenhi made somewhat elaborate recognition, and Madeleine none at all. She seemed entirely engrossed in him. Harley stood aside, watching them for a few minutes; he saw the lamp-light on her shining chestnut hair, as she bent towards Svenhi, who was talking low and volubly. All her previous indifference had vanished; she listened eagerly to whatever he was saying. Harley could bear the sight no longer: after the emotion of the music he felt he must go out into the fresh air, so he silently left the room and the house. That night he neglected to analyze his sensations.

Henceforth Madeleine and the violinist were never to be seen apart. Whenever she came to Madame Verneuil's he appeared shortly afterwards, and this always became the signal for music to begin. It was very evident that what they performed in public they had rehearsed in private. Madeleine's court of admirers were not at all satisfied with these proceedings, and although none of them had Harley's prophetic vision, they were very indignant at what they considered presumption on the part of the violinist. There was a great deal of spiteful gossip, but Madeleine's engagement to Svenhi fell as a bomb amongst them. All those among her friends who considered they had a right to interfere did not fail to do so, and many valiant attempts were made to rescue her; but she firmly stopped any tentative remarks made to her on the subject, and as she had no guardians or near relations, nothing could be done to prevent the marriage from taking place.

In France the formalities relating to marriage are very complex and tedious and give a vast amount of work to the notary. Madeleine's old and trusted lawyers proceeded as slowly and care-

fully as they could to seek for flaws in Svenhi's antecedents, but he produced the necessary papers, and all inquiries only resulted in the knowledge that he had a humble but respectable origin and that his life had been a hard-working one. The notaries tried to protect Madeleine's interests against one who they felt sure was an intriguer and an adventurer, and she let them do as they pleased, knowing that the day she chose to put her fortune into little paper boats and sail them down the Seine, she was at liberty to do so.

At last the final preparations for the wedding were finished and the day fixed. George Harley felt an insurmountable disgust at the whole proceeding. He was tired of the perpetual gossip on the subject and of the spiteful remarks made by the unsuccessful candidates, and not least he felt a pain at his heart as if it had been bruised, and he could not endure the thought of the day when the irremediable would happen. So he left Paris suddenly, bidding casual farewells and speaking of a speedy return. This was not to be, however, for back in London he felt strongly that the time had come when a definite future must be considered. He had decided for a career of letters, and with this object in view he settled down to a life of hard study. The bruise at his heart he still felt sorely, and this was his safeguard, for having, as he fancied, lived his emotional life, there was nothing to prevent him from cultivating his intellect to the exclusion of all else. And work he did, giving no time to society or amusement. He was rewarded with success, for though he never stirred the hearts of the many, he appealed to the few. But even they never knew that this man of austere ideals was in truth as emotional and sensitive as a boy who comes in touch with life for the first time. It was sensitiveness that prevented him from having more communication with his friends in Paris; he had a cowardly fear of hearing sordid details of Madeleine's unhappiness, for unhappiness he felt sure would be her lot. His correspondents thought he was indifferent, and the letters grew fewer and more formal. Once he met a young man he had known in Paris; a chance meeting in a restaurant caused them to dine together. It was unavoidable that Madeleine's name should come into conversation, and Harley winced when the unconscious young man told him that Svenhi had developed a passion for gambling in every form, and that her friends were very anxious about her fortune.



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"Her fortune!" said Harley, irritably; "and what about herself?"

The young man stared; evidently in his mind Madeleine without her fortune did not exist—and the subject dropped.

A severe cold, taken one spring and followed by a wet summer, during which Harley constantly neglected his health, caused him to receive a very serious warning from his doctor. So serious was the warning that he resolved to follow advice and escape from the English winter. Switzerland was decided on, and Harley regretfully left his commodious bachelor rooms to turn with distaste to the prospect of hotel life for a whole winter. But he had discovered in himself, much to his surprise, a great desire to live, and everything had to give way to this desire.

When, after a lapse of seven years, he found himself again in Paris he was astonished to note how little of a stranger he felt, and how the memories of his old life were calling him. His first intention had been merely to break his journey by one night in Paris, but now he felt a wish to clear away the fog that had gathered during those years. He no longer felt the selfish dread of hearing people speak of Madeleine; in fact Paris brought back the old thralldom, and he longed to see her or hear of her. Acting on impulse he sent a *bleu* to Madame Verneuil asking permission to call. Her answer was prompt and cordial. "Come," she said; "I have some dull people to dinner, but outstay them, and we will talk of old times."

To talk of old times sounded easy enough, but difficulties seemed to rise when the actual moment came. He felt surrounded by ghosts of his former life; some of them were ghosts of his own moods, his boyish enthusiasms. How old he felt as he stared moodily at the fire! He knew Madame Verneuil was understanding him as she took up some fancy work and appeared engrossed in it, dropping a casual remark while she waited until he should speak what was in his mind. At last he said abruptly:

"How is Madeleine Dulac?"

Madame Verneuil raised her eyebrows slightly. "Madeleine Svenhi—she married, you know."

"Yes, I know," he said, impatiently, "what of her, is she well?"

"She is gone," Madame Verneuil said very seriously, "gone

from Paris out of our lives with her husband, and no one knows where they went."

Then, the ice being broken, she required no more encouragement, and told him the whole pitiful story he had so dreaded to hear—how Svenhi had so soon begun to lead a useless gambler's life. They had been none of them ever sounded the depths of Madeleine's unhappiness, for she soon avoided her friends and would stand no interference. They all knew that her fortune was being squandered, but no one could help it but herself, and she seemed strangely apathetic.

At last the crash came when all her possessions were sold, even her piano; and when her friends sought for her, hoping to shield her from further indignities, she had gone away with her husband, it had been ascertained, but no one knew where, and nothing further had ever been heard about them. Harley listened in silence, and in silence he rose to go. Madame Verneuil felt she was understanding him as she had never understood him before, and she did not try to detain him. Afterwards, pacing his hotel bedroom, he thought of numberless questions he would have asked about Madeleine; but who, he wondered, could ever have penetrated into the inner fastness of her mind?

The next morning he left Paris.

## II

GEORGE HARLEY'S doctor had happily not judged him sufficiently ill to be sent to one of those great sanatoriums which are to be found in the highest altitudes and always seem to be the very threshold of death. He was on a cheerful, sunny half-way ledge where there were no serious invalids and no exhibition of thermometers. Enforced idleness had done him good in body and mind, and the society of young people was a new experience for him, their lightheartedness a relief after his somewhat solitary life, and they liked him after they had recovered their first alarm at his grave appearance and manner. After three months of this life he forgot he had ever been ill, and was able to take part in the usual amusements of a winter resort.

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In February the sunny hours were noticeably longer and the snow clouds less frequent. The young people, a little tired of tobogganing on the nearest hillside, proposed longer excursions higher up where the crisp snow would be white and untrodden. Harley agreed to accompany them, stipulating that he was not to be held responsible for broken bones. The chosen day was gay with sunshine as they started, a rather riotous party headed by a villager who was to show them the paths. After several hours of weary trudging they reached the snow hill which was their goal, and soon tobogganing was in full swing. Harley soon wearied of it and stood watching them as they laboriously climbed the hill, the sledges on their backs, in the pursuit of enjoyment of a few seconds' duration.

So engrossing was this pursuit of pleasure that only the guide noticed and pointed out to Harley that snow clouds were gathering ominously. It was no easy matter to collect the revelers. "One more slide" seemed their main object in life, and the snow began falling before they were ready to start, and the guide had become impatient at the delay. The snow fell more and more thickly, and the little paths they had taken on the upward journey were soon blocked, and they were obliged to forsake the short cuts for longer ways. They were feeling the cold intensely and tried to get some comfort out of the guide, who became more and more taciturn, walking on silently and stopping from time to time to consider a turning to take. At last he gave them a serious fright by telling them that he had lost his way and he was no longer looking for the way home but for a chalet he knew of where they would have to remain until the snowstorm was over. Anxiety, not for themselves, but for those waiting at home, made them all very serious in a moment, but the guide shook his head very decisively when they told him they must return home. He said they might do as they wished but that he should take shelter, and they followed him meekly.

At last he found the chalet; they were upon it, blinded by the driving snow, before any of them realized its presence. They were almost paralyzed with cold and fatigue, and thought of nothing but the joy of rest and warmth as they gathered before the door. There was no path swept in the snow, and they stood knee-deep in the drift. It was a large and imposing chalet with smaller







JOYCE  
ANN MACBETH





wooden structures about it, and dark firs, their branches now weighed down with snow, grew behind. A light in a window gave them hope, and it was with grateful hearts they saw the door opened by a peasant woman who looked amazed at their appearance. Another woman behind the peasant girl was dimly visible, and, with hardly any attempt at explanation, knocking the snow off their feet, they trooped into the chalet. Harley was the last to go in, and when he had shaken the snow from his eyelashes and looked up, thinking it was time to give some account of themselves, he found himself looking into the face of Madeleine Dulac. He could not speak. The emotion was so great that at first he thought he was delirious. Never for a moment did he think she could be any other woman closely resembling her, but he wondered if she were not a spirit. All this passed through his mind like a flash, for in an instant she had seen him and held out her hand in smiling recognition. He could say nothing; dazed, he followed her into the large cheerful kitchen, where all the frozen travellers were removing their wraps and rubbing their hands, while Madame Svenhi and her servant busied themselves with clever devices for restoring circulation.

While Madeleine was thus employed, Harley had ample leisure to observe her narrowly and to seek for the changes that must inevitably come in seven years. His memory was singularly clear in all that concerned her, but search as he might he could not find any physical alteration or any traces of the trouble she had passed through. The figure was as straight and as slim, the chestnut hair as glossy and abundant as ever, the grey eyes frank and clear as before, but here a difference could be felt which made Harley seek for other signs of a maturing mind and deeper knowledge of life. The look in her eyes was more steadfast and serene. Seeking further he noticed the same serenity expressed in the sensitive mouth, now no longer mocking but gentler, and at the same time firmer. Then all over her face there glowed a new fire: not the flickering gleam of thoughts passing, as sunlight and shadow succeed each other on the face of a landscape, but the steady light of a set purpose, the inward fire of the soul. These thoughts passed rapidly in Harley's mind. Later his impressions might not have been so vivid, but at this moment he was seeing with the eyes of a visionary, for surely never was a vision more amazing or more engross-

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ing than this one, so simple and commonplace in its details to the uninitiated.

Meanwhile the snow fell unceasingly, and as the daylight grew steadily less all prospect of returning that evening vanished, and it was arranged they should spend the night at the chalet. Harley looked for other inmates, but he saw none except the two women, and he dared ask no questions about Svenhi. The house seemed amazingly large for two people, and he wondered afterwards how he could have been so slow in guessing that it was a boarding-house. But Madeleine keeping a *pension*!—it was too awful to contemplate. Fires were lighted in cheerful bedrooms, smelling of pine, and there was a cosy sitting-room full of evidences of woman's occupation; yet, and Harley was amazed at this, no piano, and this struck him with a deadly chill. How complete had been the sacrifice of her life!

A stamping of feet in the porch announced other travellers, and to Harley it was another development of the vision when he saw Svenhi accompanied by a man who seemed half-cowherd and half-huntsman. Madeleine murmured some words to her husband, who came forward to him with outstretched hand which Harley took somewhat ungraciously. All the native surliness of the Englishman was in his manner, but Svenhi did not seem to notice it, and started telling how the snowstorm had spoilt his day's chamois hunting. In spite of his deep-rooted prejudice Harley could not help noticing that Svenhi had improved in appearance. He seemed stouter, broader, and his long Hungarian moustache looked less inky now that he had a healthy brown skin instead of the deathly pallor of before. His manner was frank and unaffected, and Harley saw he was making a good impression on the visitors.

During supper Madeleine, who spoke English fluently, gave all her attention to her guests, and Harley, equally bi-lingual, had to act as interpreter for Svenhi, who was relating his sporting experiences in French. Harley continued to resent him violently, and when after supper Svenhi escorted the travellers over the house to show them his hunting trophies, he contrived to escape notice and remained in the room where Madeleine, seated under the lamp, had busied herself with plain sewing, which seemingly overflowed from a large basket at her side. He stood out of the

radius of the light and looked at her silently while she sewed on, apparently unconscious of his presence. Stronger and stronger grew the necessity of hearing from her lips some account of her life: it was no concern of his, yet he had been thinking and grieving about her for so long that he almost felt she owed it to him. She sat so peacefully there, her placid face bending over her coarse needlework, that he could not believe her to be suffering, and yet—it was impossible she could be happy with the man who had used her so ill. He drew a chair close to where she was seated, and she looked up at him and smiled and went on with her work without speaking. Then he spoke:

"Tell me, I have no right to ask, but tell me if you are happy. I heard in Paris that trouble had come into your life. How have you lived through it, and have you become reconciled again—with life?" he added, fearing to offend her.

"I am very happy," she answered, looking at him with her frank eyes. "I have chosen my life, and I am far happier than I was when you knew me full of ambition and pride. That was a ready-made life, and this is one of my own making. You know of the sordid anxieties of the past: now I can tell you that they never touched my inner life, and that is where you feel suffering and joy."

She stopped; and Harley said nothing, waiting while his heart beat with expectancy. He felt himself face to face with a mystery, the deepest of all: the hidden sources of happiness. Madeleine was seeking how to tell reasonably a tale in which reason had no part, and his heart told him he could feel with her if only she would give him the clue to the enigma. She continued:

"Soon after our marriage my husband began to gamble. He was dazzled by the glamour of the gold, he was like a child—all gamblers are children—and he had always been poor. I was terribly unhappy, not for the sake of the money but because of the deterioration I saw coming over him. He was constantly in the society of men who flattered him; he believed them, and they won his money from him by fair means or foul, I never knew which. One night as I lay trying to see my way out of the darkness that surrounded us it came upon me like a flash. 'Take him away,' a voice said, 'back to the hills and valleys and streams of his childhood.' You know, perhaps, that he is the son of small farmers, and he lived in the wild and desolate country until a

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great musician heard him playing his cheap little violin and took him away to Vienna to be taught. But how to win him from this feverish life full of dreams of gold? I could do nothing; I waited, to all I appeared indifferent and apathetic. Oh, the money soon went, at last all had to be sold, and then my heart beat with an excitement I had never known: I was beginning to be happy. My husband came to me regretfully and tearfully. I held him in my arms and told him that our life was just beginning, that our day had dawned. He thought I had gone mad with grief and told me afterwards that this thought kept him from suicide, feeling suddenly his responsibility towards me. My faithful notaries had contrived to place in safety some money that had come to me from my mother, a very small amount, but it was enough to buy this house and furniture, some cows and poultry. Oh, you should see our cows grazing on the pastures high above us, the short, green, Alpine grass around, vast as the sea, and only bounded by the precipices sheer down to the infinite. My husband hunts in winter, in summer there is work for us all. This house becomes busy as a hive. Strangers come and live here; some of them return every year, and I have made many friends who only know me as Madame Svenhi who keeps a *pension*."

She stopped, voices were heard, the conversation would have to become general.

"I believe you; I admire and revere you, but I do not understand you yet," said Harley, wearily.

That night he lay wakeful and restless in spite of the fatiguing day. He turned over in his mind all Madeleine had said that evening. He was now convinced that she was happy, happy he thought in a fool's paradise of her own, and from which some day there would be a terrible awakening. The awakening would come when Svenhi tired of the rural life and returned to town and its temptations. The violin was always there with its luring voice and would some day call him away to the magic glittering city of his imagining, and this time it would be the complete shattering of Madeleine's dream, a dream which in the cold hard light of reason was wild and very insecure. Harley had not yet reached the height when we know that dreams are realities. However, to do him justice he was only anxious to be allowed to enter into this one, take part in it and understand it if he could. He judged it hard

that Svenhi the unworthy should be a feature in Madeleine's rare dream, and that he should be an outsider, merely allowed to look through the railings at the enchanted garden. As he thought of this his resentment towards Svenhi grew stronger; in fact during one feverish hour he caught himself finding satisfaction in thinking of the dangers of chamois hunting. Sleep came at last, heavy dreamless sleep.

The travellers were awakened by the dazzling light of the sun shining on the snow and making it sparkle like crystal. Long before, at the early dawn, the guide had started homewards to reassure the anxious friends. This assurance gave the young people an excuse for more tobogganing, and an hour's amusement was decided on before they all started homewards. Svenhi offered to show them a snow hill, and in a few minutes the voices were heard growing fainter as they hurried off with their sledges. Harley remained indoors with Madeleine, hardly daring to hope for a renewal of the last night's conversation, and yet anxious to begin it again should an opportunity present itself. Madeleine did not seem inclined to begin talking, but remained in the room kneeling on the window seat and looking out across the valley. Harley walked impatiently up and down the room, knowing that in an hour all chances of speaking to her would be gone, yet not knowing how to begin. Suddenly as he paced up and down he noticed a violin case piled up with some fishing rods, dusty and forgotten. This drew him up suddenly, and he realized that his opportunity had come.

"Has your husband ceased to play the violin?" he said, coming near to the window corner where Madeleine was.

"He has no need of it now," was her reply. "Music is the inarticulate speech of one who is seeking to attain—when the fulfilment is reached the need for speech ceases. Hence the perpetual restlessness of the artist who tries to express the inexpressible."

"Then he has attained fulfilment?" said Harley, hardly conscious of a sneer in his question.

"He has," Madeleine answered gravely; "he has found peace."

He turned away and looked out of the window at the snowy landscape, asking himself bitterly whether this was all madness or



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whether he was too sophisticated ever to understand elemental truths. He heard the door close as Madeleine left the room, and he remained in deep meditation until the house was noisy once more with the voices, and soon they were prepared for the homeward tramp. The farewells were very cordial, and promises were made to meet again. Harley was very quiet, but he felt less animosity towards Svenhi as he shook his hand, and his farewell to Madeleine was a silent one. Gradually her peace was spreading its quiet wings over him. The sun shone brightly on the little group as they moved down the path towards the bend of the road which was to hide the chalet completely from view. They waved their hands and passed on. Harley was the last to look back before he too passed out of sight. He saw Madeleine leaning on her husband's arm, shading her eyes from the dazzling snow with her hand. Framed in the radiant Alpine landscape they stood, he a type of manly strength and vigour and she the frail woman clinging to him. Together they seemed the perfect being, and as Harley turned his head and passed on, he felt he was leaving them in perfect harmony with their surroundings, far from disintegrating influences; and, musing, he knew he was beginning to understand.

NORA MURRAY ROBERTSON

# *A Study in Bereavement*

WRITTEN BY MR THOMAS PARKER IN 1954

**A**N old man, looking back on life, usually remembers a few scenes of really striking irony, and probably the most striking irony is that of almost unconscious hypocrisy. There was more of this in the unenlightened though eminently virtuous generation of the first decade of this century than there is now. Perhaps this was due to their not having seen, like ourselves, any really practical application of medical science to what was in those days called the "mystery" of life and death. My readers may possibly remember that it was not till 1904 that Lord Treadwell discovered how life might be prolonged until senile decay had set in, and in this way completely revolutionized the scientific aspect of what is still called "death"—a term which then had a very different meaning. But the old ideas lived on, and it was not until 1915 that the community began to adapt itself to the altered requirements of a more stationary population. It is curious to remember how my elders talked of cancer as an incurable disease, and of suicide as a deplorable aberration, if not as a crime.

But I am wandering, and must return to my reminiscence. In the autumn of 1904, when I was a young man of forty-seven, I remember attending the "funeral" of a distant cousin, called Mrs Mitcham. In those days comparatively few people were cremated, and owing to the uncertain tenure of life it was thought correct on such occasions to simulate an almost unseemly grief, instead of accepting the natural close of human activity in a spirit of rational resignation. The following narrative may interest the younger generation as showing the odd mixture of knowledge and ignorance, sentimentality and insensibility, displayed by their ancestors. My memory of the episode is so vivid that I have been able to reproduce almost exactly the remarks made by the persons then present. Though I have lost sight of most of them, the probability is that some are still alive, and I have, therefore, preferred to use fictitious names.

There was, as I remember, at this "funeral" a certain Mrs Sophia Cardew, the only sister of Mrs Mitcham, with three more or less young daughters; a Mr John Matheson, a stockbroker; a pathetic-looking old woman, called Mrs Boles; and two philanthropic ladies of the parish, Miss Molesworth and Miss Honiton.

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MENT*

Even in those days there lingered the Victorian custom of making the family solicitor read the will of the person who had been buried, and this function was accordingly performed by a solicitor of the name of Binks, who recently died at the age of 103.

The will began more or less in the common form of the time. The testatrix had left her "faithful landlady," Mrs Boles, £75 a year so long as she looked after the pug and three canaries, and three small legacies to Binks and her two co-district visitors, Miss Molesworth and Miss Honiton respectively. Mrs Cardew was to have the life interest in £7,000, which at her death was to be equally divided among such of her daughters as should be married by April 1, 1907, when the eldest would be thirty-seven, and the youngest twenty-nine. Mr Matheson, the deceased's son-in-law, was residuary legatee. He was a widower with one child, and Andrew Mitcham, his brother-in-law, had died a reputed bachelor some years before.

The will was, on the whole, satisfactory to all parties. The landlady sat reflecting on what would best conduce to the longevity of pugs and canaries, and the Misses Cardew were quite old enough to realize that their aunt's bequest was the best of all possible excuses for open dalliance with gentlemen, who, according to the absurd fashion then in vogue, reserved to themselves the monopoly of courtship. Mr Matheson and Mr Binks most imprudently drank a quantity of "brown sherry," a poisonous liquor which had not then been condemned by any Minister of Hygiene.\*

The decorous torpor of the scene was suddenly interrupted by the appearance of the local doctor in a garment called a "frock coat" and *pince-nez*. An early marriage had forced him into a country practice, but had not entirely destroyed a really intellectual curiosity of a kind then comparatively rare.

"I have come," he began abruptly, "on a very urgent matter. I was up in town very early this morning, and with great luck managed to see my old contemporary, Julius Treadwell, whom you may recently have seen boomed in the halfpenny papers. I had thought he was a complete charlatan, and wished, if so, to have the means of exposing him. But he took me off to Bart's,†

\* If I remember right, this ministry did not exist till 1908.—T.P.

† A big London hospital.







*THE STEALING OF DIONYSOS*  
*CLINTON BALMER*





and in the presence of a most distinguished company succeeded in restoring life to a man who had been dead two days. He sets the heart going after four hours' work, and calculates that in such a case life may continue quite five years more, or conceivably until senile decay sets in. We did this with closed doors, but no doubt the evening papers will be full of it. He showed that even after four days he has a reasonable chance of success, as he has now discovered a means of combating any organic changes that may have set in."

The company began to look more and more scandalized, and Mr Binks suddenly drew himself up with great solemnity.

"My dear sir!" he remarked, "I am surprised that you should burst in upon us in this way. Such topics are scarcely seemly on an occasion of this kind, and I have not yet finished explaining the will to the beneficiaries."

"Come, come," said the doctor, "you don't seem to see what I'm driving at. I arranged with Treadwell that I would wire to him immediately on obtaining your consent to try his skill. He will have innumerable applications from all parts of the country to-morrow, and, having regard to the startling circumstances of his position, he says he must have a thousand guinea fee even if he fails."

"I think," replied the solicitor, most emphatically, "that you misapprehend the situation. My clients are, I am sure, not at all prepared to allow such sacrilegious experiments to be tried on their beloved relative. I must also point out that the whole procedure seems to me grossly illegal, and, in any case, no body can be exhumed without the leave of the Home Secretary."

At this point I remember that Mrs Cardew went off into a fit of hysterics, which brought the nerves of the whole party to extreme tension.

"Dr Mills," remarked Mr Matheson, "I entirely agree with my solicitor in thinking that this subject should not have been broached in the presence of the ladies. But, apart from any other consideration, I think it would be cruel to restore life to anyone who has gone to his last rest. I go further, and maintain that it is utterly contrary to the dictates of the Christian religion, however unimportant you may think it."

"You had better call in the parson on that point," retorted

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the doctor, becoming slightly heated; "but here I see you all in deep mourning and presumably afflicted by the loss of the lady who has just died. In all seriousness I hold out a prospect of restoring her to you, and you immediately flout it. I can hardly imagine that you are influenced by the question of expense."

"The fee," said Mr Binks, with awakened interest, "would, I suppose, be paid by the executors\* as a part of the funeral expenses; it would therefore be deducted from the residue, and would ultimately fall on the residuary legatee—that is of course *you*, Mr Matheson."

"Of course, if I thought there was anything in the idea, I should have nothing to say against it," was Mr Matheson's rapid comment.

"Properly speaking," continued Mr Binks, "nothing should, in my opinion, be done without the consent of the deceased—but I feel slightly bewildered by the proposal. In any case, the fee should, I think, be apportioned among the beneficiaries. I should add that, even if Mrs Mitcham was alive again, she would have no means of replacing the income of a thousand guineas."

"Interesting as these details may be to the legal mind," said the doctor, addressing himself to the whole company, "the question now before all of you is whether or not any of you wish to see Mrs Mitcham alive again. The man I saw this morning is now lying in bed in a perfectly normal condition, and talking as anyone might who had emerged from a long catalepsy. I see myself no reason for seriously doubting that the same result might be achieved here."

Mrs Cardew had, meantime, slightly recovered, and suddenly observed:

"You know perfectly well, doctor, that this is sanctioned by no law, human or divine."

Her daughters did not seem to know quite what to say, but the eldest, whose share of the £7,000 seemed unpleasantly contingent, turned to her mother:

"You must remember, mamma, that modern science does wonderful things. As Mr Fulton said in his sermon last week,

\* In those days the State had not yet taken over these functions, and even solicitors were allowed to act in this capacity until 1921, when the great principle of "compulsory administration" was inaugurated by the centenarian Lord Chancellor.

scientific discoveries are often providential. In that case they are like new Acts of Parliament, and become a law in themselves. Think of having dear Auntie back again! We needn't see her till she has recovered."

The landlady who, as far as I remember, cared more for the dead woman than her relations, here showed a strong inclination to tears. At the same time Miss Molesworth and Miss Honiton rose, and said they thought that Mr Fulton should be consulted before any decision was arrived at. I understood Miss Honiton to add that she had never thought she would live to see those beautiful words, "Earth to earth, dust to dust," entirely lose their meaning.\*

At this moment there was a knock at the door, and the doctor's servant entered with a telegram. The doctor opened and read it.

Can no longer come down, booked for next fortnight.—Treadwell.

A visible relief came over everyone.

"I wonder if the remarks of Lazarus's family were correctly reported," muttered the doctor, as he closed the door behind him.

Lazarus, I may add, was a personage whose name, though now only familiar to scholars, was commonly cited at that time to illustrate what was then considered a miraculous recovery of consciousness.

E. S. P. HAYNES

\* A quotation from a liturgy then in use at "funerals."

## Two Songs

TWO SONGS

### I

MY Love is dark, but she is fair ;  
As dark as damask roses are,  
As dark as woodland lake-water,  
Which mirrors every star.

For she, as shines the moon by night,  
Can win the darker air  
To blend its beauty with her light—  
Till dark is doubly fair.

### II

Gaze on me, though you gaze in scorn,  
O Lady, turn your eyes to me ;  
And then the darkness may be borne,  
When two such glorious lights I see :  
For who is there if stars shine bright  
That will not praise the dark of night ?

As gloaming brings the bending dew,  
That flowers may faint not in the sun,  
So, Lady, now your looks renew  
My heart, although it droops adown ;  
And thus it may unwithered be,  
When you shall deign to smile on me.

OLIVER GOGARTY









*ROSE OF ALL THE ROSES*  
*CONSTANCE HALFORD*



## *A Tuscan Melody*

*A TUSCAN  
MELODY*

SEVEN hundred years ago, when the heart of Italy was glowing from a new fire and strong with a new youth, a poet of whom little is known parted from his lady in a Tuscan orange grove. The fading blue of the sky above them, and the green and bright colour of the orange trees dim in the sudden twilight, made a sweetly toned background to her small delicately shaped Italian head, and greatly pleased the poet. Those were caressing words that he whispered as they waited in the dusk. They parted, she to thread her way down to the village, he upwards to the little house above the orange trees. Her round lips pouted as she slipped away. "He does not love me. No, he does not love me," their petulant little curves seemed to whisper to each other. Yet, when his hand was on his doorlatch, he stood for many minutes looking down to where her white dress flickered through the trees. Looking at him then, one would have said he loved her. But suddenly a sweeter smile moved his face, a brighter light lit his eyes. He looked like one before whom the beauty of the earth has dawned in a glowing cloud on a pale sky. He disappeared into the house and was soon striding up and down a brown wood room, bare with scanty furniture. Words were singing in his ears. His heart throbbed to a strangely beautiful measure. Now and again he took a long pen from a small table in a corner of the room, and wrote words upon a piece of parchment. Then he would cross them out and write the words again. His face shone like the lanthorn of pale glass that hung in the corner over the table. Looking upon him then, one would have said that all the love of all his life was held in the faint thing that he was snatching from the air and setting out in trembling loving strokes upon his scrap of vellum.

All night he worked, building up a song from live words, and fitting them with all the art that was in him to a fine old Tuscan melody. As the orange trees broke into brilliance under the morning sun, his song was finished and he rested for a moment, humming it happily over to himself. Then, drunk with the joy of having made a new thing, he ran down the hill to bring Valeria, his lady, who had the sweetest voice in all the valley, that she might be the first to sing the song that he had made. Then indeed was he in love. Whether with the sparkling song, each word of which seemed like a little mesh in the net of music that held his

soul, a panting, trembling captive, or with the thought of the dainty Lady Valeria singing it over in the house above the orange trees, it is impossible to say. He found Valeria, and brought her all untidy and fresh as the dew on the grass, at tumbling pace up through the trees. They climbed hand in hand. His hand held hers so tight that the blood that beat in him seemed to her to belong to her own veins also. "Surely he loves me," she thought. Even as they ran he kept telling her the words of the song, lilting over the melody she was to sing. They reached the house, and he took a long draught of wine, holding it up for her to see the sunlight sparkling in its crimson depths. She refused when he offered it, but he made her sip a little that her song might rise the sweeter.

She sang, and the poet turned his head aside, gazing dumbly out over the valley, and a mist was in his eyes. The beauty of Valeria bringing the other beauty from the heart of his own song was like the bright lightning that stuns everything to silent thought. As she neared the end of the song he turned again towards her. And when she stopped with a little sob in her voice, he caught her in his arms. She sang it for him again and again. He knew as she sang that he loved her. Shortly they were married. This is the end of the story of Valeria and her poet, but the tale of the song is not finished yet, nor ever will be while men love to hear their women singing.

For the little wild thing that was born to the poet in that mad happy night in the house above the orange grove has been sung through all the world so long and so often that the name of the poet has been forgotten. The peasants in the valley call it Valeria's song, for when she came down into the village it was ever on her lips. They loved the music and the words, and passed them on from mouth to mouth long after the poet and Valeria lay together under the grass with the orange trees blossoming above their grave. The poem was sung nightly in the hot Italian summers when the peasants sat together after sunset, watching the reds and greens of the sky darken to purple and deep blue. Petrarch heard it sung in his Tuscan childhood, and he wrote other words to fit the music, but the old words clung on, and may still be heard in the valley where they were written.

The song might always have remained here as one of the

old songs of the place, and never been known elsewhere, if it had not been for a fortunate accident. One year when the valley was not so prosperous as to promise employment for all its young men, a youth, one of a numerous family, determined to leave his home and hack a golden fortune from the wealth of Pisa. This youth was clever in the making of little statues and his voice was clear and fresh. He came to Pisa, and as he had not money to rent a booth, he placed his figures on a tray and carried them through the streets. Friendless among the quick contemptuous dwellers in the city, he was puzzled and not a little dismayed by the finely dressed youths who swaggered past him, and the quaint dresses of the sailing folk who came from all parts of the world. He was very lonely. To lift his soul which felt bruised and beaten by the buzz around him, he sang as he walked, the old song of the valley he had left, away in the Tuscan hills. As he sang, he forgot the people and all the hum of the chattering trading city. He thought of the big tree in the middle of his village, in whose boughs he had sat and teasingly flung leaves and twigs at a dark-haired girl who stood gazing up at him. Perhaps he thought a little of her also. However that may be he did not notice a tall Pisan who stopped to listen to him, so that he started quickly when the man laid a hand on the curling black hair that covered his bare head. "Youth," said he, "you must sing that song before my master. Whence came it? Who was its author?" The lad was accustomed to speak freely, and undismayed by the dignity of his listener, who was a man finely dressed, he told what little he knew of the origin of the poem. He was taken to a great house richly furnished, and sang the song before one of the greatest nobles of the city. He listened to the song, and it brought a wistful look of a man rather than of a statesman, to his care-laden eyes. He had the song over again and often afterwards, and it was spread through all Pisa. From Pisa it was carried to all the cities of Italy by travellers or by the accidents of war. The Venetians knew it. It became a common street song in Rome and Naples, and often on cool nights in Florence youths and maidens drifting in silent boats between the banks of the Arno, heard music in the houses that they passed, and this song with its ancient Tuscan melody floated to them over the water in the beam of light from one of the open windows.



*A TUSCAN  
MELODY*

From Venice it found its way northward into the rugged heart of Germany. The old strong life still throbbed in the pulses of the North, when an engraver in wood came over the hills to the city on the sea. His manners were rough, of the north, but his face was free and open, and he soon became a favourite among the artists of Venice. One, in particular, grew very close with him, and the two worked in the same room. Now this artist was painting a picture for a rich man, and a noble Venetian lady, who loved him, was sitting as a model. She was fond of singing, and among all the songs she knew, this Tuscan song was her favourite. Once, as they were preparing their painting tools, she sang it to beguile the time. The tune and its words seized the German artist and held him fast. Though there was nothing sorrowful in the lyric, yet it moved him as it had moved the man who wrote it, and his sight was dimmed with tears. He begged her for the words, and found a strange joy in the swaying rhythms of the Latin that she taught him, half laughing at his eagerness. Then when he returned to the north he chanted the song at one of the merry feasts where soldiers and artists, priests and poets sat together heartily at a single board. He sang it hesitatingly as one exhibits a new sword which looks handsome but has given no proof of its strength. Under his broad eyebrows he looked round for the applause he expected and won. The others asked him for the words. Twice he repeated them. Then, with clash of flags on the table, the whole company of men in lusty chorus chanted the ancient song until the rafters creaked.

Already the song had filled all Italy and been carried across the seas to the East and across the hills to the North, when hundreds of years after that first singing in the orange grove among the Tuscan hills, travelling singers carried it West, to the Dutch fishermen who chanted it as they brought their boats to beach, to the roystering taverns of old France, and in many varying versions to Norway, and the unknown lands beyond. About this time, when all the world was singing, when lovers sang beneath the windows of their loves, and peace and war alike filled men with song, the melody came curiously to England. A pious English pilgrim, with a little of the devil still in him that he wished to cast out by his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, was tramping across Europe, singing as he went psalm tunes and all manner of godly

chants. One day in southern Germany, as he passed under the windows of an old brown inn, a voice started into the air directly above him. His pious meditation was so strong upon him that he was decidedly startled, but all thoughts of angels or devils were flung from his mind, when, looking up, he saw a red-cheeked German maiden leaning from a window-sill, singing heartfully this same old Tuscan song. Pilgrim though he was, he tucked up his skirts, dropped his staff and scrip, and in two bars of the song was up the wooden stairs and laughingly pursuing that German maiden round and round a table. He caught her at last, of course, and she sang the song to him very sweetly, sitting before him on the table, swinging her wooden shoes. He vowed that he would sing it himself, and it is recorded that he entered the Holy City with the wild thrill of the Tuscan melody upon his pious lips. When he returned to England his song spread far among the learned, and soon descended to the unlearned, who sang it quite as lustily. As years passed, it became most popular, and the chubby little boys who sat cross-legged on imitation dolphins sang it to Queen Elizabeth at that famous revel in the grounds of Kenilworth Castle. She was pleased with its melody, and had a copy writ on vellum in inks of red and green, with much fine gold, and caused her pages to sing it to her when she rested in a balcony of Windsor, weary and tired from her day of careful scheming.

For the next two hundred years the song was sung through all Europe, by the students of the universities, by soldiers on the march, by merry-making priests; the light-haired girls of Germany and the dark-haired ladies of Spain sang it always with the same subtle enjoyment, bringing gaiety to some and tears to others. But of all the stories of its singing that we know, there is none I like so well as this, of eighteenth century France. A dainty demoiselle, given the words by a stiff old singing master, read them and found them sweet to her careful little tongue. She stood by the greyheaded man at the instrument, and her slender throat swelled up and down with the wavelets of the song. She sang it as it should be sung, with the fresh passion and clear voice of a young girl, and the old master bent his locks over her little hands and kissed them for her singing. Then she blushed prettily and would sing no more till, coaxed by the pleading courteous old gentleman, she burst out laughingly with one of the

*A TUSCAN  
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lilting songs of the France that has long been dead except in the souls of her poets.

Lastly, to prove that all this is true, was not the old song sung to me to-night, when dusk caressed my orchard. Two girls, who looked like spirits in their pale dresses against the darkness of the trees, sang to me leaning on a bough whose faint pink blossoms still showed dim in the twilight. Only an hour ago, when I passed into my cottage, the stars sang high in the heavens above me and the echoes of those two sweet girlish voices were clinging round my heart.

Besides these, the song, and the melody which is older than the song, have had many other adventures. They have been woven into operas, and sung in brilliant theatres and cold glimmering streets, in crowded cities and on the wide expanses of the East. Some day I mean to build the stories of the singings into a little book.

ARTHUR RANSOME

# Two Worlds

By J. P. JACOBSEN

*An English Rendering from the Danish by Hermione  
Ramsden*

THE Salzach is not a cheerful river, and there is a peculiar melancholy about the stillness of the poverty-stricken little village on its eastern bank.

TWO  
WORLDS

The houses stand close together on the water's edge, like a crowd of miserable beggars who cannot go any further because they have no means of paying their passage across the ferry; their palsied shoulders lean against each other, and they rest their rotten crutches in the muddy stream. The black window panes scowl from under their overhanging roofs at the houses on the opposite side with an expression half hatred, half envy. On the other side the houses are scattered about in picturesque groups of twos and threes, stretching far away over the green plain until they are lost to view in the golden haze of the horizon. But the sunset casts no glow over the little village, it is shrouded in darkness, and the silence is rendered more impressive by the monotonous sound of the river as it flows slowly on, murmuring to itself, sadly and wearily.

The air on the opposite side was filled with the buzzing of the harvest flies, and from time to time a sudden gust of wind would blow them across to die among the willows on the bank.

A boat was coming up the river.

A weak, sickly-looking woman was standing on the balcony of one of the furthest houses. She was shading her eyes with an almost transparent hand, leaning over the parapet to watch the boat which seemed to be sailing upon a mirror of liquid gold.

The woman's white face shone through the dusk as though it had light in itself like the foam which, even on a dark night, whitens the crest of the waves. There was a hopeless look in her anxious eyes, and a curious, vacant smile played about the tired mouth, while the lines on her forehead deepened, causing a look of decision mingled with desperation to cross her face.

The bells in the little village church were beginning to ring.

The woman turned away from the sunlight and rocked her-

TWO  
WORLDS

self to and fro, holding her hands to her ears to keep out the sound of the bells, while she murmured to herself as though in answer to the ringing: "I cannot wait, I cannot wait."

But the bells rang on.

She paced backwards and forwards on the balcony as though she were in pain; the lines on her face had grown deeper still, and she drew her breath with difficulty like one who is oppressed with sorrow yet cannot find relief in tears.

For many a long year she had suffered from a painful disease which left her no peace either by night or day. She had consulted all the wise women she knew, she had gone from one holy well to the other, but without success. At last she had joined in the procession on Saint Bartholomew's day, and there she had met an old, one-eyed man who advised her to make a broom of edelweiss and faded rue, of maize and bracken from the churchyard, with a lock of her hair and a piece of wood from a coffin; this she was to throw after a young girl who was strong and healthy, who would come to her through running water. Then the sickness would leave her and cling to the girl.

She had made the broom and concealed it in her dress. A boat was coming up the river, it was the first that had passed since she made the magic wand. She came back to the edge of the parapet; the boat was near enough for her to count the people in it; she could see that there were six people on board and that they looked like foreigners. The boatman stood in the prow with a pole, and there was a lady at the helm with a man by her side who was watching to see that she steered according to the boatman's directions; the others were sitting in the middle of the boat.

The sick woman bent forward; every feature was strained and expectant, and her hand was concealed in her breast. She scarcely breathed as with beating heart, distended nostrils and vacant eyes, she stood waiting for the boat to come.

Already their voices were audible, first only in a faint murmur, then distinctly.

"Luck," said one of them, "is a purely heathen conception. You do not find it once mentioned in the New Testament."

"What about blessedness?"

"Stop," said another. "Of course, it is the ideal of con-

versation to digress, but it seems to me that we should do well to go back to the subject which was first started." TWO  
WORLDS

"Very well then, the Greeks——"

"First the Phœnicians."

"What do you know about the Phœnicians?"

"Nothing. But why should the Phœnicians be passed over?"

By this time the boat was just under the house, and at that moment some one lit a cigarette. A blaze of light fell upon the lady in the stern, and lit up her fresh, girlish face, revealing a smile on the parted lips and a dreamy look in the clear eyes, raised heavenward. The light went out, and as the boat sailed by there was a little splash, as of something thrown into the water.

It was about a year later. The sun was setting between two heavy walls of clouds, casting a red glow upon the pale water. A fresh wind swept across the plain; there were no harvest flies, the only sound was the rippling of the river among the rushes. In the distance a boat was seen coming down the stream.

The woman from the balcony was standing on the bank. That day when she had thrown her witch's broom after the young girl she had fallen down in a faint. The violent excitement, aided perhaps by the new parish doctor, had worked a change in her illness, and after passing through a critical interval she began to recover, and a couple of months afterwards she was completely cured. At first she was quite intoxicated with the feeling of health which was so new to her; but it did not last long. She became dejected and troubled in her mind; she was haunted by the image of the young girl in the boat. It rose before her as she had seen it, young and happy; then it knelt down at her feet and looked up at her appealingly. Then a time came when she no longer saw it, and still she knew it was there; it moaned in her bed all the day, and at night she could hear it in the corner of the room. Now she saw it again; it was looking so pale and worn, gazing at her reproachfully with large, unnatural eyes.

This evening she was standing by the brink of the river with a stick in her hand. She was drawing crosses in the soft mud, and more than once she raised herself to listen.

The bells were ringing.



TWO  
WORLDS

She finished the cross carefully and threw away the stick. Then she knelt down and prayed. Presently she waded into the river up to her waist, folded her hands, and laid herself down in the dark grey waters. The water took her and dragged her into its depths and murmured more sadly than ever as it flowed past the village, past the fields and far away.

By this time the boat was quite near; there were the same young people on board who had helped each other to steer on the former occasion; they were now on their honeymoon. He was sitting in the stern, and she was standing in the middle of the boat, leaning against the mast; she wore a large, grey shawl and a red hat; she was humming a tune.

They came close under the house. She nodded to the man at the helm and looked up at the sky and the floating clouds, as she sang:

By moat invested  
 Safe am I nested;  
 Art firmly founded, my hall of joy?  
 Do ramparts shield thee, so none annoy?  
 . . . . What see I afar, from the castle keep high  
 Darkly and dim where the crimson clouds lie?  
     Those shadows I know,  
     They gather and grow,  
     They wander and go  
 Like sad thoughts now banished  
 Of sorrows all vanished.  
 Ye shadows come, come here and rest  
 Within my castle, within my breast,  
 Drink from the golden goblet bright  
 Here in the halls of radiant light—  
 One cup for joy ere yet 'tis here,  
 One cup for hopelessness austere,  
     Dreams! fill the cup!



TWO  
WORLDS

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Within my bosom, within my breast,  
Drink from the golden goblet bright  
Draw to the hall of radiant light—  
Can any be joy see yet its here,  
Can any but hopelessness sustere,  
Dreams? All the cup!

STUDY OF A HEAD  
AUGUSTUS JOHN





## *For the King*

THERE was clamour of battle down in the plain,  
My Knight's heart laughed and laughed again.  
I would strike a blow for the King,  
My King.

*FOR THE  
KING*

I picked a lance and a true steel sword,  
And rode where the flame of the battle roared  
About the face of the King.

The shock of the charge was good to feel,  
The sway of the press, the swing of the steel!  
Under the eyes of the King.

Many a brave Knight tottered dead,  
Many a false knight turned and fled  
From the side of a falling King.

I fought my way thro' the dying light,  
Where a broken banner hung in the fight  
Over a broken King.

I won a bloody way to his side,  
I looked in his eyes—that were staring wide  
With the royal fear of a King.

I saw him turn his charger's head  
Riding away from his valiant dead  
That had died for a craven King.

I tossed him a curse, and rode at the horde  
Of his gathering foes. I broke my sword;  
And my heart, and my heart, for love of the King,  
My King!



## A Game of Confidences

A GAME OF  
CONFID-  
ENCES

"OH, there you are, Paul! How do you do? I'm so glad to see you again." Mrs Vibart beamed delightfully upon me. "I hear you have quite settled Mr Rollison's affair—so clever of you."

"I had very little —"

"What a bother it has been, hasn't it? But I can't have my best young man doing nothing," continued my charming hostess. "Now there's such a dear little thing over there, by the window. Come along at once—I have a thousand people to arrange yet. And some of them are so uneven."

"Why don't you say 'odd,' and be done with it? What does the dear little thing do? And will any pecuniary advantage accrue to me if —"

"Don't argue—I haven't a minute to lose. Here come the Ponsonbys, with an artist man whose name I have entirely forgotten. Be quick."

"I must know whether she paints, or writes, or sculpts —"

"She doesn't do anything now, beyond being very good and sweet—and she's all alone. She comes from Devon. It's too far off for me to remember if she has any precise *métier*; but you'll soon find out, Paul—you're so intelligent."

"Lead on, dear lady. The fatted calf is ready for the sacrifice."

"It won't be any sacrifice, I'm positive." Mrs Vibart, without permitting me another word, steered us both marvellously across the wide studio. Then I heard her usual introduction—quite unintelligible, until my own name was reached. "My Paul, he has been been begging for an introduction! Do be kind to him, and excuse my rushing away at once. I see a heap more arrivals."

I turned dutifully towards the "dear little thing." I instantly rather liked her; and had a vague feeling that we had met before. I said, carefully: "I have been hearing how frightfully good you are, and that you come from Devon —"

"From Dartmoor," she particularized, prettily. Her voice was so beautifully contralto that I made haste to secure the seat next to hers. It was a positively secluded corner of the studio.

"But I'm not frightfully good," she added, gently—stirring familiar chords chaotically again within me.

"Honour bright?" I questioned.

She nodded. "I'm only a country cousin of Mrs Vibart's. She's awfully kind. Introduces me to every one."

"Whether you like it or not? That's just what she has done to me; only I'm not so dissatisfied with my partner."

"Please, I never said that. I meant that Cousin Amy was always troubling and fussing over me. Now, of course, you're a somebody? Artist, author, or ——"

"Philosopher," said I, taking a surreptitious peep at her. Surely that straight, defiant, little nose, that slightly self-conscious trick of flushing ——. But she was expecting a full definition of myself. "I'll tell you a secret—quite a dear, true little secret. It's the easiest thing in the world to be a philosopher, and the best paying. You merely have to wear a high forehead, and look profound. Nature most obligingly has permitted me to achieve the former—I rather want her to stop just where she is; whilst I have acquired a sphinx-like look through attending Cousin Amy's tea-parties ——"

"Cousin Amy? Then I suppose we're cousins, too?"

"Indubitably. But I'm a town cousin, which only counts since she has been a widow—four, or is it five years? As regards philosophy, however—but do you like hearing me talk?"

"It's—heavenly," she breathed, with shy conviction.

"Thank you. I rather enjoy it, too, when I have such an equally heavenly auditor. That's quits, isn't it? How young are you?"

"What a direct question! However, to a philosopher, I'll admit ——"

"Don't. I'll guess instead. It will make the time seem so short. Then I'll get tea; and we'll eat it—and then we can go."

"I shan't go," my companion announced. "I'm staying here."

"I'll ask Amy to invite me to dinner," I retorted. "Pray silence for the guess. Two-and-twenty?"

"Four-and-twenty. It's a lot, isn't it—to be still a nobody?"

"Don't worry. I'm half as old again—and simply a philosopher. Plenty of men are quite famous at my age; but I've never had time. What's your name? I'm sorry to have to ask these things; but Amy didn't say clearly."

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ENCES

"I'm called Muriel."

"It becomes you," I remarked. "My name is Paul, which means 'little or small.' Your opportunity."

"I don't perceive that you're little or small, anyway," said Muriel, enigmatically. "What form does your philosophy take?"

"Telling stories to nice girls."

"Oh, but any one can do that."

"Pardon me—not philosophic stories, with morals and all that sort of thing."

"Let me judge."

"I had a heap of questions to ask," said I, regretfully. "I wanted to know what colours you liked, and whether your eyes are really dark grey. And whether that tiny heart-shaped locket on the end of that extraordinarily long chain contains a portrait?"

"A picture of a friend."

"Lucky friend. But you had to cut him."

She glanced up, surprisedly. "How did you know?" she asked, quickly.

"Not even a midget photo would go in there. You must have beheaded him."

"Oh, of course. I didn't understand." She paused. "Tell me your story, please."

"I was at that moment thinking where I had heard your name before. I mean the Muriel part of it," I explained, as I hadn't heard the other. "However, it has just come back to me, and thereby hangs a tale. It's about a Muriel, and is quite respectable. You might be able to advise me about it, since it's a problem."

"To whom?"

"Myself indirectly; and a friend chiefly. He's a decent fellow. I meet him at dinner. Middle Temple, you know. He's eating his terms, and occasionally I go to help. Well, in the course of his lunches he encountered a girl."

"Do they allow girls at the dinners?"

"I said *lunches*. She was a governess girl, at a shop. I must make myself clear. The shop is a very nice luncheon place, and the people live over it. They have children and a governess. I have seen her."

"Yes?"

"There's not the least doubt as regards her existence. One time they were shorthanded—at the busiest part of the day; and this girl was shot into the cashier's box. You know—little pay-place near the door. Well, my friend saw her."

"Yes?" My partner was flushing again in her delicious way.

"Fell over head and ears in love. Rum story, isn't it? Chance willed it that the girl should be imprisoned in that box day after day, for a week or more. Then, occasionally. Then chance meddled still further, and allowed meetings in the Temple Gardens, when she had the children with her. . . . All the while I never guessed a word."

"How did you find out?"

"Just sheer braininess. I perceived that Wally was not well. He seemed altogether peculiar. Ethereal and poetic. He left off swearing when dinner was late; studied harder than ever. After a little inward cogitation I drew him on one side. I said quietly, but distinctly: 'My boy, it won't do. What is her name, and how did you discover that she was an angel?' Wally—his real name is Wallace Rollison, by the way—turned pale as the Law Courts themselves."

"What did he say?" asked Muriel in a queer sort of voice.

"The whole miserable story burst forth, as from a volcano. I sat down heavily on the nearest seat—we were in Temple Gardens—and gasped. He clung to me, and instructed me that she was a dear. . . . They always are, you know. That her name was Muriel. . . . I'm sorry to drag you into it."

"Never mind that. Please go on. I'm so anxious to hear the moral."

"Don't be impatient. I talked about his career and about marrying in haste. I expounded that he hadn't known her long enough."

"That she was primarily only a governess girl; and that she had been in a shop?"

"No. Those facts were patent—and didn't so much matter. I thought of the spoiling of the boy's life. 'In a wife's lap, as in a grave, Man's airy notions mix with earth,' as the poet singeth. But he was infatuated."

A GAME OF  
CONFID-  
ENCES

"Well?"

"At my earnest request, he kept away from her for a week. I said that he would get her into a row and make her lose her place. That, no doubt, she was poor—and had relatives. I was quite a father to him."

"Didn't it strike you that the girl might have had feelings?"

"Not at that moment. After a week he broke out worse than ever. I said: 'Go, then, and ask her to marry you.' He answered, to my surprise, for I imagined I had played a master card: 'I will go—and this very day.' And he added a quite extraordinary and unnecessary remark. He said: 'It's only love that matters, after all.'"

"You don't believe that?"

"Providence made me essentially normal. Everything I eat digests, you know. But pray hear the *dénouement*—if I'm not boring you. Shall I get some tea?"

"Please no. I would rather hear the end." The strange little creature was white as a ghost over it. Or, perhaps the failing light—

"Wally came back at four o'clock. He had seen the girl, and had asked her the great question. And she . . . had said, 'NO.'"

I paused to give this effect. My companion was looking away. Her small hands were restless in her lap. She spoke to me presently, very soft and low. "Were you surprised?" she enquired, nervously.

"Very. But my respect for Miss Muriel went up at a bound. I began to be angry with Rollison. I told him he hadn't asked her properly. He protested miserably that he had implored . . . until she had told him that there was some one else."

"Some one else?"

"More in her own position, she had declared. And then had incontinently commenced to cry. Quietly and pathetically, Wally said. He couldn't understand anything but the NO. He came away."

"Was there anything else to understand?"

"Now you are touching the problem. Of course there *wasn't* 'some one else.' I saw through that after ten minutes

hard thinking. The plucky little beggar had viewed the case as I had. She really loved him, and so wouldn't let him take the risk."

"And possibly she thought that he would lose his friends, as well as his chance. That his mother would, perhaps —"

"How well you see it!" I interrupted. "His mother . . . you would never credit it; but she actually told Wally to try again! Said that she was sure no boy of hers would ever ask her to love a new daughter who wasn't worthy. I felt awfully mean and small when I heard him answer that fair play was a jewel. That he wasn't going to ask the little girl to be disloyal."

"Why did you feel mean?"

"Because I only had to tell him what I had guessed, which, mind you, I'm as certain of as I am of anything in life; and he would have gone back, and would have persuaded her, in time."

"In time?"

"Yes. I made a few inquiries, discreetly, myself. She had left the shop place, and had gone home: and, all the while, I knew in my heart that she would make him the best little wife in the world. She would have helped him. . . . Don't you think I'm a beast?"

"Perhaps you were wrong. About the guess, I mean. She might have had another lover."

"She hadn't, absolutely."

"If they had married, would you, as one of his friends, have cared to still know him? They would have been poor, and through it all—the worry, I mean—he might have failed, and not ever have been 'called.' Again, she mightn't have been his equal."

"I feel a culprit," I protested. "Whenever I see his face, it comes home to me. I *ought* to tell him."

"Would you . . . be best man at his wedding?"

"The problem again! I have seen so many unhappy marriages; and yet —"

My companion turned towards me once more, and her grey eyes seemed to hold tears. It was full dusk in the studio, the gabbling riot going on—pictures and shows, and mediums and manners—all were curiously remote. I felt myself strangely drawn



A GAME OF  
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ENCES

towards this little girl. . . . She put out her hand as if to take something from mine.

"Don't you feel that she was right?" she asked, gently and patiently. Then, altering her tone, she concluded, abruptly, "I'll take your check, please."

I knew her, then. I knew that I had known her all along. Of course, of course! That true contralto voice; those unforgettable eyes. I answered her soberly.

"I shall be very proud," said I, emphatically, "very honoured, if I may be best man at your wedding. We have both been wrong; and Wally was right. It is only love that matters in this poor little world. . . . Let me get you some tea?"

On my way I almost ran into Amy Vibart. "You have been good," she whispered. "Do you see who is by the door? It's Mr Rollison, looking everywhere for you."

"Not for me," I said, decidedly. "So *you* put it into my head, did you? You clever thing, how ingeniously it was suggested! I'm about to get Muriel some very nice tea—two cups—and then I'm going to let Rollison carry the tray."

Amy squeezed my arm, affectionately. "You're quite my best young man," she murmured.

PAUL CRESWICK

# *Megalomania*

THE world is ruled by me and God:  
Silent we single from the crowd  
The ugly, mean: the fair, the proud,  
At one irrevocable nod  
Go down, go down and bite the sod.

MEGALO-  
MANIA

Here, where despised I sit alone,  
Almighty God hath reared His throne:  
Am I cast down, abject, afraid,  
To gaze within those eyes unseared  
By myriad lights of million suns  
Which roll relentless round His feet?  
Watch me—I smile, I hold his beard.

Houses we crumble in our hands  
And shake their vermin down to Hell—  
Yea, all the proud indifferent lands  
That know me not for over-lord—  
For over-lord and God as well,  
Resistlessly their rests are hurled  
Beyond the ramparts of the world.

Here in my freezing little room  
I rouse the innavigable seas;  
The screaming breakers black with doom  
Crush the strong ships against the coast:  
I raise my hand, sweep out the stars,  
And in the crash of smashing spars  
God, I and God laugh through the gloom.

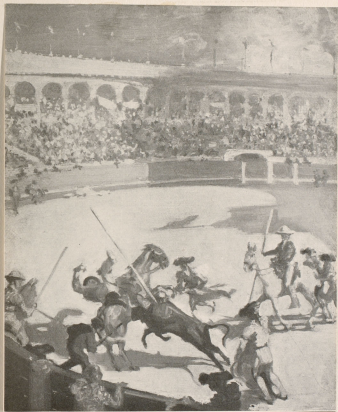
*MEGALO-  
MANIA*

Then gazing in each other's eyes  
We slide, we slide into a dream,  
While myriad worlds around arise,  
Slip past, and strow their myriad gleam—  
Phantasmagoria they seem,  
The thick dust of eternities:  
But awful, stony, thunder-shod,  
We trample down the firmament,  
For God is I, and I am God.

VINCENT O'SULLIVAN.







*THE BULL FIGHT*  
*A. McC. PATERSON*





# Old Songs

## I.—FAIR ROSAMUND

"HOW did you get in?" said Fair Rosamund indifferently. OLD SONGS  
Queen Eleanor held up the skein of silk, with a compassionate smile.

"Ah, yes, I might have known," laughed Fair Rosamund; "all spiders spin silk. . . . Will you be staying long?"

"No; not very long," answered Queen Eleanor regretfully.

"I am very sorry for that," sighed Rosamund; "the sight of you makes me feel ten years younger."

"Never mind," murmured Eleanor comfortingly; "I will stay a little while—long enough to make you much younger than that."

A sharp silence followed.

"Will you not sit down?" cooed Rosamund absently. "O, I forgot; pardon me; this is the only chair that has been given to me, and it holds but one at once."

"Where does he sit?" said Eleanor, looking round aimlessly at the great lime trees overhead.

"On my knee," whispered Rosamund.

Eleanor resumed, "Why should I pardon you? Do not yield me your chair—"

"I had not thought of it," said Rosamund, opening her eyes very widely.

Eleanor continued, not noticing the interruption, "I will sit on the floor at your feet."

"That will be beautiful," said Rosamund; then she went on protectingly, "See, I will give you a little corner of the hem of my skirt to sit upon."

"How good; I shall hide it completely," said Eleanor.

She seated herself, and again a long silence ensued. Then she resumed, "This cannot go on for ever."

"I thought not," said Rosamund sagely.

Eleanor rose and drew from her gown-bosom a narrow thin willowy knife and a vial of green copper. She cut off a short piece from the skein of silk and knotted it about the neck of the vial; with this she hung the vial on the tip of the knife and offered them to Rosamund, saying "Which?"

"Do you mean to kill me?" laughed Rosamund.

OLD SONGS

"Eleanor nodded repeatedly and rapidly, with an expression of vanity on her face.

"You are most foolish," said Fair Rosamund in tones of grave reproof; "surely you see that my death by your hands will make him think of me whenever he sees you, so that he will remember how much greater is my beauty than yours; then, too, he will always hate you until he can watch you die, in payment for my death—and that may make it possible even you will die before your time. As for me, he will love me more surely than ever when he has lost me; perchance he will even have me embalmed and will cherish me in a painted chapel with jewelled windows."

"It all depends upon what there is to embalm," lisped Queen Eleanor contentedly. "I fear I can wait no longer; must I choose or will you?"

"O, not the knife . . ." and Rosamund shivered daintily; "the knife will hurt, I know it will; I once stabbed myself when I was yet in the convent—it was purely pretence, you know, so that I might get my own way. I took care that the stylet (it was a stylet) should slip along a rib, but I can feel the glistening pain whenever I think of it. . . ."

"No, not the knife . . ." she added hurriedly.

"Then . . ." and Eleanor held the vial still nearer to her.

Rosamund turned to her embroidery frame, saying calmly: "You must wait a moment, just until I have put this stitch in. There," she went on presently, rolling up her silks, thrusting her needles into them and shutting them into a ball of copper filagree and violet enamel, "give me your nosegay."

She loosened the stopper and smelt the vial's contents; her nostrils curled. "How nasty," she said. Then she rose suddenly, took the Queen's head in her hands and kissed her on the mouth. Having done this she drank the contents of the vial hastily and seated herself again, fearful lest Eleanor should spoil her of her chair. "'Tis good," she mused, "to know that I shall never have anything so nasty again."

She leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes. Presently, with a slow, thin-lipped smile, she said: "He will neglect you to kiss me often when I am dead; he would rather kiss my cold blue lips than your warm red lips."







THE FAIR  
J. HODGSON LOBLEY





"Will he?" asked Eleanor, Queen.

Fair Rosamund laughed shrilly. Suddenly she sat upright, shrieking, her eyes staring. She gripped her body with both hands.

"O . . . O! What can that be? How it did hurt. There it is again. Help me . . . it hurts . . . it hurts . . . it hurts . . . You have given me a corrosive poison; how cruel of you; you might have given me a narcotic poison. . . ."

"Where is she? . . . she has gone. O God! O God! send her back, so that I can die calmly and sweetly in her presence; I can die so, God, if she is here; she will give me strength. But now. . . ."

She gripped her body very tightly with her hands and rolled on the floor.

". . . O, she has given me this eating draught to wring all the beauty out of my face and to distort my limbs as I die, so that he will despise me and think of me with horror . . . there are blue blotches on my hands . . . will it be so all over my body? I will lie long-stretched and hold myself very still, so that I may be seemly for him to look on. . . ."

Her hands clutched her body again; she sat up, then dashed herself on the ground again.

## II—PAOLO AND FRANCESCA

"WHERE do you suppose you are?" asked Francesca wonderingly.

"In Hell," faltered Dante between his sobs.

"But why should you think that?" said Francesca in still greater wonderment. "'Tis so plain that we are in Heaven."

Dante's voice seemed to be rilling through tears as he returned: "The dreadful torments I have seen; the darkness and the wailing; the sight of the twain of you driven helplessly down the cold pitiless wind while little eager terrible flames assail you on

OLD SONGS

every side—nought save Hell could be thus potent over such mighty lovers as you. . . .”

“Is it too dark for us to see each other?” interrupted Paolo.

“No,” said Dante more sadly than ever.

“Then are we in Heaven,” answered Paolo. “This light is the light of our choice; all lovers love the twilight. We must be in Heaven when we can see each other. Does this wind of which you speak (we cannot feel it, for we are at its heart; it seems cold to you because we need and take all its warmth for ourselves), does it seem to you to sunder us and send each of us adrift all lonely?”

Dante shook his head.

“Then are we in Heaven,” continued Paolo. “We must be in heaven when we are together. Our Heaven is to lie in each other’s arms; and as we do so the wind of our passion drives us whither it will, for it always blows us to happiness. We are quite safe, because we love eternally. The wind of passion is the breath of God. It must be that you carry Hell with you when you can hear our cries of joy and think that we are wailing.”

“But the dreadful torments I have seen?” doubted Dante waveringly.

“We know nothing of them,” laughed Paolo and Francesca together merrily. “Yet torments are purgings everywhere; of evil in Heaven, of good in Hell.”

“But,” triumphed Dante, “my dead lady is not here, so it must be Hell.”

Francesca laughed a long time. At last she sang: “We cannot help that. Heaven is where we are. If your lady is somewhere apart from you she must be in Hell; hasten to rescue her, O swift to speak and laggard to do.”

“Where we are, Heaven is,” chanted Paolo in antiphon.

“O, Paolo,” joyously rippled Francesca, “he is so wicked: see, he wants to put us into Hell that he may save his lady from Hell. We shall never convince him; wicked people can never believe what other people say. The little roses that fall from us as we kiss whirl about us for ever; but they are no use to him; he thinks they are flames of bygone earthly lust that God has saved up to punish us with. Come, my heart’s Paolo, let us gather

up all our little roses—armfuls, Paolo, armfuls—and with them pelt him out of Paradise. . . .”

As Virgil and Dante turned away, Virgil said with a pagan's unintelligence: “Hell is not such a hateful place after all, you see.”

OLD SONGS

### III—FAUST

“GRETCHEN? Ah, sir, I am inexpressibly weary of that wrinkled-to-shrivelling falsehood. 'Twas a Teuton-calumny, too; but our German mind ever alternated 'tween philosophy and sentimentality, incapable of understanding that a middle way exists—nay, 'tis possible that other things exist also—I know not; I have the German mind.

“Simplicity, simplicity—that is our bane, and we know it; we hide it under mountains of words, but we cannot hide our souls so—we do no more than punctuate the obvious.

“And sentimentality is a hypocrisy that comes of living to a theory; as a nation we are martyred to the family; here it is—positively grown to an instinct—and thus I am subjugated to a round peach-face and two long plaits of yellow hair. Would our poet were not so immortal.

“Your own countryman Marlov (or is it Marlau you call him?) divined me trulier. Some elusive neluctable inscrutable stir o' the animal in us sets every man toward the wenches sooner or later; but he felt I had an ambition like his own, and that if the accident o' birth must drag me from my self's high thoughts of man's divinity, I could yield to no less than the pick o' the ages, the envy of the best-mated fondlers; so he gave me the Lacedæmonian; I warrant he lusted after her himself.

“'St, 'st; nay, sir, softly, one moment; 'tis here that it cuts—I have been made the apex of tragedies, the butt of farces, the occasion for the high-noted one of the opera to after-the-syrup-of-the-newest-Parisian-fashion out-caper his dusty triumphs of the

OLD SONGS

day before; but none thinks of my life-work, of what I rough-hewed for the after-time; even your countryman makes me fear Hell i' the end, though he was wiser himself—but he must have a tickling finale for his buskin-grinder, and crashes through my fame to find one. Now, sir, cannot you adjust me with posterity, give me the serious perpetuation which is my right? . . .

“I hear your present patent of immortality is a biography in two volumes with a supplement by an eminent authority. . . . Facts? I do not desire a record of facts, I seek a work of genius. Facts, facts, facts—O, have all these hundreds of years gone by since I lived and strove, and has humanity not yet passed its old stone of stumbling? Sir, I have understood that yours is the age of constructive anatomy; given the bone, you uprear its animal: the age of evolution; given the product, you predicate its source—and do not the traditions of me furnish bones and sources to suffice a mastodon-biography? I require the instinct of the prophet, not the gospel of the disciple; you know the spirit of me and what I must have been—invent, then, your facts accordingly, one cosmic harmony to form. From the boasts I have overheard I imagine your marvellous (he, he, he, . . .) century has accomplished much greater feats of sympathetic interpretation than this I ask of you. Facts—what have I to do with facts? Facts—have I then indeed lived in vain?

“I know what you say—sir, sir, go not yet—I beseech you listen to me one little minute—nay, sir, if you will persist in going you will infallibly make me tear your sleeve—I admit ruefully that a biography may be most dull; but I had liefer beamummythanforgotten. . . .”

## IV—JULIET AND ROMEO

NOWADAYS every one knows that only a few short moments (so few, so short) had dropped on the string where Death counted his rosary whose prayers are always granted—only some fleet rose-petal moments had dropped after Romeo had sipped that merciful merciless milk from the breast of the old mother, when Juliet crept to earth again as thoughtlessly as she had done that first time not many—ah, God, not very many—years before.

As she awakened, the chill humid dead-leaf odour of the place where she lay was the first thing she knew; then, as she yet held her eyes lightly closed, this sensation swiftly dropped a chain of thoughts in her mind to bind her to all earth again—but she cared not, for the chain was all gold as she was. In a little space she opened her eyes most gently, as if she was so tired of sleep; they met Romeo's dazzling stare fixed there for the last of earth. "True heart," she murmured.

He never answered her, and his face softened into a shadow of unhoping happiness and long expected wonder which she did not understand, feeling that it was meant for something within her which it was too blind to reach.

"Romeo," said Juliet.

"Juliet," said Romeo.

His courage became winged, "Am I, then, indeed dead?" he went on; "I knew you would be quite near to me, and that your greeting would be in the first light; but you have put off your new glory that you may not humble me; great soul, I know—but may you truly take me with you?"

She thought the vaporous scent of the place had fumed him in dreams. "Nay, we are not dead," she laughed; "but the opiate is spent, and you are come. Haste, make haste, lest one should hear us—nay, but I am a ghost to fright all such—and ghost-cold, truly—Come, there are many heavens we must undergo ere we enter that last one."

"Not dead" thrilled Romeo in a very rapture of forgetfulness. Suddenly he snatched her from the bier and clasped her to a helplessness more stringent than that of a winding sheet, whereupon there slipped utterly out of time a little space of kisses and of words which none will repeat who has whispered such for himself.



But through that chasm in time they both fell into eternity; for presently Romeo, who could not think for joy, caught with the drowner's instinct at a word he seemed to have heard once in an imperfect life. "Opiate," he muttered dazedly; "what of an opiate?"

"Love," cooed Juliet, soothingly, "'twas how I cheated them until you could come to me; was it not all in the monk's letter?"

"I know no letter," he answered slowly, like one waking, "save my sister's of your death." Then he knew, and, in a reeling sweat, moaned, "Ere you lived again, I had opened the door to go to you; O God; O God."

"What is it? How?" she sobbed, clinging to him in terror. "Poison," he said with a dull carelessness, showing her the half empty phial.

Loosening her hold, she answered with a calm smiling gladness, "Is that all? Give me some too, and then it will not matter." She held out her hand.

"Nay," he replied in a deep hushed voice, withdrawing the phial, "there shall be no sin in you; I know we must be together . . . there . . . afterward, so love will set you among the sinners without that; but you shall not suffer—I must have all the suffering to myself—I am greedy for suffering, now that I have learned its delight. . . . Let the burden be mine. . . ."

He put his arm round her neck, and, laying his hand on her brow, drew her head back upon his shoulder; then he loosened her lips with a kiss, and steadily poured the draught into her mouth—she swallowed the poison as he shed the empty phial.

Steadying her with his arm, he led her to the bier, going as gently as though they trod roses.

Lifting her, he laid her on the bier, and stretched himself beside her as softly as a benediction.

While she nestled to him she whispered, "Clasp me in your arms so that I cannot move, and I will grip your feet with mine so that you cannot move. . . ."

After a long time she said very drowsily, "My hands are so cold, Romeo; open your doublet and shirt and put my hands within to your bosom." He did as she asked, dead birds to his heart, although he was almost numb; then he drew her to him again as if he were a saint saving a tangible, visible soul.

The moon had set and it was dark, dark, dark, when she muttered in a palsy: "Romeo . . . . was I going to speak . . . ah, Romeo . . . . what did I say . . . . Romeo. . . . I cannot feel your mouth crush mine. . . . Is your mouth on mine . . . . be so sure that your mouth. . . ."

*OLD SONGS*

GORDON BOTTOMLEY.

## Five Poems in Prose

### I

FIVE POEMS  
IN PROSE

THERE was a queen of goodness and of beauty living in a lonely wood where, at morn and at evening, birds sang for very love of her. Around her the grasses grew that they might feel the softness of her feet, and above her the stars shone that they might mirror themselves in her hair. The trees bent down to kiss her, bringing rich gifts of fruit and foliage: the winds sang lowly and sweetly with desire and love of her. Sometimes she lay by a stream in dreams, and when her tresses fell over her head into the water, she wondered why she was so beautiful, and why those ripening lips and eyes and comely neck had been given to her. And she dreamed of knights who were far away, tall and straight as a pine.

At night she would linger under the stars and weave strange letters and messages out of the skies, longing and longing for love. And many a king came by in robes of gold, with gifts of rich garments and promises of thrones, and they lay in worship at her feet, begging that she might love them. Yet not one dared to say within himself that he loved her—she was so beautiful that none could think himself worthy. And she tired of the kings and fine courtiers, and went forth among the shepherds on the hills and the ploughmen in the fields, but they all bent low and kissed her feet because they dared not to love her.

Until one day, when love had come not, as the sun was setting, and all the great kings and princes of the world had worshipped at her feet, sorrow came upon her, great sorrow for the love that came not. And she lay down and died near the red berries of a holly-tree; and when maidens came by to smooth out her soft limbs, and close her lovely lips and eyes, they found written on her breast:

*Beauty is a burden too great to be borne.*

### II

ONE day two lovers were lying together on a bed of green rushes by the river, and the man's lips were pressed to the lips of his beloved, and her hair fell down over his head. But a man came

by, who was the World, to punish them for their sin; and he told them to follow him to the place of justice. Then the young man replied: "Thee have I never followed, and thy justice is not my justice." And he said again to the World: "Are there any of thy children starving—go and feed them. Are there any of thy children thirsty—give them drink. Are they naked—clothe them. All these things thou hast not done, because thou hast thought the days too short and the labour too great, and thou art hard with selfishness. Yet when love comes by with food and drink and clothes more beautiful than all the food and clothes and drink the World can give, thou callest him sinful, and would'st drive him away. Cease not to get money for thy tills and rich viands to glut thine appetite. Continue ever-grasping, unhappy and greedy, but seek thou not Love that gives all things. That, you can never find, *for Love is Sacrifice.*

FIVE POEMS  
IN PROSE

## III

A MAN came slowly along the road, a white stick in his hand, singing sorrowfully of something that was lying on his heart. He was old and withered, with weary eyes, and in his steps there was great heaviness, for he had ceased to care for one place more than another. And when he ceased to sing he spoke to himself:

"Aye, it is long since and I a strong farmer, and foolish was I not to have her, that girl with the dark hair and eyes that had the colour of sloes. White she was on the forehead, and whiter was that fine soft neck of hers that put me in mind of a swan. And long will I be wandering until I hear again a thrush as sweet as the girl I could have had for the asking. Black and bitter was the day I listened to my mother with her talk of cows and of horses and of money. Black and bitter was the day I listened to the priest and his talk of fine marriages. Black and bitter was the day there was no fire and no life in my heart and I let the girl that was sweeter than the new honey go away from me. Sorrow and black misery that have been with me since and the buying of cows and of heifers for the woman of the Kavanaghs that I married. Surely she has spread out the bed

FIVE POEMS  
IN PROSE

well for me and has cared me well: and there isn't a better woman at butter-making in the parish. But there's a cold wind always blowing through the thatch and a queer pain in my heart when I'm thinking of the girl that was comelier than Deirdre. And it is likely it will be there until I find my death."

## IV

SHE was young, but pale and worn, her eyes were red with weeping, and when they put her in the dock she wept again. They read out of a long paper the story of her crime, of the little thing she had borne into the world and to whom she had given suck for a few months, and then put it to sleep beneath the waters, with a heavy stone round its neck. And they asked her why she had killed her child:

"It was on a cold night," she said, "when I came along the road that leads by the river, and the moon was out and shining on it, and I saw his father coming along the road—the man that had been dead for a twelvemonth. And he stopped me and spoke to me. 'It is a long day for him to be without food,' he said, 'and there is little pity for the tinker's child. There is little need of food in the grave.' That was all he said, and I went down to the river with my child."

*And they put her in a prison lest her breasts might cease to yearn.*

## V

A LONG avenue of poplars reached from the doorway of the house to the gateway, where the porter's lodge still remained—but uninhabited. And in the evening boys and girls would gather there to dance. Especially in the summer evenings, or in those evenings of early autumn when the rich brown colour still remained; and often from the house two would go forth to whisper some tale of love to each other. It chanced so one evening when there was great peacefulness and quiet on the air, and two people walked along the avenue, past the great house, and down to the borders of the lake, silent and sorrowful. For their love had grown cold, and though each knew of it, neither dared to speak it. They spoke

only in cold, hesitant voices, of the trees, the evening lights, the waters of the lake, the comeliness and beauty of the dark pine woods; but of that love which had drawn them together they spoke not.

"You have dreamed foolishly," a voice had whispered to him, "she is less beautiful than a hundred beautiful maidens whom you know; she is not worthy of your life. Seek you among the maidens that but await you, and one will be found with white beautiful hands to spread out the bed for you, and with young, full lips to linger on yours. But do not rest with her who no longer awakens desire in you."

And a voice would whisper to her: "Leave him who is not brave and comely, for he loves you not, and seek one from among the men who are great and strong to wrestle and to hunt. Love is no longer with you; seek now for one more worthy of your love."

And both then thought of the years they had been together, of the dreams they had woven out of one heart, the house where they had first met, where they had first embraced, and the drooping branches of the oak-tree under which they had first kissed. Without speaking they rose to part. And he stood, while she wandered down among the trees, and he heard her voice come softly through the leaves, singing in mournful and plaintive strain:

Hear me, gentle maiden,  
Whosoe'er you be;  
When love cometh laden  
With great ecstasy,

Sorrow he will bring thee,  
Hear me, maiden fair;  
Sorrow he will bring thee,  
And a load of care.

Love with sorrow laden!  
Such a fate was mine;  
Hear me, gentle maiden,  
Such fate be not thine!



FIVE POEMS  
IN PROSE

He listened to the voice that was full of sorrow, and went to follow it along the narrow path. As he came clear of the bushes, he saw her step on the little wooden foot-bridge under which the stream that joined two lakes flowed. He listened, waiting to hear her sing again; but there came instead the crash of the rotten bridge, and the sound of her fall into the waters; and he saw for a moment the gleam of her white gown ere she sank. He rushed into the waters that were eddying along, and when she rose again, half-conscious, he clasped her in his arms, and she clasped him so strongly he could not move. In vain he tried to swim; they were borne on by the current. Soon he ceased to struggle and, ere he became unconscious, laid his head on hers; and with his mouth on her mouth they sank to rest.

But the trees still sing of them, and those hear who have ears for the old music:

True love lives for ever,  
Never shall it pass;  
Death is but a lover,  
Life is but a lass.

'Neath the waters singing,  
She lies smooth and fair,  
While her love is twining  
Garlands for her hair.

MAURICE JOY

## Love

AH, sweet, there is but little time for love,  
Though day be heaped on day, and night on night,  
Climbing the skies beyond the topmost height  
Till God be reached where endless ages move.

LOVE

Yet but a little time is left to prove  
How Love goes forth and in his hand a light  
Burning a flame of beauty, pure and white,  
To lead us where, within some ancient grove,

He holds his court, and thuribles do swing,  
Laden with incense, over odorous flowers  
That wait to deck the lovers he doth bring  
Out of the tyranny of days and hours,  
To live for ever with sweet murmuring  
Of birds and harps among the leafy bowers.

## *Rhapsodie Capriccioso*

RHAPSODIE  
CAPRIC-  
CIOSO

NOW when life is nearly o'er,  
And there remains for me  
Only the bleak and barren shore  
By a cold and threatening sea,  
I stand alone and watch the surges rise  
And strive to pierce with, tear dimmed, darkening eyes  
The cold sea fog that wreathes me all around.  
What restless secret lingers in the sound  
Of hissing waves that roll upon the beach,  
Linger a moment and return again,  
Murmuring ever the old refrain,  
Far beyond reach,  
Back to the sea?  
Then of a sudden the thought came to me,  
The life of man is ever like a wave,  
That coming from the unknown darkness of the sea,  
Where none can alter, limit, help or save,  
Lingers for one brief moment on life's changing shore,  
Then swiftly turns again and comes no more,  
Again become an atom in the sea.  
And we too, when the game of life is done,  
Smile sadly, when we sit alone and ponder  
Over how much is lost, how little won,  
And watch with tired relief and slightly wonder  
At the drifting flotsam of our lives,  
Rejoicing only we again can cease to be,  
When after struggles, sorrows, hopes and fears,  
And feeble flickering through uncertain years,  
The wave returns again unto the sea.

CHRISTOPHER SANDEMAN

# TO ELECTRA

Words by

Robert Derrick

Music by

W.L. Shand

1 No, dare not the

*mf* *p*

ask a kiss, I dare not beg a smile ;  
utmost share of my desire shall be

Lest having that or this I might grow proud the  
Only to kiss that air that late-ly kissed

while.  
thee

*rall.* *a tempo* *rall.*

# *The Wayward Atom*

## A TALE OF EVOLUTION

THE WAY-  
WARD  
ATOM

IN the days when all was Chaos, before ever principalities existed or any Universal Peace Society had come to call forth wrangling, there yet was strife.

For in the lightless void, unnumbered atoms hurried aimlessly about, passing and being passed, as blind Chance willed their endless and erratic course. So that to many of them this unmeaning travel grew wearisome, and seemed—as indeed it was—a waste of energy to no good purpose. And as through constant meeting they came to know each other, they would speed, in passing, a hasty word, which was mainly discontented: for even atoms like to grumble. Thus, very slowly, a plan was formed, a plan that passed from rover to rover in such a Babel that it set the void resounding.

Now their scheme, put into English, was after this fashion: "Let us do something," they cried one to another. "Let us not wander aimlessly for ever—above all, with no one to admire us. We are atoms, and atoms are the elements of things. If, then, we could cling together and move as one, we might form what we will."

Among these atoms who planned so sensibly there were some twenty larger than the rest. Perhaps they were arch-atoms, or maybe they were molecules. It made no matter, then: they only knew that they were larger. And to one of these, the largest, it was given to choose what their union should make. So it thought a little, and then passed its message round.

"Brother atoms," said it, in the specious tones of a company-promoter, "we can scarce expect to form anything of any merit. A first experiment is always faulty. But I vote that we should make a World. And by this I mean nothing great. It would not be like the flaming orb of heat, or the paler orb, that larger brethren made centuries ago. But we few who are left in Chaos might make a tiny world that would amuse us and yet do the universe no harm: indeed our world will hardly be observed. But we will form ourselves cunningly into land, and sea, and shrubs, and trees. We might even have a try at animals—four-footed, crawling creatures of every sort: and perhaps, as we grew cleverer in combina-

tion, we might improve the creatures, until finally some might stand upon two feet and be, if not altogether, yet partly, rational."

And at this a loud hum of admiration arose from the atoms near enough to hear.

"But," went on the speaker, in tones of weight, "this will not be easy. Four of us larger atoms must try to cling together as we pass, then others must form around us slowly, and the sixteen giants that remain must hang around the outer ring, to make it perfect."

Of course they travelled so swiftly that no atom heard the whole speech from its speaker, but each passed on the part that it had caught, until all knew the whole. Then they set about their venture. First, as arranged, the four contrived to stick together as they whirled, and bit by bit the others grouped themselves around this centre. And when all revolved together in a rugged mass, the arch-atoms began to grapple themselves on where they were needed, until finally only one remained apart.

But here began the strife. For this large atom that remained proved obdurate. It would not join the others. They declared that it alone was wanted to complete the world in perfectness. Without it, the world would be but second-class. They proved this fully, by copious philosophical and indeed *a priori* arguments. But the wayward atom jauntily continued to gyrate. In truth, the more they protested, the happier it seemed. And as the earth, with much groaning and rumbling, went around—for, without this atom, it was an imperfect thing—the wayward rebel would buzz merrily about it, jeering loud and long at each new creature that it saw.

For, all this time, the world evolved. True, the trees and animals were paltry, since the plan had allowed for twenty arch-atoms and the twentieth had not appeared. But it evolved, and let those who doubt it ask the scientists.

In this way a long time slipped by. But time to them was little, for no one, as yet, had thought of time at all: they had no trains, or dinner-hours, or watches. Indeed there were no men, but only half-formed animals made up of atoms.

And at length it was clear to them that, if the fractious rover still held out, they must arrange the world without it. And so, as it skimmed past, they cried aloud and said:

"Foolish one, hang on, and so complete our world for us.



THE WAY-  
WARD  
ATOM

For with you it would be a pleasant place, but without you it is spoilt."

And the atom was pleased, vainly enough, that it was so much needed. It liked the feeling, and replied: "Let it be spoilt, then. I don't care an atom."

Now this, in those days, was an awful thing to say.

So when they had recovered of the shock, the atoms set to work, and changed their places every way. With such economy and such good skill did they contrive it, that the world wagged far more smoothly. Indeed, at length, the wisest animals grew into men—men, not yet wise enough to play at Bridge, nor civilized enough to shoulder weapons, but of such sense as to know that their stunted tails would no more hold their weight from branches. So they gave up swinging and walked upon two legs.

Still always there was something lacking. And always the wayward atom revolved happily around the earth.

Now, though the atom-men felt that the world was still imperfect and rather a chill place, they were set upon discouraging the atom. So they shouted to it: "Now the earth is finished. We can do without you."

This spoilt the atom's pleasure. As it brooded on the matter its pace began to flag. It had been so happy when still in demand—and now it was not wanted! Certainly it would have cried, but it was eyeless.

Instead, with tearful voice, it moaned: "I want to join you—now."

But they replied: "Perhaps. You are not wanted—now."

Then it grew furious. "How can you be such brutes?" it sobbed, "with me a wee, defenceless atom—and you a big, bullying world—and you won't take me in."

And to this, with reason, they made answer: "But we asked you often, and you would not come."

Whereat the atom waxed indignant. "Can't you see?" it said, "it's all so different now. Then, you *wanted* me: I thought you missed me so—but now— Oh, I loathe you all—all. Please let me in, do—I'll be so good. I'll love you all, I will."

And at this strange speech the men, being simple fellows, laughed merrily. Now, up to this moment they had never laughed, but only gibbered, as a monkey will. And it seemed to them that

this laughter was part of that which had been missing. So their hearts were softened, and after some few words they hailed the wayward atom in this fashion:

"Come in, then, if you will. But as your place is now filled up and all goes well, except that earth is dull, you shall be sundered and spread over the whole surface, to make us laugh, and cheer our tedium, and love us all." (They laughed again.) "Perhaps you are what has been lacking heretofore."

And they called the wayward atom Woman.

So Woman evolved. And, ever since, she has gone about, refusing when asked, sulking when not, doing everything that nobody expected, but loving all, and loved by all. And men have never ceased from laughing at her.

This is the story that the atoms tell.

But other folk have other tales intended to explain the facts.

DESMOND F. T. COKE

## *Snake-Charmer's Song*

*SNAKE-  
CHARMER'S  
SONG*

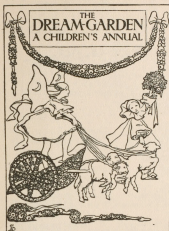
**W**HITHER dost thou hide from the magic of my flute-call,  
In what moonlight tangled meshes of perfume,  
Where the clustering bamboos guard the squirrel's  
slumber,  
Where the deep woods glimmer with the champa's bloom ?

I'll feed thee, O beloved, on milk and wild red honey,  
I'll bear thee in a basket of rushes green and white  
To a far-off city where entrancing maidens  
Thread with mellow laughter the petals of delight.

Whither dost thou loiter? by what lotus fountain  
Where the midnight scatters its ambrosial fire?  
Come, thou subtle bride of my mellifluous wooing,  
Come, thou silver-breasted moonbeam of desire!

SAROJINI NAIDU

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# The Venture, 1904



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Continued

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by

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