# WORKS AND MORE

*by the same author*

**THE HAPPY HYPOCRITE**

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*and*
# MORE

Max Beerbohm

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*'Amid all he has here already achieved, full,we may think, of the quiet assurance of what is to come, his attitude is still that of the scholar; he seems still to be saying, before all things, from first to last, " I am utterly purposed that I will not ofend."*

## *Dandies and Dandies*

HOW very delightful Grego's drawings are! For all their mad perspective and crude colour, they have indeed the sentiment of style, and they reveal, with surer delicacy than does any other record, the spirit of Mr. Brummell's day. Grego guides me, as Virgil Dante, through all the mysteries of that other world. He shows me those stiff-necked, over-hatted, wasp-waisted gentlemen, drinking Burgundy in the *Gqfe des Milles Colonnes* or riding through the village of Newmarket upon their fat cobs or gambling at Crockford's. Grego's *Green Room of the Opera House* always delights me. The formal way in which Mile. Mercandotti is standing upon one leg for the pleasure of Lord Fife and Mr. Ball Hughes; the grave regard directed by Lord Petersham towards that pretty little maid-a-mischief who is risking her rouge beneath the chandelier; the unbridled decorum of Mile. Hullin and the decorous debauchery of Prince Esterhazy in the distance) make altogether a quite enchanting picture. But, of the whole series, the most illuminative picture is certainly the *Ball at Almack's.* In the foreground stand two little figures, beneath Whom, on the nether margin, are inscribed those splendid words, *Btau Brummell in Deep Conversation with the Duchess of Rutland,* The Duchess is a girl in pink, with a great wedge-comb erect **among** her **ringlets,** the **Beau tres degage,** his **head averse,**

his chin most supercilious upon his stock, one foot advanced, the gloved fingers of one hand caught lightly in his waistcoat; in fact, the yery deuce of a pose.

In this, as in all known images of the Beau, we are struck by the utter simplicity of his attire. The 'countless rings' affected by D'Orsay, the many little golden chains, 'every one of them slighter than a cobweb,' that Disraeli loved to insinuate from one pocket to another of his vest, would have seemed vulgar to Mr. Brummell. For is it not to his fine scorn of accessories that we may trace that first aim of modern dandyism, the production of the supreme effect through means the least extravagant? In certain congruities of dark cloth, in the rigid perfection of his linen, in the symmetry of his glove with his hand, lay the; secret of Mr. Brummell's miracles. He was ever most economical," most scrupulous of means. Treatment was everything with him. Even foolish Grace and foolish Philip Wharton, in their book about the beaux and wits of this period, speak of his dressing-room as 'a studio in which he daily composed that elaborate portrait of himself which was to be exhibited for a few hours in the clubrooms of the town.' Mr. Brummell was, indeed, in the utmost sense of the word, an artist. No poet nor cook nor sculptor, ever bore that title more worthily than he.

And really, outside his art, Mr. Brummell had a personality of almost Balzacian insignificance. There have been dandies, like D'Orsay, who were nearly painters; painters, like Mr, Whistler, who

wished to be dandies ; dandies, like Disraeli, who afterwards followed some less arduous calling. I fancy Mr. Brummell was a dandy, nothing but a dandy, from his cradle to that fearful day when he lost his-figure and had to flee the country, even to that distant day when he died, a. broken exile, in the arms of two *religieuses.* At Eton, no boy was so successful as he in avoiding that strict alternative of study and athletics which we force upon our youth. He once terrified a master, named Parker, by asserting that he thought cricket 'foolish.' Another time, after listening to a reprimand from the headmaster, he twitted that learned man with the asymmetry of his neckcloth. Even in Oriel he could see little charm, and was glad to leave it, at the end of his first year, for a commission in the Tenth Hussars. Crack though the regiment was —indeed, all the commissions were granted by the Regent himself—young Mr. Brummell could not bear to see all his brother-officers in clothes exactly like his own ; was quite as deeply annoyed as would be some god, suddenly entering a restaurant of many mirrors. . One day, he rode upon parade in a pale-blue tunic, with silver epaulettes. The Colonel, apologizing for the narrow system which compelled him to so painful a duty, asked him to leave the parade. The Beau saluted, trotted back to quarters and, that afternoon, sent in his -papers. Henceforth he lived freely as a fop, in his maturity, should.

His *dibuful* the town was brilliant and delightful. Tales of his elegance had won for him there a

precedent fame. He was reputed rich. It was known that the Regent desired his acquaintance. And thus, Fortune speeding the wheels of his cabriolet and Fashion running to meet him with smiles and roses in St. James's, he might well, had he been worldly or a weakling, have yielded his soul to the polite follies. But he passed them by. Once he was settled in his suite, he never really strayed from his toilet-table, save for a few brief hours. Thrice every day of the year did he dress, and three hours were the average of his every toilet, and other hours were spent in council with the cutter of his coats or with the custodian of his wardrobe. A single, devoted life ! To White's, to routs, to races, he went, it is true, not reluctantly. He was known to have played battledore and shuttle-cock in a moonlit garden with Mr. Previte' and some other gentlemen. His elopement with a young Countess from a ball at Lady Jersey's was quite notorious. It was even whispered that he once, in the company of some friends, made as though he would wrench the knocker off the door of some shop. But these things he did, not, most certainly, for any exuberant love of life. Rather did he regard them as healthful exercise of the body and a charm against that dreaded corpulency which, in the end, caused his downfall.; Some recreation from his work even the most strenuous artist. must have; and' Mr. Brummell naturally sought his in that exalted sphere whose modish elegance accorded best with his temperament, the *sphere of le plus beau numde.* General Bucknall used

to growl, from the window of the Guards' Club, that such a fellow was only fit to associate with tailors. But that was an old soldier's fallacy. The proper associates of an artist are they who practise his own art rather than they who—however honourably—do but cater for its practicei For the rest, I. am sure that Mr. Brummell was no lackey, as they have suggested. He wished merely to be seen by those who were best qualified to appreciate the splendour of his achievements. Shall not the painter show his work in galleries, the poet flit down Paternoster Row? Of rank, for its own sake, Mr. Brummell had no love. He patronized all his patrons. Even to the Regent his attitude was always that of a master in an art to one who is sincerely willing and anxious to learn from, him. i

Indeed, English society is always ruled by a dandy, and the more absolutely ruled the greater that dandy be. For dandyism, the perfect flower of outward elegance, is the ideal it is always striving to realize in its own rather incoherent way. But there is no reason why dandyism should be confused, as it has been by nearly all writers; with mere social life. *Its* contact with social life is, indeed, but one of the accidents of an art. Its influence, like the scent of a flower, is diffused unconsciously. It has its own aims and laws, and knows none other. And the only person who eyer fully acknowledged this truth in aesthetics is, of all persons most unlitely, the author of *Sartor Resartus.* That anyone who dressed so very badly as did Thomas Cariylc should have tried to construct a philosophy of clothes has

always seemed to me one of the most pathetic things in literature. He in the Temple of Vestments ! Why sought he to intrude, another Clodius, upon those mysteries and light his pipe from those ardent censers ? What were his hobnails that they should mar the pavement of that delicate Temple ? Yet, for that he betrayed one secret rightly heard there, will I pardon his sacrilege. 'A dandy,' he cried through the mask of Teufelsdrock, 'is a clothes-wearing man, a man whose trade, office, and existence consists in the wearing of clothes. Every faculty of his soul, spirit, purse, and person is heroically consecrated to this one object, the wearing of clothes wisely and well.' Those are true words,'They are, perhaps, the only true words in *Sartor Resartus.* And I speak with some authority. For I found the key to that empty book, long ago, in the lock of the author's empty wardrobe. His hat, that is still preserved in Chelsea, formed an important clue.

But (behold !) as we repeat the true words of TeufelsdrSck,' there comes Monsieur Barbey D'Aureviily, that -gentle *moqueur,* drawling, with a wave of his hand, Les *esprits qui ne potent pas les choses que par leur plus petit cote ont imagine' que le Dandysme etait surtout l'art de la mise, une heureuse et audacieuse dictature enfaitde toilette etd'iligance extirieure Tres-certainementc'est cela aussi.maisc'est bien davantag Le Dandysme est touts une maniire d'eitre et l'on n'est pels que par la sote materiemllement visible. C'est urn maniere d'etre entierement cmptisee de nuances, comm il arrive toujours dans lss socieres tres Dieilles et tres-civilisees*

It is a pleasure to argue with so suave a subtlist, and we say to him that this comprehensive definition does not please us. We say we think he errs.

Not that Monsieur's analysis of the dandiacal mind is* worthless by any means. Nor, when he declares that George Brummell was the supreme king of the dandies and *fu le dandysme meme,* can I but piously lay one hand upon the brim of my hat, the other upon my heart. Bu3t it is as an artist, and for his supremacy in the art of costume, and for all he did to gain the recognition of costume as in itself an art, and for that superb taste and subtle simplicity of mode whereby he was able to expel, at length, the Byzantine spirit of exuberance which had possessed St. James's and wherefore he is justly called the Father of Modern Costume, that I do most deeply revere him. It is not a little strange that Monsieur D'Aurevilly, the biographer who, in many ways, does seem most perfectly to have understood Mr. Brummell, should belittle to a mere phase that which was indeed the very core of his existence. To analyse the temperament of a great artist and then to declare that his art Was but a part--a little part—of his temperament, is a foolish proceeding. It. is as though a man should say that he finds, on analysis, that gunpowder is composed of potassium chloride (let me say), nitrate and power of explosion. Dandyism is ever the outcome of a carefully cultivated temperament, not part of the temperament itself, That *maniere d'etre, entieremmt composee de nuances,* was not more, as the writer seems to have supposed,than attributory to

Mr. Brummell's art. Nor is it even peculiar to dandies, All delicate spirits, to whatever art they turn, even if they turn to no art, assume an oblique attitude towards life. Of all dandies, Mr. Brummell did most steadfastly maintain this attitude. Like the single-minded artist that he was, he turned full and square towards his art and looked life straight in the face out of the corners of his eyes.

It is not hard to see how, in the effort to give Mr. Brummell his due place in history, Monsieur D'Aurevilly came to grief. It is but strange that he should have fallen into a rather obvious trap. Surely he should have perceived that, so long as Civilization compels her children to wear clothes, the thoughtless multitude will never acknowledge dandyism to be an art. If considerations of modesty or hygiene compelled every, one to stain canvas or chip marble every morning, painting and sculpture would in like manner be despised. Now, as these considerations do compel every, one to envelop himself in things made of cloth and linen, this common duty is confounded with that fair procedure, elaborate of many thoughts, in whose accord the fop accomplishes his toilet, each morning afresh, Aurora speeding on to gild his mirror. Not until nudity be popular will the art of costume be really acknowledged. Nor even then will it be approved; Communities are ever jealous (quite naturally) of the artist who works for his own pleasure, not for theirs—more jealous by far of him whose energy is spent only upon the glorification of himself alone. Carlyle speaks of dandyism as a survival of 'the

primeval superstition, self-worship.' *'La vanitr,'* are almost the first words of Monsieur D'Aurevilly, 'c'*est un sentiment contre lequel tout le monde est impitoyable.'* Few remember that thedandy's vanity is far different from the crude conceit of the merely handsome man. Dandyism is, after all, one of the decorative arts. A fine ground to work upon is its first postulate. And the dandy cares for his physical endowments only in so far as they are susceptible of fine results. They are just so much to him as to the decorative artist is inilluminate parchment, the form of a white vase or the surface of a wall where frescoes shall be.

Consider the words of Count D'Orsay, spoken on the eve of some duel, ' We are not fairly matched. If I were to wound him in the face it would not matter ; but if he were to wound me, ce *strait vraiment dommage!'* There we have a pure example of a dandy's peculiar vanity—'It would be a real pity!' They say that D'Orsay killed his,man--no matter whom-in this duel. He never should have gone out. Beau Brummell never risked his dandy-hood in these mean encounters. But D'Orsay was a wayward, excessive creature, too fond of life and other follies to achieve real greatness The power of his predecessor, the Father of Modern Costume, fa over us yet. All that is left of D'Orsay's art is **a** waistcoat and a handful of rings—vain relics of no more value for us than the fiddle of Paganini or the mask of Menischus! I think that in Carolo's painting of him, we can see the strength, that was the weakness, of *le Jeune Cupidon,* His fingers **are**

closed upon his cane as upon a sword. There is mockery in the inconstant eyes. And the lips, so used to close upon the wine-cup, in laughter so often parted, they do not seem immobile, even now. Sad that one so prodigally endowed as he was, with the three essentials of a dandy—physical distinction, a sense of beauty and wealth or, if you prefer the term, credit—should not have done greater things.. Much of his costume was merely showy or eccentric, without the rotund unity of the perfect fop's. It had been well had he lacked that dash and spontaneous gallantry that make him cut, it may be, a more attractive figure than Beau Brummell. The youth of St. James's gave him a wonderful welcome. The flight of Mr. Brummell had left them as sheep without a shepherd. .They had even cried 6ut against the inscrutable decrees of fashion and curtailed the height of their stocks; Ant! (lo !) here, ambling down the Mall with tasselled cane, laughing in the window at White's or in Fop's Alley posturing, here, with the devil in his eyes and all the. graces at his elbow, was D'Orsay, the prince paramount who should dominate London and should guard life from monotony by the daring of his whims. He accepted so many engagements that he often dressed very quickly both in the morning and at nightfall. - His brilliant genius would sometimes enable him to appear faultless, but at other times not even his fine figure could quite dispel the shadow of a toilet too hastily conceived. Befcre long he took that fatal step, his marriage with Lady Harriet Gardiner. The marriage, as we all know,

was not a happy one, though the wedding was very pretty. It ruined the life of Lady Harriet and of her mother, the Blessington. It won the poor Count further still further from his art and sent him spinning here, there, and everywhere. He was continually at Clevedon, or Belvoir, or Welbeck, laughing gaily as he brought down our English partridges, or at Crockford's, smiling as he swept up our English guineas from the board. Holker declares that, excepting Mr. Turner, he was the finest equestrian in London and describes how the mob would gather every morning round his door to see him descend, insolent from his toilet, and mount and ride away. Indeed, he surpassed' us all in all the exercises of the body. He even essayed pre-eminence in the arts (as if his own art were insufficient to his vitality !) and was for ever penning impetuous verses for circulation among his friends. There was no great harm in this, perhaps Even the handwriting of Mr. Brummell was not unknown in the albums, But D'Orsay's painting of portraits *is* inexcusable. The aesthetic vision of a dandy should be bounded by his own mirror. A few crayon. sketches of *himsdf—dilectissimœ imagines*—are as much as he should ever do. That D'Orsay's portraits, even his much-approved portrait of the Duke of Wellington, are quite amateurish, is no excuse. It is the process of painting which is repellent; to force from little tubes; of lead a glutinous flamboyance and to defile, with the hair of a camel therein steeped, taut canvas, is hardly the diversion for a gentleman; and to have done

all this for a man who was admittedly a field-marshal . . .

I have often thought that this selfish concentration, which is a part of dandyism, is also a symbol of that *einsamkeit* felt in greater or less degree by the practitioners of every art. But, curiously enough, the very unity of his mind with the ground he works on exposes the dandy to the influence of the world. In one way dandyism is the least selfish of all the arts. .Musicians are seen and, except for a price, not heard. Only for a price may you read what poets have written. All painters are not so generous as Mr. Watts. But the dandy presents himself to the nation whenever he sallies from his front door. Princes and peasants alike may gaze upon his masterpieces.. Now, any art which is pursued directly under the eye of the public is always far more amenable to fashion than is an art with which the public is but vicariously concerned. Those standards to which artists have gradually accustomed it the public will not see lightly set at naught. Very rigid, for example, are the traditions of the theatre. If my brother were to declaim his lines at the Haymarket in the florotund manner of Macready, what a row there would be in the gallery ! It is only by the impalpable process of evolution that change comes to the theatre* Likewise in the sphere of costume no swift rebellion can succeed, as was exemplified by the Prince's effort to revive knee-breeches. Had his Royal Highness elected, in his wisdom, to wear tight trousers strapped -under his boots, 'smalls' might, in their

turn, have reappeared, and at length—who knows ? knee-breeches. It is only by the trifling addition or elimination, modification or extension, made by this or that dandy and copied by the rest, that the mode proceeds. The young dandy will find certain laws to which he must conform. If he outrage them he will be hooted by the urchins of the street, riot unjustly, for he will have outraged the slowly constructed laws of artists who have preceded him. Let him reflect that fashion is no bondage imposed by alien hands, but the last wisdom of his own kind, and that true dandyism is the result of an artistic temperament working upon a fine body within the wide limits of fashion. Through this habit of conformity, which it inculcates, the army has given us nearly all our finest dandies, from Alcibiades to Colonel .Br*b*z*n *de nos jours.* Even Mr. Brummell, though he defied his Colonel, must have owed some of his success to the military spirit. Any parent intending his son to be a dandy; will do well to send him first into the army, there to learn humility, as did his archetype, Apollo, in the house of Admetus. A sojourn at one ,of the Public Schools is also to be commended. The University it were well to avoid.

Of course, the dandy, like any other artist, has foments When his own period, palling, inclines him to antique modes, A fellow-student once told me that,after a long vacation spent in touch with modern-life; he hadhammered at the Iittle gate of Merton and felt of a sudden his hat assume plumes and art expansive curl; the impress of a ruff about

his neck, the dangle of a cloak and a sword. I, too, have my Elizabethan, my Caroline moments. I have gone to bed Georgian and awoken Early Victorian. Even savagery has charmed me. And at such times I have often wished I could find in my wardrobe suitable costumes. But these modish regrets are sterile, after all, and comprimend. What boots it to defy the conventions of our time ? The dandy is the 'child of his age,' and his best work must be produced in accord with the age's natural influence. The true dandy must always love contemporary costume. In this age, as in all precedent ages, it is only the tasteless who cavil, being impotent to win from it fair results. How futile their voices are ! The costume of the nineteenth century, as shadowed for us first by Mr. Brummell, so quiet, so reasonable, and, I say emphatically, so beautiful; free from folly or affectation, yet susceptible to exquisite ordering; plastic, austere, economical, may not be ignored. I spoke of the doom of swift rebellions, but I doubt even if any soever gradual evolution will lead us astray from the general precepts of Mr. Brummell's cbde. At every step in the progress of democracy those precepts will be strengthened. Every day their fashion is more secure, corroborate. They are acknowledged by the world* The barbarous costumes that in bygone days were designed by class-hatred, or hatred of race,are dying, very surely .dying. The costermonger with his pearl, emblazoned -coat has been driven even from that Variety; Stage, whereon he sought a desperate

**sanctuary. The clinquant corslet of the Swiss girl just survives at *bals costumes.* I am told that the kilt is now confined entirely to certain of the soldiery and to a small cult of Scotch Archaicists. I have seen men flock from the boulevards of one capital and from the avenues of another to be clad in Conduit Street. Even into Oxford, that curious little city, where nothing is ever born nor anything ever quite dies, the foree of the movement has penetrated, insomuch that tasselled cap and gown of degree are rarely seen in the streets or colleges. In a place which was until recent times scarcely less remote, Japan, the white and scarlet gardens are trod by men who are shod in boots like our own, who walk—rather strangely still—in close-cut cloth of little colour, and stop each other from time to time, laughing to show how that they too can furl an umbrella after the manner of real Europeans.**

**It is very nice, this universal acquiescence in the dress we have designed, but, if we reflect, not wonderful. There are three apparent reasons, and one of them is aesthetic. So to clothe the body that its fineness be revealed and its meanness veiled has been the aesthetic aim of all costume, but before our time the mean had never been struck; The ancient Romans went too far. Muffled in the ponderous folds of a toga, Adonis might pass for Punchinello, Punchinello for Adonis. The ancient Britons, on the other hand, did not go far enough. And so it had been in all ages down to that bright morning when Mr. Brummell, at his mirror, conceived the notion of trousers and simple coats.**

Clad according to his convention, the limbs of the weakling escape contempt, and the athlete is unobtrusive, and all is well. But there is also a social reason for the triumph of our costume—the reason of economy. That austerity, which has rejected from its toilet silk and velvet and all but a few jewels, has made more ample the wardrobes of Dives, and sent forth Irus nicely dressed among his fellows. And lastly there is a reason of psychology, most potent of all perhaps. Is not the costume of to-day, with its subtlety and sombre restraint, its quiet congruities of black and white and grey, supremely apt a medium for the expression of modern emotion and modern thought? That aptness, even alone, would explain its triumph.' Let us be glad that we have so easy, yet so delicate, a mode of expression.

Yes ! costume, dandiacal or not, is in the highest degree expressive, nor is there any type it may not express. It enables us to classify any 'professional man' at a glance, be he lawyer, leech or what not. Still more swift and obvious is its revelation of the work and the soul of those who dress, whether naturally or for effect, without reference to convention. The bowler of Mr. Jerome K. Jerome is a perfect preface to all his works. The silk hat of Mr. Whistler is a real *nocturne, his* linen a symphony en *blarg majeur.* To halve seen Mr. Hall Caine is to have read his soul. His flowing, formless cloak is as one of his own novels, twenty-five editions latent in the folds of it Melodrama, crouches upon **the** brim of *his sombrero.* His tie is a Publisher's

Announcement. His boots are Copyright. In his hand he holds the staff of *The Family Herald.*

But the dandy, innowise violating the laws of fashion, can make more subtle symbols of his personality. More subtle these symbols are for the very reason that they are effected within the restrictions which are essential to an art. Chastened of all flamboyance, they are from most men occult, obvious, it may be, only to other artists or even only to him they symbolize. Nor will the dandy express merely a crude idea of his personality, as does, for example, Mr. Hall Caine, dressing himself always and exactly after one pattern. Every day as his mood has changed since his last toilet, he will vary the colour, texture, form of his costume. Fashion does not rob him of free will. It leaves him liberty of all expression. Every day there is not one accessory, from the butterfly that alights above his shirt-front to the jewels planted in his linen, that will not symbolize the mood that is in him or the occasion of the coming day.

On this, the psychological side of foppery, I know not one so expert as him whom, not greatly caring for contemporary names, I will call Mr. Le V. No herdiworshipper am I, but I cannot write without enthusiasm of his simple life. He has not spurred his mind to the quest of shadows, nor vexed his soul in the worship of any gods No woman has wounded his heart, though he has gazed gallantly into the eyes of many women, intent, I faecy, upon his own miniature there. Nor is the incomparable set of his trousers spoil*t* by the perching of any

dear little child upon his knee. And so, now that he is stricken with seventy years, he knows none of the bitterness of eld, for his toilet-table is an imperishable altar, his wardrobe a quiet nursery and very constant harem. Mr. Le V. has many disciples, young men who look to him for guidance in all that concerns costume, and each morning come, themselves tentatively clad, to watch the perfect procedure of his toilet and learn invaluable lessons. I myself, a lie-a-bed, often steal out, forgoing the best hours of the day abed, that I may attend that *levee.* The rooms of the Master are in St. James's Street, and perhaps it were well that I should give some little record of them and of the manner of their use. In the first room the Master sleeps. He is called by one of his valets, at seven o'clock, to the second room, where he bathes, is shampooed, is manicured and, at length, is enveloped in a dressing-gown of white wool. In the third room is his breakfast upon a little table and his letters and some newspapers. Leisurely he sips his chocolate, leisurely learns all that need be known. With a cigarette he allows his temper, as informed by the news and the weather and what not, to develop itself for the day. At length, his mood, suggests, imperceptibly, what colour, what form of clothes he shall' wear. He rings for hisvalet-~'I will wear such and such a coat, such and such a tie ; my trousers shall be of this or that tone ; this or that jewel shall be radiant in the folds of my tie. It is generally near noon that he reaches the fourth room, the dressing-room. The uninitiate can hardly realize how impressive is

the ceremonial there enacted. As I write, I can see, in memory, the whole scene—the room, severely simple, with its lemon walls and deep wardrobes of white wood, the young fops, *φιλομαθέστατοι τινες τῶν νεανίσκων*, ranged upon a long bench, rapt in wonder, and, in the middle, now sitting, now standing, negligently, before a long mirror, with a valet at either elbow, Mr. Le V., our cynosure. There is no haste, no faltering when once the scheme of the day's toilet has been set. It is a calm toilet. A flower does not grow more calmly.

Any of us, any day, may see the gracious figure of Mr. Le V., as he saunters down the slope of St. James's. Long may the sun irradiate the surface of his tilted hat! It is comfortable to know that, though he die to-morrow, the world will not lack a most elaborate record of his foppery. All his life he has kept or, rather,' the current valets have kept for him, a *Journal de Toilette.* Of this there are now fifty volumes, each covering the space of a year. Yes, fifty springs have filled-his button-hole with their violets ; the snow of fifty winters has been less white than his linen; his boots have outshone fifty sequences summer suns, and the colours of all those autumns have faded in the dry light of his apparel. The first page of each volume of the *Journal de Toilette* bears the signature of Mr. Le V. and of his- two valets. Of the other pages each is givenup, as in other diaries, to one day of the year. In ruled spaces ace recorded there *the* cut and texture of the suit, the colour of *the* tie, the form of jewellery that was Worn on the day the page records.

No detail is omitted and a separate space is set aside, for 'Remarks.' I remember that I once asked Mr. Le V., half in jest, what he should wear on the Judgment Day. Seriously, and (I fancied) with a note of pathos in his voice, he said to me, 'Young man, you ask me to lay bare my soul to you. If I had been a saint I should certainly wear a light suit, with a white waistcoat and a flower, but I am no saint, sir, no saint. . . . I shall probably wear black trousers or trousers of some very dark blue, and a frock-coat, tightly buttoned.' Poor old Mr. Le V. ! I think he need not fear. If there be a heaven for the soul, there must be other heavens also, where the intellect and the body shall be consummate. In both these heavens Mr. Le V. will have his hierarchy. Of a life like his there can be no conclusion, really. Did not even Matthew Arnold admit that conduct of a cane is three-fourths of life?

Certainly Mr. Le V. is a great artist, and his supremacy is in the tact with which he suits .his toilet to his temperament. But the marvellous affinity of a dandy' s mood to his daily toilet is not merely that it finds therein its perfect echo nor that it may even be, in reflex, thereby accentuated or made less poignant. For some years I had felt convinced that in a perfect dandy this affinity must reach a point, when the costume itself, planned with the finest sensibility, would change with the emotional changes of its wearer, automatically. But I felt that here was one of those boundaries, where the **fields** of **art align** with the **fields** of science, and I

hardly dared to venture further. Moreover, the theory was not easy to verify. I knew that, except in some great emotional crisis, the costume could not palpably change its aspect. Here was an *impasse*; for the perfect dandy—the Brummell, the Mr. Le V.—cannot afford to indulge in any great emotion outside his art; like Balzac, he has not time. The gods were good to me, however. . One morning near the end of last July, they decreed that I should pass through Half Moon Street and meet there a friend who should ask me to go with him to his club and watch for the results of the racing at Goodwood. This club includes hardly any member who is not a devotee of the Turf, so that, when we entered it, the cloak-room displayed long rows of unburdened pegs—save where one hat shone. None but that illustrious dandy, Lord X., wears quite so broad a brim as this hat had. I said that Lord X. must be in the club.

'I conceive he is too nervous to be on the course, my friend replied; They say he has plunged up to the hilt, on to-day's mruiing.'

His lordship was indeed there, fingering feverishly the sinuous ribands of the tape-machine. I sat at a little distance, watching him. Two results straggled forth within an hour, and, at the second of these, I saw with wonder Lord X.'s linen actually flush for a moment and then turn deadly pale. I looked again and saw that his boots had lost their lustre. Drawing nearer, I found that grey hairs had begun to show themselves in his raven coat. It was very painful and yet, to me, very gratifying.

**In the cloak-room, when I went for my own hat and cane, there was the hat with the broad brim, and (lo !) over its iron-blue surface little furrows had been ploughed by Despair.**

***Rouen*, 1896.**

## *A Good Prince*

I FIRST saw him one morning of last summer, in the Green Park. Though short, even insignificant, in stature and with an obvious tendency to be obese, he had that unruffled, Olympian air, which is so sure a sign of the Blood Royal. In a suit of white linen he looked serenely cool, despite the heat. Perhaps I should have thought him, had I not been versed in the *Almanack de Gotha*, a trifle older than he is. He did not raise his hat in answer to my salute, but smiled most graciously and made as though he would extend his hand to me, mistaking me, I doubt not, for one of his friends. Forthwith, a member of his suite said something to him in. an undertone, whereat he smiled again and took no further notice of me.

I do not wonder the people idolize him. His almost blameless life has been passed among them, nothing in it hidden from their knowledge. When they look upon his dear presentment in the photographer's window—-the shrewd, kindly eyes under the high forehead, the sparse locks so carefully distributed—words of loyalty only and of admiration rise to their lips. For of all princes in. modern days he seems to fulfil most perfectly the obligation of princely rank. Νήπιος he might have been called in the heroic age, when princes were judged according to their mastery of the sword or of the bow, or have seemed, to those mediæval **eyes that**

loved to see a scholar's pate under the crown, an ignoramus. We are less exigent now. We do but ask of our princes that they should live among us, be often manifest to bur eyes, set a perpetual example of a right life. We bid them be the ornaments of our State. Too often they do not attain to our ideal. They give, it may be, a half-hearted devotion to soldiering, or pursue pleasure merely—tales of their frivolity raising now and again the anger of a public swift to envy them their temptations. But against this admirable Prince no such charges can be made. Never (as yet, at least) has he cared to *play at soldiers.' By no means has he shocked the Puritans. Though it is no secret that he prefers the society of ladies, not one breath of scandal has ever tinged his name. Of how many English princes could this be said, in days when Figaro, quill in hand, inclines his ear to every keyhole?

Upon the one action that were well obliterated from his record I need not long insist. It seems that the wife of an aged ex-Premier came to have an audience and pay her respects. Hardly had she spoken when the Prince, in a fit of unreasoning displeasure, struck her a violent blow with his clenched fist. Had His Royal Highness not always stood so far aloof from political contention, it had been easier to find a motive for this unmannerly blow. The incident is deplorable, but it belongs, after all, to an earlier period of his life; and, were it not that no appreciation must rest upon the suppression of any scandal, I should not have referred to it. For the rest, I find no stain, soever

faint, upon his life. The simplicity of his tastes is the more admirable for that he is known to care not at all for what may be reported in the newspapers. He has never touched a card, never entered a play-house. In no stud of racers has he indulged, preferring to the finest blood-horse ever bred a certain white and woolly lamb with a blue riband to its neck. This he never tired of fondling. It is with him, like the roebuck of Henri Quatre, wherever he goes.

Suave and simple his life is ! Narrow in range, it may be, but with every royal appurtenance of delight, for to him Love's happy favours are given and the tribute of glad homage, always, here and there and every other where. Round the flower-garden at Sandringham runs an old wall of red brick, streaked with ivy and topped infrequently with balls of stone. By its iron gates, that open to a vista of flowers, stand two kind policemen, guarding the Prince's procedure along that bright vista. As his perambulator rolls out of the gate of St. James's Palace, he stretches out his tiny hands to; the scarlet sentinels. An obsequious retinue follows him over the lawns of the White Lodge, cooing and laughing, blowing kisses and praising him. Yet do not imagine his life has been, all gaiety ! The afflictions that befall royal personages always touch very poignantly the heart of the people, and it is not too much to say that ail England watched by the cradle-side of Prince Edward in that dolorous hour, when first the little battlements rose about the rose-Ted roof of his mouth! I am glad to think that not

one querulous word did His Royal Highness, in his great agony, utter. They only say that his loud, incessant cries bore testimony to the perfect lungs for which the House of Hanover is most justly famed. Irreiterate be the horror of that epoch !

As yet, when we know not even what his first words will be, it is too early to predict what verdict posterity will pass upon him. Already he has won the hearts of the people ; but, in the years which, it is to be hoped, still await him, he may accomplish more. *Attendons!* He stands alone among European princes—but, as yet, only with the aid of a chair.

*London,* 1895.

# *188o*

*Say, shall these things be forgotten*
*In the Row that men call Rotten,*
*Beauty Clare?* **Hamilton Aide.**

'HISTORY,' **it has been said, 'does not repeat itself. The historians repeat one another.' Now, there are still some periods with which no historian has grappled, and, strangely enough, the period that most gready fascinates me is one of them. The labour I set myself is therefore rather Herculean. But it is also, for me,' so far a labour of love that I can quite forget or even revel in its great difficulty. I would love to have lived in those bygone days; when first society was inducted into the mysteries of art and, not losing yet its old and elegant *tenue*, babbled of blue china'and white lilies, of the painter Rossetti and the poet Swinburne. It would be a splendid thing to have seen the *tableaux* at Cromwell House[1] or to have made my way through the**

[1] **'Cromwell House.'** *The residence of Lady Freake, a famous hostess of the day and founder of a brilliant* **salon,** *where even Royalty was sure of a welcome. The writer of a recent monograph declares that 'many a modern hostess would do well to emulate. Lady Freake not only in her toste for ike Beautiful in Art but also for the Intellectual in Conversation.'*

**'Fancy Fair.'** *For a full mount of this function, see pp 102-124 of the 'Annals of the Albert Hall'*

**'Jersey Lily.'** *A fanciful title bestowed, at this time, upon the beautiful Mrs. Langtry, who was a native of Jersey island, See also p.* **43.**

**Fancy Fair and bartered all for a cigarette from a shepherdess; to have walked in the Park, straining my eyes for a glimpse of the Jersey Lily ; danced the live-long afternoon to the strains of the Manola Valse; clapped holes in my gloves for Connie Gilchrist.**

**It is a pity that the Historians have held back so long. For this period is now so remote from us that much in it is nearly impossible to understand, more than a little must be left in the mists of antiquity that involve it. The memoirs of the day are, indeed, many, but not exactly illuminative. From, such writers as *Frith, Montague Williams* or the *Bancrofts*, you may gain but little peculiar knowledge. That quaint old chronicler, *Lucy'*, dilates amusingly enough upon the frown of Sir Richard (afterwards Lord) Cross or the tea-rose in the Prime Minister's button-hole. But what can he tell us of the negotiations that led Gladstone back to public life or of the secret councils of the Fourth Party, whereby Sir Stafford was gradually eclipsed? Good memoirs must ever be the cumulation of gossip. Gossip (alas !) has been killed by. the Press. In the tavern or the barber's-shop, all secrets passed into every ear. From newspapers how little can' be culled ! Manifestations are there made manifest to Us and we are taught, with tedious iteration, the things we knew, and need not have known, before. In my research, I have had only such poor guides as**

'Manola Valse.' *Supposed to have been introduced by Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, who, having heard it in Vienna, was phased, for a while, by its novelty, but soon reverted to the more sprightly* deux-temps.

*Punchy or the London Charivari* and *The Queen, the Lady's Newspaper,* Excavation, which in the East has been productive of rich material for the archaeologist, was indeed suggested to me. I was told that, just before Cleopatra's Needle was set upon the Embankment, an iron box, containing a photograph of Mrs. Langtry, some current coins and other trifles of the time, was dropped into the foundation. I am sure much might be done with a spade, here and there, in the neighbourhood of old Cromwell House. Accursed be the obduracy of vestries ! Be not I, but they, blamed for any error, obscurity or omission in my brief excursus.

The period of 1880 and of the two successive years should ever be memorable, for it marks a great change in the constitution of English society. It would seem that, under the quiet *regime* of the Tory Cabinet, the upper ten thousand (as they were quaintly called in those days) had taken a somewhat more frigid tone. The Prince of Wales had inclined to be restful after the revels of his youth. The prolonged seclusion of Queen Victoria, who was then engaged upon that superb work of introspection and self-analysis, *More Leaves from the Highlands,* had begun to tell upon the social system. Balls and other festivities, both at Court and in the houses of the nobles, were notably fewer. The vogue of the Opera was passing. Even in the top of the season, Rotten Row, I read, was not impenetrably crowded. But in 1880 came the tragic fall of Disraeli and the triumph of the Whigs. How great a change came then upon Westminster must be

known to anyone who has studied the annals of Gladstone's incomparable Parliament. Gladstone himself, with a monstrous majority behind him, revelling in the old splendour of speech that not seventy summers nor six years' sulking had made less ; Parnell, deadly, mysterious, with his crew of wordy peasants that were to set all Saxon things at naught—the activity of these two men alone would have made this Parliament supremely stimulating throughout the land. What of young Randolph Churchill, who, despite his halting speech, foppish mien and rather coarse fibre of mind, was yet the greatest Parliamentarian of his day? What of Justin Huntly McCarthy, under his puerile mask a most dark, most dangerous conspirator, who, lightly swinging the sacred lamp of burlesque, irradiated with fearful clarity the wrath and sorrow of Ireland ? What of Blocker Warton ? What of the eloquent atheist, Charles Bradlaugh, pleading at the Bar, striding past the furious Tories to the very Mace, hustled down the stone steps with the broadcloth torn in ribands from his back ? Surely such scenes will never more be witnessed at St. Stephen's. Imagine the existence of God being made a party question ! No wonder that at a time of such turbulence fine society also should have shown the primordia of a great change. It was felt that the aristocracy could not live by good-breeding alone. The old delights seemed vapid, waxen. Something vivid was desired. And so the sphere of fashion converged with the sphere of art, and revolution was the result.

**Be it remembered that long before this time there had been in the heart of Chelsea a kind of cult for Beauty. Certain artists had settled there, deliberately refusing to work in the ordinary official way, and 'wrought,' as they were wont to asseverate, 'for the pleasure and sake of all that is fair.' Little commerce had they with the brazen world. Nothing but the light of the sun would they share with men. Quietly and unbeknown, callous of all but their craft, they wrought their poems or their pictures, gave them one to another, and wrought on. Meredith, Rossetti, Swinburne, Morris, Holman Hunt were in this band of shy artificers. In fact, Beauty had existed long before 1880. It was Mr. Oscar Wilde who managed her *dibut* To study the period is to admit that to him was due no small part of the social vogue that Beauty began to enjoy. Fired by his fervid words, men and women hurled their mahogany into the streets and ransacked the curio-shops for the furniture of Annish days. Dados arose upon every wall, sunflowers and the feathers of peacocks curved in every corner, tea grew quite cold while the guests were praising the Willow Pattern of its cup. A few fashionable women even' dressed themselves in sinuous draperies and unheard-of greens. Into whatsoever ballroom you went, you would surety: find, among the women in tiaras and the fops and the distinguished foreigners,' half a score of comely ragamuffins in velveteen, murmuring sonnets, posturing, waving their hands. Beauty was sought in the most unlikely places. Young painters found her mobled in**

**the fogs, and bank-clerks, versed in the writings of Mr. Hamerton, were heard to declare, as they sped home from the City, that the Underground Railway was beautiful from London Bridge to Westminster, but not from Sloane Square to Notting Hill Gate.**

**Æstheticism (for so they named the movement) did indeed permeate, in a manner, all classes. But it was to the *haut monde* that its primary appeal was made. The sacred emblems of Chelsea were sold in the fashionable toy-shops, its reverently chanted creeds became the patter of the *boudoirs*. The old Grosvenor Gallery, that stronghold of the few, was verily invaded. Never was such a fusion of delightful folk as at its Private Views.[1] There was Robert Browning, the philosopher, doffing his hat with a courtly sweep to more'than one Duchess. There, too, was Theo Marzials, poet and eccentric, and Charles Colqaghi, the hero of a hundred tea-**

[1] **'Private Views.'** ***This passage, which I found in a contemporary chronicle, is so quaint and so instinct with the spirit of its time that I am fain to quote it:***

***'There were quaint, beautiful, extraordinary costumes walking about—ultra-asthetics, artistic-asthetics, (esthetics that,made up their minds to be daring, and suddenly gave way in some important point—put a frivolous bonnet on the top of a grave and flowing garment that Albert Durer might have designed for a mantle. There were fashionable costumes that Mrs. Mason or Madame Etise might have turned out that mowing. The motley, crowd mingled, forming into groups, sometimes dazzling you by the array of colours that you never thought to see in full daylight. . . Canary-coloured garments flitted cheerily by garments of the saddest green. A hat in an agony of pokes and angles was seek in company with a bometihat was a gay garland of flowers. A vast caps that might ham enshrouded the form of a Mater Dolorosa hung by thtside of a jauntily-striped langtry-hood.'***

fights, and young Brookfield, the comedian, and many another good fellow. My Lord of Dudley, the *virtuoso*, came there, leaning for support upon the arm of his fair young wife. Disraeli, with his lustreless eyes and face like some seamed Hebraic parchment, came also, and whispered behind his hand to the faithful Corry. And Walter Sickert spread the latest *mot* of 'the Master,'[1] who, with monocle, cane and tilted hat, flashed through the gay mob anon.

*Autrement*, there was Coombe Wood, in whose shade the Lady Archibald Campbell suffered more than one of Shakespeare's plays to be enacted. Hither, from the garish, indelicate theatre that held her languishing, Thalia was bidden, if haply, under the open sky, she might resume her old charm. All Fashion came to marvel and so did all the Æsthetes, in the heart of one of whose leaders, Godwin, that superb architect, the idea was first conceived. Real Pastoral Plays ! Lest the invited guests should get any noxious scent of the footlights across the grass, only amateurs were accorded parts. They roved through a real wood, these jerkined amateurs, with the poet's music upon their lips. Never under such dark and griddled elms had the outlaws feasted upon their venison. Never had any Rosalind traced with such shy wonder the writing of her

[1] *The* 'Master.' *By this title his disciples used to address Janus Whistler, the author-artist. Without echoing the obloquy that was lavished at first nor the praise that was lavished later upon his pictures, we must admit that he was, at least, a great master of English prose and a controversialist of no mean itower.*

lover upon the bark, nor any Orlando won such laughter for his not really sportive dalliance. Fairer than the mummers, it may be, were the ladies who sat and watched them from the lawn. All of them wore jerseys and tied-back skirts. Zulu hats shaded their eyes from the sun. Bangles shimmered upon their wrists. And the gentlemen wore light frock-coats and light top-hats with black bands. And the Æsthetes were in velveteen, carrying lilies.

Not that Art and Fashion shunned the theatre. They began in 1880 to affect it as never before. The one invaded Irving's *premieres* at the Lyceum. The other sang paeans in praise of the Bancrofts. The French plays, too, were the feigned delight of all the modish world. Not to have seen Chaumont in *Totot chez Tata* was held a solecism. The homely mesdames and messieurs from the Parisian boards were 'lionized' (how strangely that phrase rings to modern ears 1) in ducal drawing-rooms. In fact, all the old prejudice of rank was being swept away. Even more significant than the reception of players was a certain effort, made at this time, to raise the average of aristocratic loveliness—an effort that, but a few years before, would have been surely scouted as quite undignified and outrageous. What the term 'Professional Beauty' signified, how any lady gained a right to it, we do not and may never know. It is certain, however, that there were many ladies of tone, upon whom it was bestowed. They received special attention from the Prince of Wales, and hostesses would move heaven and earth to have them in their rooms. Their photographs

were on sale in the window of every shop. Crowds assembled every morning to see them start from Rotten Row. Preeminent among Professional Beauties were Lady Lonsdale (afterwards Lady de Grey), Mrs. Wheeler, who always 'appeared in black,' and Mrs. Gornwallis West, who was Amy Robsart in the *tableaux* at Cromwell House, when Mrs. Langtry, *cette Cliopatre de son siecle* appeared also, stepping across an artificial brook, in the pink kirtle of Effie Deans. We may doubt whether the movement, represented by these ladies, was quite in accord with the dignity and elegance that always should mark the best society. Any effort to make Beauty compulsory robs Beauty of its chief charm. But, at the same time, I do believe that this movement, so far as it was informed by a real wish to raise a practical standard of feminine charm for all classes, does not deserve the strictures that have been passed upon it by posterity. One of its immediate sequels was the incursion of American ladies into London. Then it was that these pretty creatures, 'clad in Worth's most elegant confections,* drawled their way through our greater portals. Fanned, as they were, by the feathers of the Prince of Wales, they had a great success, and they were so strange that their voices and their dresses were mimicked *partout.* The English beauties were rather angry, especially with the Prince, whom alone they blamed for the vogue of their rivals. History credits His Royal Highness with many notable achievements. Not the least of these is that he discovered the inhabitants of America,

**It will be seen that in this renaissance the keenest students of the exquisite were women. Nevertheless, men were not idle, neither. Since the day of Mr. Brummell and King George, the noble art of self-adornment had fallen partially desuete. Great fops like Bulwer and *le jeune Cupidon* had come upon the town, but never had they formed a school. Dress, therefore, had become simpler, wardrobes smaller, fashions apt to linger. In 1880 arose the sect that was soon to win for itself the title of 'The Mashers.'[1] What this title exactly signified I suppose no two etymologists will ever agree. But we can learn clearly enough, from the fashion-plates of the day, what the Mashers were in outward semblance ; from the lampoons, their mode of life. Unlike the dandies of the Georgian era, they pretended to no classic taste and, wholly contemptuous of the Æsthetes, recognized no art save the art of dress. Much might be written about the Mashers. The restaurant—destined to be, in after years, so salient a delight of London—was not known to them, but they were often admirable upon the steps of clubs. The Lyceum held them never, but nightly they gathered at the Gaiety Theatre. Nightly the stalls were agog with small, sleek heads surmounting**

[1] 'Masher.' *One authority derives the tide, rather ingeniously, from 'Ma Chire,' the mode of address used by die gilded youth to the barmaids of die period-—-whence the corruption 'Masher.* Another traces it to the chorus of a song, which, at that tune, had a great vogue in the music-halls:*

*'I'm dm slashing, dashing, mashing Montmorency of the day*

*This, in my opinion, is the safer suggestion, and may be adopted.*

coHars of interminable height. Nightly, in *the foyer*, were lisped the praises of. Kate Vaughan, her graceful dancing, or of Nellie Farren, her matchless fooling. Never a night passed but the dreary stage-door was cinct with a circlet of fools bearing bright bouquets, of flaxen-headed fools who had feet like black needles, and graceful fools incumbent upon canes. A strange cult I I once knew a lady whose father was actually present at the first night of The Forty Thieves,' and fell enamoured of one of the *coryphees.* By such links is one age joined to another.

There is always something rather absurd about the past. For us, who have fared on, the silhouette of Error is sharp upon the past horizon. As we look back upon any period, its fashions seem grotesque, its ideals shallow, for we know how soon those ideals and those fashions were to perish, and how rightly ; nor can we feel a little of the fervour they did inspire. It is easy to laugh at these Mashers, with their fantastic raiment and languid lives, or at the strife of the Professional Beauties. It is easy to laugh at all that ensued when first the mummers and the stainers of canvas strayed into Mayfain Yet shall I laugh ? For me the most romantic moment of a pantomime is always when the winged and wired fairies begin to fade away, and, as they fade, clown and pantaloon tumble on joppling and grimacing, seen very faintly in that indecisive twilight. The social condition of 1880 fascinates me in the same way. Its contrasts fascinate me.

Perhaps, in my study of the period, I may have

**fallen so deeply beneath its spell that I have tended, now and again, to overrate its real import. I lay no claim to the true historical spirit. I fancy it was a chalk drawing of a girl in a mob-cap, signed 'Frank Miles, 1880,' that first impelled me to research. To give an accurate and exhaustive account of that period would need a far less brilliant pen than mine. But I hope that, by dealing, even so briefly as I have dealt, with its more strictly sentimental aspects, I may have lightened the task of the scientific historian. And I look to Professor Gardiner and to the Bishop of Oxford.**

***London*, 1894.**

## *King George the Fourth*

THEY say that when King George was dying, a special form of prayer for his recovery, composed by one of the Archbishops, was read aloud to him and that His Majesty, after saying Amen 'thrice, with great fervour,' begged that his thanks might be conveyed to its author. To the student of royalty in modern times there is something rather suggestive in this incident. I like to think of the drug-scented room at Windsor and of the King, livid and immobile among his pillows, waiting, in superstitious awe, for the near moment when he must stand, a spirit, in the presence of a perpetual King. I like to think of him following the futile prayer with eyes and lips, and then, custom resurgent in him and a touch of pride that, so long as the blood moved ever so little in his veins, he was still a king, expressing a desire that the dutiful feeling and admirable taste of the Prelate should receive a suitable acknowledgment. It would have been impossible for a real monarch like George, even after the gout had turned his thoughts heavenward, really to abase himself before his Maker. But he could, so to say, treat with Him, as he might have treated with a fellow-sovereign, in a formal way, long after diplomacy was quite useless. How strange it must be to be a king ! How delicate and difficult a task it is to judge him ! So far as I know, no attempt has been made to judge King George the Fourth fairly. The hundred

and one eulogies and lampoons, irresponsibly published during and immediately after his reign, are not worth a wooden hoop in Hades. Mr. Percy Fitzgerald has published a history of George's reign, in which he has so artistically subordinated his own personality to his subject, that I can scarcely find,, from beginning to end of the two bulky volumes, a single opinion expressed, a single idea, a single deduction from the admirably-ordered facts. All that most of us know of George is from Thackeray's brilliant denunciation. Now, I yield to few in my admiration of Thackeray's powers. He had a charming style. We never find him searching for the *mot juste* as for a needle in a bottle of hay. Could he have looked through a certain window by the river at Groisset or in the quadrangle at Brasenose, how he would have laughed ! He blew on his pipe, and words came tripping round him, like children, like pretty little children who are perfectly drilled for the dance, or came, did he will it, treading in their precedence, like kings, gloomily. And I think it is to the credit of the reading mob that, by reason of his beautiful style, all that he said was taken for the truth, without questioning. But truth after all is eternal, and style transient, and now that Thackeray's style is becoming, if I may say so, a trifle 1860, it may not be amiss that we should inquire whether his estimate of George is in substance and fact worth anything at all. It seems to me that, as in his novels, so in his history of the four Georges, Thackeray made no attempt at psychology. He dealt simply with types. One

George he insisted upon regarding as a buffoon, another as a yokel. The fourth George he chose to hold up for reprobation as a drunken, vapid cad. Every action, every phase of his life that went to disprove this view, he either suppressed or distorted utterly. 'History,' he would seem to have chuckled, 'has nothing to do with the First Gentleman. But I will give him a niche in Natural History. He shall be King of the Beasts.' He made no allowance for the extraordinary conditions under which all monarchs live, none for the unfortunate circumstances by which George, especially, was from the first hampered.' He judged him as he judged Barnes Newcome and all the scoundrels he created. Moreover, he judged him by the moral standard of the Victorian Age. In fact, he applied to his subject the wrong method, in the wrong manner, and at the wrong time. And yet every one has taken him at his word. I feel that my essay may be scouted as a paradox ; but I hope that many may recognize that I am not, out of mere boredom, endeavouring to stop my ears against popular platitude, but rather, in a spirit of real earnestness, to point out to the mob. how it has been cruel to George. I do not despair of success. I think If shall make converts. The mob is really Very fickle and sdmetimes cheers the truth.

None, at all events, will deny that England stands to-day otherwise than she stood a hundred and thirty-two years ago, when George was born. To-day we are living a decadent life. All the while that We are prating of progress, we are really so

**deteriorate! There is nothing but feebleness in us. Our youths, who spend their days in trying to build up their constitutions by sport or athletics and their evenings in undermining them with poisonous and dyed drinks ; our daughters, who are ever searching for some new quack remedy for new imaginary megrim, what strength is there in them? We have our societies for the prevention of this and the promotion of that and the propagation of the other, because there are no individuals among us. Our sexes are already nearly assimilate. Women are becoming nearly as rare as ladies, and it is only at the music-halls that we are privileged to see strong men. We are born into a poor, weak age. We are not strong enough to be wicked, and the Nonconformist Conscience makes cowards of us all.**

**But this was not so in the days when George was walking by his tutor's side in the gardens of Kew or of Windsor. London must have been a splendid place in those days—full of life and colour and wrong and revelry. There was. no absurd press nor vestry to protect the poor at the expense of the rich and see that everything should be neatly adjusted. Every man had to shift for hirnself and, consequendy, men were, as Mr, Clement Scott would say, manly, arid women, as Mr. Clement Scott would say, womanly. In those days, a young man of wealth and family found open to him a vista of such licence as had been unknown to any since the barbatuli of the Roman Empire. To spend the early morning with his valet, gradually**

assuming the rich apparel that was not then tabooed by a hard sumptuary standard ; to saunter round to White's for ale and tittle-tattle and the making of wagers ; to attend a 'drunken d*ejeuner*' in honour of *Ha tres belle Rosaline*' or the Strappini; to drive some fellow-fool far out into the country in his pretty curricle, 'followed by two well-dressed and well-mounted grooms; of singular elegance certainly,' and stop at every tavern on the road to curse the host for not keeping better ale and a wench of more charm ; to reach St. James's in time for a random toilet and so off to dinner. Which of *our* dandies could survive a day of pleasure such as this ? Which would be ready, dinner done, to scamper off again to Ranelagh and dance and skip and sup in the rotunda there ? Yet the youth of that period would not dream of going to bed or ever he had looked in at Crockford's—*tanta lubido rerum*—for a few hours' faro.

This was the kind of life that young George found opened to him, when, at length, in his nineteenth year, they gave him an establishment in Buckingham House. How his young eyes must have sparkled, and with what glad gasps must he have taken the air of freedom into his lungs ! Rumour had long been busy with the damned surveillance under which his childhood had been passed. A paper of the time says significantly that 'the Prince of Wales, with a spirit which does him honour, has three times requested a change in that system.' King George had long postponed permission for his son to appear at any balls, and the year before had only given it.

lest he should offend the Spanish Minister, who begged it as a personal favour. I know few pictures more pathetic than that of George, then an overgrown boy of fourteen, tearing the childish frill from around his neck and crying to one of the Royal servants, 'See how they treat me!' Childhood has always seemed to me the tragic period of life: To be subject to the most odious espionage at the one age when you never dream of doing wrong, to be deceived by your parents, thwarted of your smallest wish, oppressed by the terrors of manhood and of the world to come, and to believe, as you are told, that childhood is the only happiness known; all this is quite terrible. And all Royal children, of whom I have read, particularly George, seem to have passed through greater trials in childhood than do the children of any other class. Mr. Fitzgerald, hazarding, for once an opinion, thinks that 'the stupid, odious, German, sergeant-system of discipline that had been so rigorously applied was, in fact, responsible for the blemishes of the young Prince's character.' Even Thackeray, in his essay upon George I I I . , asks what wonder that the son, finding himself free at last, should have plunged, without looking, into the vortex of dissipation. In Torrens' *Lift of Lord Melbourne* we learn that Lord Essex, riding one day with the King, met the young Prince wearing a wig, and that the culprit, being sternly reprimanded by his father, replied that he had 'been ordered by his doctor to wear a ,wig, for he was subject to cold.' Whereupon the King, to vent the aversion he already felt for his son, or, it

may have been, glorying in the satisfactory result of his discipline, turned to Lord Essex and remarked, 'A lie is ever ready when it is wanted.' George never lost this early ingrained habit of lies. It is to George's childish fear of his guardians that we must trace that extraordinary power of bamboozling his courtiers, his ministry, and his mistresses that distinguished him through his long life. It is characteristic of the man that he should himself have bitterly deplored his own untruthfulness. When, in after years, he was consulting Lady Spencer upon the choice of a governess for his child, he made this remarkable speech, 'Above all, she must be taught the truth. You know that I don't speak the truth and my brothers don't, and I find it a great defect, from which I would have my daughter free. *We have been brought up badly, the Queen having taught us to equivocate.*' You may laugh at the picture of the little chubby, curly-headed fellows learning to equivocate at their mother's knee, but pray remember that the wisest master of ethics himself, in his theory of *ἕξεις ἀποδεικτικαι*, similarly raised virtues, such as telling the truth, to the level of regular accomplishments, and, before you judge poor George harshly in his entanglements of lying, think of the cruelly unwise education he had undergone.

However much we may deplore this exaggerated tyranny, by reason of its; evil effect upon his moral nature, we cannot but feel glad that it existed, to afford a piquant contrast to the life awaiting him. Had he passed through the callow dissipations of

Eton and Oxford, like other young men of his age, he would assuredly have lacked much of that splendid, pent vigour with which he rushed headlong into London life. He was so young and so handsome and so strong, that can we wonder if all the women fell at his feet? 'The graces of his person,' says one whom he honoured by an intrigue, "the irresistible sweetness of his smile, the tenderness of his melodious, yet manly voice, will be remembered by me till every vision of this changing scene are forgotten. The polished and fascinating ingenuousness of his manners contributed not a little to enliven our promenade. He sang with exquisite taste, and the tones of his voice, breaking on the silence of the night, have often appeared to my entranced senses like more than mortal melody.' But besides his graces of person, he had a most delightful wit, he was a scholar who could bandy quotations with Fox or Sheridan, and, like the young men of to-day, he knew all about Art. He spoke French, Italian, and German perfectly. Crossdill had taught him the violoncello. At first, as was right for one of his age, he cared more for the pleasures of the table and of the ring, for cards and love. He was wont to go down to Ranelagh surrounded by a retinue of bruisers—rapscallions, such as used to follow Glodius through the streets of Rome —and he loved to join in the scuffles like any commoner. Pugilism he learnt from Angelo, and he was considered by some to be a fine performer. On one occasion, too, at an *exposition d'escrime,* when he handled the foils against the *maitre,* he 'was

highly complimented up
In fact, despite all his ace
have been a thoroughly
was just the kind of figure-head Society had long been in need of. A certain lack of tone had crept into the amusements of the *haut monde,* due, doubtless, to the lack of an acknowledged leader. The King was not yet mad, but he was always bucolic, and socially out of the question. So at the coming of his son Society broke into a gallop. Balls and masquerades were given in his honour night after night. Good Samaritans must have approved when they found that at these entertainments great ladies and courtesans brushed beautiful shoulders in utmost familiarity, but those who delighted in the high charm of society probably shook their heads. We need not, however, find it a flaw in George's social bearing that he did not check this kind of freedom. At the first, as a young man full of life, of course he. took everything as it came, joyfully. No one knew better than he did, in later life, that there is a time for laughing with great ladies and a time for laughing with courtesans. But as yet it was not possible for him to exert influence. How great that influence became I will suggest hereafter.

I like to think of him as he was at this period, charging about, in pursuit of pleasure, like a young bull. The splendid taste for building had not yet come to him. His father would not hear of him patronizing the Turf. But already he was implected with a passion for dress and seems to have erred somewhat on the side of dressing up, as is the way

of young men. It is fearful to think of him, as Cyrus Redding saw him, 'arrayed in deep-brown velvet, silver embroidered, with cut-steel buttons, and a gold net thrown over all.' Before that 'gold net thrown over all,' all the mistakes of his after-life seem to me to grow almost insignificant. Time, however, toned his too florid sense of costume, and we should at any rate be thankful that his imagination never deserted him. All the delightful munditiae that we find in the contemporary 'fashion-plates for gentlemen' can be traced to George himself. His were the much-approved 'quadruple stock of great dimensions,' the 'cocked grey-beaver,' 'the pantaloons of mauve silk negligently crinkled,' and any number of other little pomps and foibles of the kind. As he grew older and was obliged to abandon many of his more vigorous pastimes, he grew moreand more enamoured of the pleasures of the wardrobe. He would spend hours, it is said, in designing coats for his friends, liveries for his servants, and even uniforms. Nor did he ever make the mistake of giving away outmoded clothes to his valets, but kept them to form what must have been the finest collection of clothes that has been seen in modern times. With a sentimentality that is characteristic of him, he would, often, as he sat, crippled by gout in his room at Windsor, direct his servaht to bring him this or that coat, which he had worn ten or twenty or thirty years before,, and, when it was brought to him, spend much time in laughing or sobbing over the memories that lay in its folds. It is pleasant to know that George, during

his long and various life, never forgot a coat, however long ago worn, however seldom.

But in the early days of which I speak he had not yet touched that self-conscious" note which, in manner and mode of life, as well as in costume, he was to touch later. He was too violently enamoured of all around him, to think very deeply of himself. But he had already realized the tragedy of the voluptuary, which is, after a little time, not that he must go on living, but that he cannot live in two places at once. We have, at this end of the century, tempered this tragedy by the perfection of railways, and'it is possible for our good Prince, whom Heaven bless, to waken to the sound of the Braemar bag-pipes, while the music of Mdlle. Guilbert's latest song, cooed over the footlights of the Concerts Parisiens, still rings in his ears. But in the time of our Prince's illustrious great-uncle there were not railways ; and we find George perpetually driving, for wagers, to Brighton and back (he had already acquired that taste for Brighton which was one of his most lovable qualities) in incredibly short periods of time. The rustics who lived along the road were well accustomed to the sight of a high, tremulous phaeton flashing past them, and the crimson face of the young prince bending over the horses. There is something absurd in representing George as, even before he came of agr, a hardened and cynical profligate, an Elagabalus in trousers, His blood flowed fast enough through his veins.' All his escapades were those of a healthful young man of the time. Need we blame him

if he sought, every day, to live faster and more fully?

In a brief essay like this, I cannot attempt to write, as I hope one day to do, in any detail a history of George's career, during the time when he was successively Prince of Wales and Regent and King. Merely is it my wish at present to examine some of the principal accusations that have been brought against him, and to point out in what ways he has been harshly and hastily judged. Perhaps the greatest indignation against him was, and is to this day, felt by reason of his treatment of his two wives, Mrs. Fitzherbert and Queen Caroline. There are some scandals that never grow old, and I think the story of George's married life is one of them. It was a real scandal. I can feel it. It has vitality. Often have I wondered whether the blood with which the young Prince's shirt was saturate when Mrs. Fitzherbert was first induced to visit him at Carlton House, was merely red paint, or if, in a frenzy of love, he had truly gashed himself with a razor. Certain it is that his passion for the virtuous and obdurate lady was a very real one. Lord Holland describes how the Prince used to visit Mrs. Fox, and there indulge in 'the most extravagant expressions and actions—rolling on the floor, striking his forehead, tearing his hair, falling into hysterics and swearing that he would abandon the country, forgo the crown, &c.' He was indeed still a child, for Royalties, not being ever brought into contact with the realities of life, remain young for longer than other people. Cursed with a truly

royal lack of self-control, he was unable to bear the idea of being thwarted in any wish. Every day he sent off couriers to Holland, whither Mrs. Fitzherbert had retreated, imploring her to return to him, offering her formal marriage. At length, as we know, she yielded to his importunity and returned. It is difficult indeed to realize exactly what was Mrs. Fitzherbert's feeling in the matter. The marriage must be, as she knew, illegal, and would lead, as Charles James Fox pointed out in his powerful letter to the Prince, to endless and intricate difficulties. For the present she could only live with him as his mistress. If, when he reached the legal age of twenty-five, he were to apply to Parliament for permission to marry her, how could permission be given, when she had been living with him irregularly ? * Doubtless,. she was flattered by the attentions of the Heir to the Throne, but, had she really returned his passion, she would surely have preferred 'any other species of connection with His Royal Highness to one leading to so much misery and mischief.' Really to understand her marriage, one must look at the portraits of her that are extant. That beautiful and silly face explains much. One can well fancy such a lady being pleased to live after the performance of a mock-ceremony with a prince for whom she felt no passion. Her view of the matter can, only have been social, for in the eyes of the Church, she could only live with the Prince as his mistress. Society, however, once satisfied that a ceremony of some kind had been enacted, never regarded her as anything but his

wife. The day after Fox, inspired by the Prince, had formally denied that any ceremony had taken place, 'the knocker of her door,' to quote her own complacent phrase, ' was never still.' The Duchesses of Portland, Devonshire and Cumberland were among her visitors.

How much pop-limbo has been talked about the Prince's denial of the marriage ! I grant that it was highly improper to marry Mrs. Fitzherbert at all. But George was always weak and wayward, and he did, in his great passion, marry her. That he should afterwards deny it officially seems to me to have been utterly inevitable. His denial did her not the faintest damage, as I have pointed out. It was, so to speak, an official quibble, rendered necessary by the circumstances of the case. Not to have denied the marriage in ,the House of Commons would have meant ruin to both of them. As months passed, more serious difficulties awaited the unhappily wedded pair. What boots it to repeat the story of the Prince's great debts and desperation ? It was clear that there was but one way of getting his head above water, and that was to yield to his father's wishes and contract a real marriage with a foreign princess. Fate was dogging his footsteps relentlessly. Placed as he was, George could not but offer to marry as his father willed. It is well, also, to remember that George was not ruthlessly and suddenly turning his shoulder upon Mrs. Fiteherbert. Forsome time before the British plenipotentiary went to fetch him a bride from over the waters, his name had been associated with

that of the beautiful and unscrupulous Countess of Jersey.

Poor George ! Half-married *to* a woman whom he no longer worshipped, compelled to marry a woman whom he was to hate at first sight! Surely we should not judge a prince harshly. 'Princess Caroline very *gauche* at cards,' 'Princess Caroline very *missish* at supper,' are among the entries made in his diary by Lord Malmesbury, while he was at the little German Court. I can conceive no scene more tragic than that of her presentation to the Prince, as related by the same nobleman. ' I , according to the established etiquette,' so he writes, 'introduced the Princess Caroline to him. She, very properly, in consequence of my saying it was the right mode of proceeding, attempted to kneel to him. He raised her gracefully enough, and embraced her, said barely one word, turned round, retired to a distant part of the apartment, and calling to me, said : "Harris, I am not well: pray get me a glass of brandy."' At dinner that evening, in the presence of her betrothed, the Princess was 'flippant, rattling, affecting wit.' Poor George, I say again! Deportment was his ruling passion, and his bride did not know how to behave. Vulgarity—hard, implacable, German vulgarity—was in everything she did to the very day of her death. The marriage was solemnized on Wednesday, April 8th, 1795, and the royal bridegroom was drunk.

So soon as they were separated, George became implected with a morbid hatred for his wife, which

was hardly in accord with his light and variant nature and shows how bitterly he had been mortified by his marriage of necessity. It is sad that so much of his life should have been wasted in futile strainings after divorce. Yet we can scarcely blame him for seizing upon every scrap of scandal that was whispered of his wife. Besides his not unnatural wish to be free, it was derogatory to the dignity of a prince and a regent that his wife should be living an eccentric life at Blackheath with a family of singers named Sapio. Indeed, Caroline's conduct during this time was as indiscreet as ever. Wherever she went she made ribald jokes about her husband, 'in such a voice that all, by-standing, might hear.' 'After dinner,' writes one of her servants, 'Her Royal Highness made a wax figure as usual, and gave it an amiable pair of large horns ; then took three pins out of her garment and stuck them through and through, and put the figure to roast and melt at the fire. What a silly piece of spite ! Yet it is impossible not to laugh when one sees it done.' Imagine,the feelings of the First Gentleman in Europe when the unseemly story of these pranks was whispered to him !

For my own part, I fancy Caroline was innocent of any infidelity to her unhappy husband. But that is neither here nor there. Her behaviour was certainly not above suspicion. It fully justified George in trying to establish a case for her divorce. When, at length, she went abroad, her vagaries were such that the whole of her English suite left her, and we hear of her travelling about the Holy Land

attended by another family, named Bergami. When her husband succeeded to the throne, and her name was struck out of the liturgy, she despatched expostulations in absurd English to Lord Liverpool. Receiving no answer, she decided to return and claim her right to be crowned Queen of England. Whatever the unhappy lady did, she always was ridiculous. One cannot but smile as one reads of her posting along the French roads in a yellow travelling-chariot drawn by cart-horses, with a retinue that included an alderman, a reclaimed lady-in-waiting, an Italian count, the eldest son of the alderman, and 'a fine little female child, about three years old, whom Her Majesty, in conformity with her benevolent practices on former occasions, had adopted.' The breakdown of her impeachment, and her acceptance of an income, formed a fitting anti-climax to the terrible absurdities of her position. She died from the effects of a chill caught when she was trying vainly to force a way to her husband's coronation. Unhappy woman ! Our sympathy for her is not misgiven. Fate wrote her a most tremendous tragedy, and she played it in tights. Let us pity her, but not forget to pity her husband, the King, also.

It is another common accusation against **George** that he was an undutiful and unfeeling **son. If** this was so, it is certain **that** not **all the blame is to be laid upon him alone. There is more than one anecdote** which shows **that** King **George disliked his eldest son, and took no trouble to conceal his dislike, long before the boy had been freed from his**

tutors. It was the coldness of his father and the petty restrictions he loved to enforce that first drove George to seek the companionship of such men as Egalite and the Duke of Cumberland, both of whom were quick to inflame his impressionable mind to angry resentment. Yet, when Margaret Nicholson attempted the life of the King, the Prince immediately posted off from Brighton that he might wait upon his father at Windsor—a graceful act of piety that was rewarded by his father's refusal to see him. Hated by the Queen, who at this time did all she could to keep her husband and his son apart, surrounded by intriguers, who did all they could to set him against his father, George seems to have behaved with great discretion. In the years that follow, I can conceive no position more difficult than that in which he found himself every time his father relapsed into lunacy. That he should have by every means opposed those who through jealousy stood between him and the regency was only natural. It cannot be said that at any time did he show anxiety to rule, so long as there was any immediate chance of the King's recovery. On the contrary, all impartial seers of that chaotic Court agreed that the Prince bore himself throughout the intrigues, wherein he himself was bound to be, in a notably filial way.

There are many things that I regret in the career of George,IV., and what I most of all regret is the part that he played in the politics of the period. Englishmen to-day have aft length decided that Royalty shall not set foot in the political arena. I

do not despair that some day we shall place politics upon a sound commercial basis, as they have already done in America and France, or leave them entirely in the hands of the police, as they do in Russia. It is horrible to think that, under our existing *rigime,* all the men of noblest blood and highest intellect should waste their time in the sordid atmosphere of the House of Commons, listening for hours to nonentities talking nonsense, or searching enormous volumes to prove that somebody said something some years ago that does not quite tally with something he said the other day, or standing tremulous before the whips in the lobbies and the scorpions in the constituencies. In the political machine are crushed and lost all our best men. That Mr. Gladstone did not choose to be a cardinal is a blow under which the Roman Catholic Church still staggers. In Mr. Chamberlain Scotland Yard missed its smartest detective. What a fine voluptuary might Lord Rosebery have been ! It is a platitude that the country is ruled best by the permanent officials, and I look forward to the time when Mr. Keir Hardie shall hang his cap in the hall of No. 10 Downing Street, and a Conservative 'working-man shall lead Her Majesty's Opposition. In the lifetime of George, politics were not a whit finer than they are to-day. I feel a genuine indignation that he should have wasted so much of tissue in mean intrigues about ministries and bills. That he should have been fascinated by that splendid fellow, Fox, is quite right. That he should have thrown himself with all his heart into

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**the storm of the Westminster election is most natural. But it is awful inverideed to find him, long after he had reached man's estate, indulging in back-stair intrigues with Whigs and Tories. It is, of course, absurd to charge him with deserting his first friends, the Whigs. His love and fidelity were given, not to the Whigs, but to the men who led them. Even after the death of Fox, he did, in misplaced piety, do all he could for Fox's party. What wonder that, when he found he was ignored by the Ministry that owed its existence to him, he turned his back upon that sombre couple, the 'Lords G. and G.,' whom he had always hated, and went over to the Tories? Among the Tories he hoped to find men who would faithfully perform their duties and leave him leisure to live his own beautiful life. I regret immensely that his part in politics did not cease here. The state of the country and of his own finances, and also, I fear, a certain love that he had imbibed for political manipulation, prevented him from standing aside. How useless was all the finesse he displayed in the long-drawn question of Catholic Emancipation ! How lamentable his terror of Lord Wellesley's rude dragooning J And is there not something pitiable in the thought of the Regent at a time of ministerial complications lying prone on his bed with a sprained ankle, and taking, as was whispered, in one day as many as seven hundred drops of laudanum ? Some said he took these doses to deaden the pain. But others, and among them his brother Cumberland, declared that the sprain was all a sham. I hope it was.**

**The thought of a voluptuary in pain is very terrible. In any case, I cannot but feel angry, for George's own sake and that of his kingdom, that he found it impossible to keep further aloof from the wearisome troubles of political life. His wretched indecision of character made him an easy prey to unscrupulous ministers, while his extraordinary diplomatic powers and almost extravagant tact, made them, in their turn, an easy prey to him. In these two processes much of his genius was spent untimely. I must confess that he did not quite realize where his duties ended. He wished always to do too much. If you read his repeated appeals to his father that he might be permitted to serve actively in the British army against the French, you will acknowledge that it was through no fault of his own that he did not fight. It touches me to think that in his declining years he actually thought that he had led one of the charges at Waterloo. He would often describe the whole scene as it appeared to him at that supreme moment, and refer to the Duke of Wellington, saying, 'Was it not so, Duke?' 'I have often heard you say so, your Majesty,' the old soldier would reply, grimly. I am not sure that the old' soldier was at Waterloo himself. In a room full of people he once referred to the battle as having been won upon the playing-fields of Eton. This was certainly a most unfortunate slip, seeing that all historians are agreed that it was fought on a certain field situate a few miles from Brussels.**

**In one of his letters to the King, craving for a military appointment, George urges that, whilst his**

next brother, the Duke of York, commanded the army, and the younger branches of the family were either generals or lieutenant-generals, he, who was Prince of Wales, remained colonel of dragoons. And herein, could he have known it, lay the right limitation of his life. As Royalty was and is constituted, it is for the younger sons to take an active part in the services, whist the eldest son is left as the ruler of Society. Thousands and thousands of guineas were given by the nation that the Prince of Wales, the Regent, the King, might be, in the best sense of the word, ornamental. It is not for us, at this moment, to consider whether Royalty, as a wholly Pagan institution, is not out of place in a community of Christians. It is enough that we should inquire whether the god, whom our grandfathers set up and. worshipped and crowned with offerings, gave grace to his Worshippers.

That George was a moral man, in our modern sense, I do not for one moment pretend. It were idle to deny that he was profligate. When he died there were found in one of his cabinets more than a hundred locks of women's hair. Some of these were still plastered with powder and pomatum, some were mere little, golden curls, such as grow low down upon a girl's neck, others were streaked with grey. The whole of this collection subsequently passed into the hands of Adam, the famous Scotch henchman of the Regent In his family, now resident in Glasgow,'it is treasured as an heirloom. I myself have been privileged to look at all these locks of hair, and I have seen a *clairvoyante*

take them one by one, and, pinching them between her lithe fingers, tell of the love that each symbolized, I have heard her tell of long rides by night, of a boudoir hung with grass-green satin, and of a tryst at Windsor ; of one, the wife of a hussar at York, whose little lap-dog used to bark angrily whenever the Regent came near his mistress ; of a milkmaid who, in her great simpleness, thought her child would one day be King of England ;. of an archduchess with blue eyes, and a silly little flautist from Portugal; of women that were wantons and fought for his favour, great ladies that he loved dearly, girls that gave themselves to him humbly. If we lay all pleasures at the feet of our Prince,' we can scarcely hope he will remain virtuous. Indeed, we do not wish our Prince to be an exemplar of godliness, but a perfect type of happiness. It may be foolish of us to insist upon apolaustic happiness, but that is the kind of happiness that we can ourselves, most of us, best understand, and so we offer it to our ideal. In Royalty we find our Bacchus, our Venus.

Certainly George was, in the practical sense of the word, a fine king. His wonderful physique, his wealth, his brilliant talents, he gave them all without stint to Society. From the time when, at Madame Cornelys', he gallivanted with rips and demireps, to the time when he sat, a stout and solitary old king, fishing in the artificial pond at Windsor, his life was beautifully ordered. He indulged to the full in all the delights that England could offer him. That he should have, in his old age, suddenly abandoned his career of vigorous

enjoyment is, I confess, rather surprising.' The Royal voluptuary generally remains young to the last. No one ever tires of pleasure. It is the pursuit of pleasure, the trouble to grasp it, that makes us old. Only the soldiers who enter Capua with wounded feet leave it demoralized. And yet George, who never had to wait or fight for a pleasure, fell enervate long before his death. I can but attribute this to the constant persecution to which he was subjected by duns and ministers, parents and wives.

Not that I regret the manner in which he spent his last years. On the contrary, I think it was exceedingly cosy. I like to think of the King, at Windsor, lying a-bed all the moaning in his darkened room, with all the sporting papers scattered over his quilt and a little decanter of the favourite cherry-brandy within easy reach. I like to think of him sitting by his fire in the afternoon and hearing his ministers ask for him at the door and piling another log upon the fire, as he heard them sent away by his servant. It was not, I acknowledge, a life to kindle popular enthusiasm. But most people knew little of its mode. For all they knew, His Majesty might have been making his soul or writing his memoirs. In reality, George was now 'too fat by far' to brook the observation of casual eyes. Especially he hated to be seen by those whose memories might bear them back to the time when he had yet a waist. Among his elaborate precautions of privacy was a pair of *avant-couriers,* who always preceded his pony-chaise in its daily progress through Windsor

Great Park and had strict commands to drive back any intruder. In T*he Veiled Majestic Man, Where is the Graceful Despot of England?* and other lampoons not extant, the scribblers mocked his loneliness. At White's one evening, four gentlemen of high fashion vowed, over their wine, they would see the invisible monarch. So they rode down next day to. Windsor, and secreted themselves in the branches of a holm-oak. • Here they waited *perdus,* beguiling the hours and the frost with their flasks. When dusk was falling, they heard at last the chime of hoofs on the hard road, and saw presently a splash of the Royal livery, as two grooms trotted by, peering warily from side to side, and disappeared in the gloom. The conspirators in the tree held their breath, till they caught the distant sound of wheels. Nearer and louder came the sound, and soon they saw a white, postillioned pony, a chaise and, yes, girth immensurate among the cushions, a weary monarch, whose face, crimson above the dark accumulation of his Stock, was like some ominous sunset. . . . He had passed them and they had seen him, monstrous and moribund among the cushions. He had been borne past them like a wounded Bacchanal. The King ! The Regent! . . . They shuddered in the frosty branches. The night was gathering and they climbed silently to the ground, with an awful, indispellible image before their eyes.

You see, these gentlemen were not philosophers. Remember, also, that the strangeness of their escapade, the cramped attitude they had been compelled to maintain in the branches of the holm-

oak, the intense cold and their frequent resort to the flask must have all conspired. to exaggerate their emotions and prevent them from looking at things in a rational way. After all, George had lived his life. He had lived more fully than any other man. And it was better really that his death should be preceded by decline. For every one, obviously, the most *desirable* kind of death is that which strikes men down, suddenly, in their prime. Had they not been so dangerous, railways would never have ousted the old coaches from popular favour. But, however keenly we may court such a death for ourselves or for those who are near and dear to us,* we must always be offended whenever it befall one in whom our interest is aesthetic merely. Had his father permitted George to fight at Waterloo, and had some fatal bullet pierced the padding of that splendid breast, I should have been really, annoyed, and this essay would never have been written. Sudden death mars the Unity of an admirable life. Natural declines, tapering to tranquillity, is its proper end. As a man's life begins, faintly, and gives no token of childhood's intensity and the expansion of youth and the perfection of manhood, so it should also end, faintly. The King died a death that was like the calm conclusion of a great, lurid poem. *Quievit.*

Yes, his life was a poem, a poem in the praise of Pleasure. And it is right that we should think of him always as the great voluptuary. Only let us note that his nature never became, as do the natures of most voluptuaries, corroded by a cruel indifference to the happiness of others. When all the town was

agog for the *fete* to be given by the Regent in honour of the French King, Sheridan sent a forged card of invitation to Romeo Coates, the half-witted dandy, who used at this time to walk about in absurd ribbons and buckles, and was the butt of all the streetsters. The poor fellow arrived at the entrance of Carlton House, proud as a peacock, and he was greeted with a tremendous cheer from the by-standing mob, but when he came to the lackeys he was told that his card was a hoax and sent about his business. The tears were rolling down his cheeks as he shambled back into the street. The Regent heard later in the evening of this sorry joke, and next day despatched a kindly-worded message, in which he prayed that Mr. Coates would not refuse to come and 'view the decorations, nevertheless.' Though he does not appear to have treated his inferiors with the extreme servility that is now in vogue, George was beloved by the whole of his Household, and many are the little tales that are told to illustrate the kindliness and consideration he showed to his valets and his jockeys and his stable-boys. That from time to time he dropped certain of his favourites is no cause for blaming him. Remember that a Great Personage, like a great genius, is dangerous to his fellow-creatures. The favourites of Royalty live in an intoxicant atmosphere. They become unaccountable for their behaviour. Either they, get beyond themselves, and, like Brummell forget that the King, their friend, is also their master or they outrun the cbnstable and go bankrupt, or cheat at cards in order to keep up their position, or do some

other foolish thing that makes it impossible for the King to favour them more. Old friends are generally the refuge of unsociable persons. Remembering this also, gauge the temptation that besets the very leader of Society to form fresh friendships, when all the cleverest and most charming persons in the land are standing ready, like supers at the wings, to come on and please him ! At Carlton House there was a constant succession of wits. Minds were preserved for the Prince of Wales, as coverts are preserved for him to-day. For him Sheridan would flash his best bon-mot, and Theodore Hook play his most practical joke, his swiftest chansonette. And Fox would talk, as only he could, of Liberty and of Patriotism, and Byron would look more than ever like Isidore de Lara as he recited his own bad verses, and Sir Walter Scott would 'pour out with an endless generosity his store of old-world learning, kindness, and humour.' Of such men George was a splendid patron. He. did not merely sit in his chair, gaping princely at their wit and their wisdom, but quoted with the scholars and argued with the statesmen and jested with the wits. Doctor Burney, an impartial observer, says that he was amazed by the knowledge of music that the Regent displayed in a half-hour's discussion over the wine. Croker says that 'the Prince-and Scott were the two most brillian stbry-tellers, in their several ways, he had ever happened to meet. Both exerted themselves, and it was hard to say which' shone the most.' Indeed His Royal Highness appears to have been a fine conversationalist, with a wide range of know-

ledge and great humour. We, who have come at length to look upon stupidity as one of the most sacred prerogatives of Royalty, can scarcely realize that, if George's birth had been never so humble, he would have been known to us as a most admirable scholar and wit, or as a connoisseur of the arts. It is pleasing to think of his love for the Flemish school of painting, for Wilkie and Sir Thomas Lawrence. The' splendid portraits of foreign potentates that hang in the Banqueting Room at Windsor bear witness to his sense of the canvas. In his later years he exerted himself strenuously in, raising the tone of the drama. His love of the classics never left him. We know he was fond of quoting those incomparable poets, Homer, at great length, and that he was prominent in the 'papyrus-craze.' Indeed, he inspired Society with a love of something more than mere pleasure, a love of the 'humaner delights.' He was a giver of tone. At his coming, the bluff, disgusting ways of the Tom and Jerry period gave way to those florid graces that are still called Georgian.

A pity that George's predecessor was not a man, like the Prince Consort, of strong chastening influence I Then .might the bright flamboyance which he gave to Society have made his reign more beautiful than any other—a real renaissance. **But** he found London a wild city of taverns and cock-pits, and the grace which in the course of years he gave to his subjects never really entered into them. The cock-pits were gilded and the taverns painted with colour, but the heart of the city was.vulgar,

even as before. The simulation of higher things did indeed give the note of a very interesting period, but how shallow that simulation was and how merely it was due to George's own influence, we may see in the light of what happened after "his death. The good that he had. done died with him. The refinement he had laid upon vulgarity fell away, like enamel from withered cheeks. It was only George himself who had made the sham endure. The Victorian era came soon, and the angels rushed in and drove the nymphs away and hung the land with reps.

I have often wondered whether it was with a feeling that his influence would be no more than life-long, that George allowed Carlton House, that dear structure, the very work of his life and symbol of his being, to be rased. I wish that Carlton House were still standing. I wish we could still walk through those corridors, whose walls were 'crusted with ormolu,' and parquet-floors were 'so glossy that, were-Narcissus to come down from heaven, he would, I maintain, need no other mirror for his *beaute.*' I wish that we could see the pier-glasses and the girandoles and the twisted sofas, the fauns foisted upon the ceiling and the rident goddesses along the wall. These things would make George's memory dearer to us, help us to a fuller knowledge of him. I am glad that the Pavilion still stands here in Brighton. Its trite lawns and wanton cupolæ have taught me much. As I write this essay, I can see them from my window. Last night, in a crowd of trippers and townspeople, I roamed the lawns of

**that dishonoured palace, whilst a band played us tunes.' Once I fancied I saw the shade of a swaying figure and of a wine-red face.**

***Brighton*, 1894.**

## *The Pervasion of Rouge*

**NAY, but it is useless to protest. Artifice must queen it once more in the town, and so, if there be any whose hearts chafe at her return, let them not say, 'We have come into evil times,' and be all for resistance, reformation, or angry cavilling. For did the king's sceptre send the sea retrograde, or the wand of the sorcerer avail to turn the sun from its old course ? And what man or what number of men ever stayed that inexorable process by which the cities of this world grow, are very strong, fail, and grow again ? Indeed, indeed, there is charm in eyery period, and only fools and flutterpates do not seek reverently for what is charming in their own day. No martyrdom, however fine, nor satire, however splendidly bitter, has changed by a little tittle the known tendency of things. It is the times that can perfect us, not we the times, and so let all of us wisely acquiesce. • Like the little wired marionettes, let us acquiesce in the dance.**

**For behold ! The Victorian era comes to its end and the day of sancta simplicitas is quite ended. The old signs are here and the portents to warn the seer of life that we are* ripe for a new epoch of artifice. Are not men rattling the dice-box and ladies dipping their fingers in the rouge-pot ? At Rome, in the keenest time of her degringplade, when there was gambling even in the holy temples, great ladies (does not Lucian tell us?) did not**

scruple to squander all they had upon unguents from Arabia. Nero's mistress and unhappy, wife, Poppæa; of shameful memory, had in her travelling retinue fifteen—or, as some say, fifty—she-asses, for the sake of their milk, that was thought an incomparable guard against cosmetics with poison in them. Last century, too, when life was lived by candlelight, and ethics was but etiquette, and even art a question of punctilio, women, we know, gave the best hours of the day to the crafty farding of their faces and the towering of their coiffures. And men, throwing passion into the wine-bowl to sink or swim, turned out thought to browse upon the green cloth. Cannot we even now in our fancy see them, those silent exquisites round the long table at Brooks's, masked, all of them, * lest the countenance should betray feeling,' in quinze. masks, through whose eyelets they sat peeping, peeping, while macao brought them riches or ruin! We can see them, those silent rascals, sitting there with their cards and their rouleaux and their wooden money-bowls, long after the dawn had crept up St. James's and pressed its haggard face against the window of the little club. Yes, we can raise their ghosts—and, more, we can see manywhere a devotion to hazard fully as meek as theirs. In England there has been a wonderful revival of cards. Baccarat may rival dead faro in the tale of her devotees. We have all seen the sweet English chatelaine at her roulette wheel, and ere long it may be that tender parents will be writing to complain of the compulsory baccarat in our public schools.

**In fact, we are all gamblers once more, but our gambling is on a finer scale than ever it was. We fly from the card-room to the heath, and from the heath to the City, and from the City to the coast of the Mediterranean. Arid just as no one seriously encourages the clergy in its frantic efforts to lay the spirit of chance that has thus resurged among us, so no longer are many faces set against that other great sign of a more complicated life, the love for cosmetics. No longer is a lady of fashion blamed if, to escape the outrageous persecution of time, she fly for sanctuary to the toilet-table ; and if a damosel, prying in her mirror, be sure that with brush and pigment she can trick herself into more charm, we are not angry. Indeed, why should .we ever have been ? Surely it is laudable, this wish to make fair the ugly and overtop fairness, and no wonder that within the last five years the trade of the makers of cosmetics has increased immoderately—twenty-fold, so one of these makers has said to me. We need but walk down any modish street and peer into ,the little broughams that flit past, or (in Thackeray's phrase) under the bonnet of any woman we meet, to see over how wide a kingdom rouge reigns.**

**And.now the use of pigments is becoming general, and most women are not so young as they are painted, it may be asked curiously how the prejudice ever came into being. Indeed, it is hard to trace folly, for that it is inconsequent, to its start; and perhaps it savours too much of reason to suggest that the prejudice was due to the tristful confusion man has made of soul and surface. Through trusting so**

keenly to the detection of the one by keeping watch upon the other, and by force of the thousand errors following, he has come to think of surface even as the reverse of soul. He seems to suppose that every clown beneath his paint and lip-salve is moribund and knows it (though in verity, I am told, clowns are as cheerful a class of men as any other), that the fairer the fruit's rind and the more delectable its bloom, the closer are packed the ashes within it. The very jargon of the hunting-field connects cunning with a mask. And so perhaps came man's anger at the embellishment of women—that lovely mask of enamel with its shadows of pink and tiny pencilled veins, what must lurk behind it? Of what treacherous mysteries may it not be the screen ? Does not the heathen lacquer her dark face, and the harlot paint her cheeks, because sorrow has made them pale?

After all, the old prejudice is a-dying. We need not pry into the secret of its birth. Rather is this a time of jolliness and glad indulgence. For the era of rouge is upon us, and as only in an elaborate era can man, by the tangled accrescency of his own pleasures and emotions, reach that refinement which is his highest excellence, and by making himself, so to say, independent of Nature, come nearest to God, so only in an elaborate era is woman perfect. Artificfc is the strength of the world, and in that same mask of paint and powder, shadowed with vermeil tinct and most trimly pencilled, is woman's strength.

. For see ! We need not look so far back to see woman under the direct influence of Nature. Early

in this century, our grandmothers, sickening of the odour of faded exotics and spilt wine, came out into the daylight once more and Jet the breezes blow around their faces and enter, sharp and welcome, into their lungs. Artifice they drove forth and they set Martin Tupper upon a throne of mahogany to rule over them. A very reign of terror set in. All things were sacrificed to the fetish Nature. Old ladies may still be heard to tell how, when they were girls, affectation was not; and, if we verify their assertion in the light of such literary authorities as. Dickens, we find that it is absolutely true. Women appear to have been in those days utterly natural in their conduct—flighty, fainting, blushing, gushing, giggling, and shaking their curls. They knew no reserve in the first days of the Victorian era. No thought was held too trivial, no emotion too silly, to express. To Nature everything was sacrificed. Great heavens ! And in those barren days what influence did women exert! By men they seem not to have been feared nor loved, but regarded rather as 'dear little creatures' or 'wonderful little beings,' and in their relation to life as foolish and ineffectual as the landscapes they did in water-colour. Yet, if the women of those years were of no great account, they had a certain charm, and they at least had not begun to trespass upon men's grounds; if they touched not thought, which is theirs by right, at any rate they refrained from action, which is ours. Far more serious was it when, in the natural trend of time, they became enamoured of ranking and archery and galloping

**along the Brighton Parade. Swiftly they have sped on since then from horror to horror. The invasion of the tennis-courts and of the golf-links, the seizure of the bicycle and of the typewriter, were but steps preliminary in that campaign which is to end with the final victorious occupation of St. Stephen's. But stay ! The horrific pioneers of womanhood who gad hither and thither and, confounding wisdom with the device on her shield,'shriek for the unbecoming, are doomed. Though they spin their bicycle-treadles so amazingly fast, they are too late. Though they scream victory, none follow them. Artifice, that fair exile, has returned.**

**Yes, though the pioneers know it not, they are doomed already. For of the curiosities of history not the least strange is the manner in which two social movements may be seen to overlap, long after the second has, in truth, given its death-blow to the first. And, in like manner, as one has seen the limbs of a murdered thing in lovely movement, so we need not doubt that, though the voices of those who cry out for reform be very terribly shrill, they will soon be hushed. Dear Artifice is with us. It needed but that we should wait**

**Surely, without any of my pleading, women will welcome their great and amiable protectrix, as by instinct. For (have I not said ?) it is upon her that all their strength, their life almost, depends. Artifice's first command to them is that they should repose. With bodily activity their powder will fly, their enamel crack. They are butterflies who must not flit, if they love their bloom. Now, setting**

aside the point of view of passion, from which very many obvious things might be said (and probably have been by the minor poets), it is, from the intellectual point of view, quite necessary that a woman should repose. Hers is the resupinate sex. On her couch she is a goddess, but so soon as ever she put her foot to the ground—lo, she is the veriest little sillypop, and quite done for. She cannot rival us in action, but she is our mistress in the things of the mind. Let her not by second-rate athletics, nor indeed by any exercise soever of the limbs, spoil the pretty procedure of her reason. Let her be content to remain the guide, the subtle suggester of what *we* must do, the strategist whose soldiers we are, the little architect whose workmen.

'After all,' as a pretty girl once said 'to me, 'women are a sex by themselves, so to speak,' and the sharper the line between their worldly functions and ours, the better. This greater swiftness and less erring subtlety of mind, their forte and privilege, justifies the painted mask that Artifice bids them wear. Behind it their minds can play without let. They gain the strength of reserve. They become important, as in the days of the Roman Empire were the Emperor's mistresses, as was the Pompadour at Versailles, as was our Elizabeth. Yet do not their faces become lined with thought; beautiful and without meaning are their faces.

And, truly, of all the good things that will happen with the full revival of cosmetics, one of the best is **that** surface will finally be severed from soul.. That **damnable confusion** will be-solyed **by the ex-**

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tinguishing of a prejudice which, as I suggest, itself created.« Too long has the face been degraded from its rank as a thing of beauty to a mere vulgar index of character or emotion. We had come to troubling ourselves, not with its charm of colour and line, but with such questions as whether the lips were sensuous, the eyes full of sadness, the nose indicative of determination. I have no quarrel with physiognomy. For my own part I believe in it. But it has tended to degrade the face aesthetically, in such wise as the study of cheirosophy has tended to degrade the hand. And the use of cosmetics, the masking of the face, will change this. We shall gaze at a woman merely because she is beautiful, not stare into her face anxiously, as into the face of a barometer.

How fatal it has been, in how many ways, this confusion of soul and service ! Wise were the Greeks in making plain masks for their mummers to play in, and dunces we not to have done the same ! Only the other day, an actress was saying that what she was most proud of in her art—next, of course, to having appeared in some provincial pantomime at the age of three—was the deftness with which she contrived, in parts demanding a rapid succession of emotions, to dab her cheeks quite quickly with rouge from the palm of her right hand or powder from the palm of her left. Gracious goodiness i why do not we have masks upon the stage ? Drama is the presentment of the soul in action. The mirror of the soul is the voice. Let the young critics, who seek a cheap reputation far

austerity, by cavilling at 'incidental music,' set their faces rather against the attempt to justify inferior dramatic art by the subvention of a quite alien art like painting, of any art, indeed, whose sphere is only surface. Let those, again, who sneer, so rightly, at the 'painted anecdotes of the Academy,' censure equally the writers who trespass on painters' ground. It is a proclaimed sin that a painter should concern himself with a good little girl's affection for a Scotch greyhound, or the keen enjoyment of their port by elderly* gentlemen of the early 'forties. Yet, for a painter to prod the soul with his paint-brush* is no worse than for a novelist to refuse to dip under the surface, and the fashion of avoiding a psychological study of grief by stating that the owner's hair turned white in a single night, or of shame by mentioning a sudden rush of scarlet to the cheeks, is as lamentable as may be. But ! But with the universal use of cosmetics and the consequent secernment of soul and surface, upon which, at the risk of irritating a reader, I must again insist, all those old properties that went to bolster up the ordinary novel—the trembling lips, the flashing eyes, the determined curve of the chin, the nervous trick -of biting the moustache, aye, and the hectic spot of red on either cheek—will be made spiflicate, as the puppets were spiflicated by Don Quixote. Yes, even now Demos begins *to* discern. The same spirit that has revived rouge, smote his mouth as it grinned at the wondrous painter of mist and river, and now sends him sprawling for the pearls that Meredith dived for in the deep waters of romance.

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**Indeed, the revival of cosmetics must needs be so splendid an influence, conjuring boons innumerable, that one inclines almost to mutter against that inexorable law by which Artifice must perish from time to time. That such branches of painting as the staining of glass or the illuminating of manuscripts should fall into disuse seems, in comparison, so likely; these were esoteric arts ; they died with the monastic spirit. But personal appearance is art's very basis. The painting of the face is the first kind of painting men can have known. To make beautiful things—is it not an impulse laid upon few ? But to make oneself beautiful is an universal instinct. Strange that the resultant art could ever, perish ! So fascinating an art too ! So various in its materials from stimmis, psimythium, and fuligo to bismuth and arsenic, so simple in that its ground and its subject-matter are one, so marvellous in that its very subject-matter becomes lovely when an artist has selected it ! For surely this is no idle nor fantastic saying. To deny that 'making up' is an art, on the pretext that the finished work of its exponents depends for beauty and excellence Upon the ground chosen for the work, is absurd. At the touch of a true artist, the plainest face turns comely. As subject-matter the face is no more than suggestive, as ground, merely a loom round which the beatus artifex may spin the threads of any golden fabric :**

*'Qpae nunc nomen habent operosi signa Maronis*
*Pondus iners quondam duraque massa fuit.*
*Multa viros nescire decet; pars maxima rerum*
*Offendat, si non interiora tegas,'*

**and, as Ovid would seem to suggest, by pigments any tone may be set aglow on a woman's cheek, from enamel the features take any form. Insomuch that surely the advocates of soup-kitchens and free-libraries and other devices for givjng people what Providence did not mean them to receive should send out pamphlets in the praise of self-embellishment. For it will place Beauty within easy reach of many who could not otherwise hope to attain to it.**

**But of course Artifice is rather exacting. In return for the repose she forces—so wisely !—upon her followers when the sun is high or the moon is blown across heaven, she demands that they should pay her long homage at the sun's rising. The initiate may not enter lightly upon her mysteries. For, if a bad complexion be inexcusable, to be ill—painted is unforgivable; and, when the toilet is laden once more with the fulness of its elaboration, we shall hear no more of the proper occupation for women. And think, how sweet an energy, to sit at the mirror of coquetry ! See the dear merits of the toilet as shown upon old vases, or upon the walls of Roman ruins, or, rather still, read Bottiger's allur-ing, scholarly description of 'Morgenscenen im Puttzimmer Einer Reichen Romerin.' Read of Sabina's face as she comes through the curtain of her. bed-chamber to the chamber of her toilet. The slave-girls have long been chafing their white**

feet upon the marble floor. They stand, those timid Greek girls, marshalled in litte battalions. Each has her appointed task, and all kneel in welcome as Sabina stalks, ugly and frowning, to the toilet chair. Scaphion steps forth from among them, and, dipping a tiny sponge in a bowl of hot milk, passes it lightly, ever so lightly, over her mistress' face. The Poppaean pastes melt beneath it like snow. A cooling lotion is poured over her brow, and is fanned with feathers. Phiale comes after, a clever girl, captured in some sea-skirmish on the Ægean. In her left hand she holds the ivory box wherein are the phucus and that white powder, psimythium ;. in her right a sheaf of slim brushes. With how sure a touch does she mingle the colours, and in what sweet proportion blushes and blanches her lady's upturned face. Phiale is the cleverest of all the slaves. Now Calamis dips her quill in a certain powder that floats, liquid and sable, in the hollow of her palm. Standing upon tiptoe and with lips parted, she traces the arch of the eyebrows. The slaves whisper loudly of their lady's beauty, and two of them hold up a mirror to her. Yes, the eyebrows are rightly arched. But why does Psecas abase herself? She is craving leave to, powder Sabina's hair with a fine new powder. It is. made of the grated rind of the cedar-tree, and a Gallic perfumer, whose stall is near the Circus, gave it to her for a kiss. No lady in Rome knows of it. And so, when four special slaves have piled up the head-dress, out of a perforated box this glistening powder is showered. Into every little brown ringlet it enters,

till Sabina's hair seems like a pile of gold coins. Lest the breezes send it flying, the girls lay the powder with sprinkled attar. Soon Sabina will start for the Temple of Cybele.

Ah 1 Such are the lures of the toilet that none will for long hold aloof from them. Cosmetics are not going to be a mere prosaic remedy for age or plainness, but all ladies and all young girls will come to love them. Does not a certain blithe Marquise, whose *lettres intimes* from the Court of Louis Seize are less read than their wit deserves, tell us how she was scandalised to see *'meme les toutes jeunes demoiselles emaillees comme ma tabatiere' ?* So it shall be with us. Surely the common prejudice against painting the lily can but be based on mere ground of economy. That which is already fair is complete, it may be urged—urged implausibly, for there are not so many lovely things in this world that we can afford not to know each one of them by heart. There is only one white lily, and who that has ever seen—as I have—a lily really well painted could grudge the artist so fair a ground for his skill ? Scarcely do you believe through how many nice metamorphoses a lily may be passed by him. In like manner, we all know the, young girl, with her simpleness, her goodness, her wayward ignorance. And a very charming ideal for England must she have been, and a very natural one, when a young girl sat even on the throne. But no nation can keep its ideal for ever, and it needed none of Mr, Gilbert's delicate satire in 'Utopia' to remind us that she had passed out of our ken with the rest of

**the early Victorian era. What writer of plays, as lately asked some pressman, who had been told off to attend many first nights and knew what he was talking about, ever dreams of making the young girl the centre of his theme? Rather he seeks inspiration from the tried and tired woman of the world, in all her intricate maturity, whilst, by way of comic relief, he sends the young girl flitting in and out with a tennis-racket, the poor *εἴδωλον ἀμαυρόν* of her former self. The season of the unsophisticated is gone by, and the young girl's final extinction beneath the rising tides of cosmetics will leave no gap in life and will rob art of nothing.**

**'Tush,' I can hear some damned flutterpate exclaim, 'girlishness and innocence are as strong and as permanent as womanhood itself! Why, a few months past, the whole town went mad over Miss Cissie Loftus ! Was not hers a success of girlish innocence and the absence of rouge? If such things as these be outmoded, why was she so wildly popular?' Indeed, the triumph of that clever girl, whose *debut* made London nice even in August, is but another witness to the truth of my contention. In a very sophisticated time, simplicity has a new dulcedo. Hers- was a success of contrast. Accustomed to clever malaperts like Miss Lloyd or Miss Reeve, whose experienced pouts and smiles under the sun-bonnet are a standing burlesque of innocence and girlishness, Demos was really delighted, for once and away, to see the real presentment of these things upon his stage. Coming after all those sly serios, coining so young**

and mere with her pink frock and straightly combed hair, Miss Cissie Loftus had the charm which things of another period often do possess. Besides, just as we adored her for the abrupt nod with which she was wont at first to acknowledge the applause, so we were glad for her to come upon the stage with nothing to tinge the ivory of her cheeks. It seemed so strange, that neglect of convention.. To be behind footlights and not rouged ! Yes, hers was a success of contrast. She was like a daisy in the window at Solomons'. She was delightful. And yet, such is the force of convention, that when last I saw her, playing in some burlesque at the Gaiety, her fringe was curled and her pretty face rouged with the best of them. And, if further need be to show the absurdity of having called her performance 'a triumph of naturalness over the jaded spirit of modernity,' let us reflect that the little mimic was not a real old-fashioned girl after all. She had none of that restless naturalness that would seem to have characterized the girl of the early Victorian days. She had no pretty ways—no smiles nor blushes nor tremors. Possibly Demos could not have stood a presentment of girlishness unrestrained.

But, with her grave insouciance, Miss Cissie Loftus had much of the reserve that is one of the factors of feminine perfection, and to most comes only, as I have said, with artifice. Her features played very, very slightly. And in truth, this may have been one of the reasons of her great success. For expression is but too often the ruin of a face ; and, since we cannot, as yet, so order the circumstances of

life that women shall never be betrayed into 'an unbecoming emotion,' when the brunette shall never have cause to blush nor La Gioconda to frown, the safest way by far*is to create, by brush and pigments, artificial expression for every face.

And this—say you ?—will make monotony ? You are mistaken, *toto cælo* mistaken. When your mistress has wearied you with one expression, then it will need but a few touches of that pencil, a backward sweep of that brush, and lo, you will be revelling in another. For though, of course, the painting of the face is, in manner, most like the painting of canvas, in outcome it is rather akin to the art of music—lasting, like music's echo, not for very long. So that, no doubt, of the many little appurtenances of the Reformed. Toilet Table, not the least vital will be a list of the emotions that become its owner, with recipes for simulating them. According to the colour she wills her hair to be for the time—black or yellow or, peradventure, burnished red—she will blush for you, sneer for you, laugh or languish for you. The good combinations of line and colour are nearly numberless, and by their means poor restless woman will be able to realize her moods, in all their shades and lights and dappledoms, to live many lives and masquerade through many moments of joy. No monotony will be. And for us men matrimony will have lost its sting.

But that in the world of women they will not neglect this art, so ripping in itself, in its result so wonderfully beneficent, I am sure indeed. Much,

I have said, is already done for its full revival. The spirit of the age has made straight the path of its professors. Fashion has made Jezebel surrender her monopoly of the rouge-pot. As yet, the great art of self-embellishment is for us but in its infancy. But if Englishwomen can bring it to the flower of an excellence so supreme as never yet has it known, then, though Old England lose her martial and commercial supremacy, we patriots will have the satisfaction of knowing that she has been advanced at one bound to a place in the councils of aesthetic Europe. And, in sooth, is this hoping too high of my countrywomen? True that, as the art seems always to have appealed to the ladies of Athens, and it was not until the waning time of the Republic that Roman ladies learned to love the practice of it, so Paris, Athenian in this as in all other things, has been noted hitherto as a far more vivid centre of the art than London. But it was in Rome, under the Emperors, that unguentaria reached its zenith, and shall it not be in London, soon, that unguentaria shall outstrip its Roman perfection ! Surely there must be among us artists as cunning in the use of brush and puff as any who lived at Versailles. Surely the splendid, impalpable advance of good taste, as shown in dress and in the decoration of houses, may justify my hope of the preeminence of Englishwomen in the cosmetic art. By their innate delicacy of touch they will accomplish much, and much, of course, by their swift feminine perception. Yet, it were well that they should know something **also of the theoretical** side of the craft. Modern

authorities upon the mysteries of the toilet are, it is true, rather few; but among the ancients many a writer would seem to have been fascinated by them. Archigehes, a man of science at the Court of Cleopatra, and Criton at the Court of the Emperor Trajan, both wrote treatises upon cosmetics—doubtless most scholarly treatises that would have given many a precious hint. It is a pity they are not extant. From Lucian or from Juvenal, with his bitter picture of a Roman *levee,* much may be learnt; from the staid pages of Xenophon and Aristophanes' dear farces. But best of all is that fine book of the Ars Amatoria that Ovid has set aside for the consideration of dyes, perfumes, and pomades. Written by an artist who knew the allurement of the toilet and understood its philosophy, it remains without rival as a treatise upon Artifice. It is more than a poem, it is a manual; and if there be left in England any lady who cannot read Latin in the original she will do well to procure a discreet translation. In the Bodleian Library there is treasured the only known copy of a very poignant and delightful rendering of this one book of Ovid's masterpiece. It was made by a certain Wye Waltonstall, who lived in the days of Elizabeth, and, seeing that he dedicated it to 'the Vertuous Ladyes and Gendewomen of Great Britain,' I am sure that the gallant writer, could he know of our great renaissance of cosmetics, would wish his little work to be placed once more within their reach. 'Inafmuch as to you, ladyes and gentlewomen,' so he writes in his queer little dedication, 'my booke of pigments doth firft addreffe

itfelf, that it may kiffe your hands and afterward have the lines thereof in reading fweetened by the odour of your breath, while the dead letters formed into words by your divided lips may receive new life by your paffionate expreffion, and the words marryed in that Ruby coloured temple may thus happily united, multiply your contentment.' It is rather sad to think that, at this crisis in the. history of pigments, the Vertuous Ladyes and Gentlewomen cannot read the libellus of Wye Waltonstall, who did so dearly love pigments.

But since' the days when these great critics wrote their treatises, with what gifts innumerable has Artifice been loaded by Science ! Many little partitions must be added to the narthecium before it can comprehend all the new cosmetics that have-been quietly devised since classical days, and will make the modern toilet chalks away more splendid in its possibilities. A pity that no one has devoted himself to the compiling of a new list; but doubtless all the newest devices are known to the admirable unguentarians of Bond Street, who will impart them to their clients. Our thanks, too, should be given to Science for ridding us of the old danger that was latent in the use of cosmetics. Nowadays they cannot, being purged of any poisonous element, do harm to the skin that they make beautiful. There need be no more sowing the seeds of destruction in the furrows of time, no martyrs to the cause like Maria, Countess of Coventry, that fair dame but infelix, who died, so they relate, from the effect of a poisonous rouge upon her lips. No, we need

have no fears now. Artifice will claim not another victim from among her worshippers.

Loveliness shall sit at the toilet, watching her oval face in the oval mirror. Her smooth fingers shall flit among the paints and powder, to tip and mingle them, catch up a pencil, clasp a phial, and what not and what *not,* until the mask of vermeil tinct has been laid aptly, the enamel quite hardened. And, heavens, how she will charm us and ensorcel our eyes.! Positively rouge will rob us for a time of all our reason; we shall go mad over masks. Was it not at Capua that they had a whole street where nothing was sold but dyes and unguents? We must have such a street, and, to fill our new Seplasia, our Arcade of the Unguents, all herbs and minerals and live creatures shall give of their substance. The white cliffs of Albion shall be ground to powder for Loveliness, and perfumed by the ghost of many a little violet. The fluffy eider-ducks, that are swimming round the pond, shall lose their feathers, that the powder-puff may be moonlike as it passes over Loveliness' lovely face. Even the camels shall become ministers of delight, giving many tufts of their hair to be stained in her splendid colour-box, and across her cheek the swift hare's foot shall fly as of old. The sea shall offer her the phucus, its scarlet weed. We shall spill the blood of mulberries at her bidding. And, as in another period of great ecstasy, a dancing wanton, la belle Aubrey, was crowned upon a church's lighted altar, so Arsenic, that 'greentress'd goddess,' ashamed at length of skulking between the soup of the un-

popular and the test-tubes of the Queen's analyst, shall be exalted to a place of consummate honour upon the toilet-table of Loveliness.

All these things shall come to pass. Times of jolliness and glad indulgence ! For Artifice, whom we drove forth, has returned among us, and, though her eyes are red with crying, she is smiling forgiveness. She is kind. Let us dance and be glad, and trip the cockawhoop ! Artifice, sweetest exile, is come into her kingdom. Let us dance her a welcome !

*Oxford,* 1894.

## *Poor Romeo !*

EVEN now Bath glories in his legend, not idly, for he was the most fantastic animal that ever stepped upon her pavement. Were ever a statue given him (and indeed he is worthy of a grotesque in marble), it would be put in Pulteney Street or the Circus. I know that the palm trees of Antigua overshadowed his cradle, that there must be even now in Boulogne many who set eyes on him in the time of his less fatuous declension, that he died in London. But Mr. Coates (for of that Romeo I write) must be claimed by none of these places. Bath saw the laughable disaster of his *debut,* and so, in a manner, his whole life seems to belong to her, and the story of it to be a part of her annals.

The Antiguan was already on the brink of middle-age when he first trod the English shore. But, for all his thirty-seven years, he had the heart of a youth, and his purse being yet as heavy as his heart was light, the English sun seemed to shine gloriously about his path and gild the letters of introduction that he scattered everywhere. Also, he was a gentleman of amiable, nearly elegant mien, and something of a scholar. His father had been the most respectable resident Antigua could show, so that little Robert, the future Romeo, had often sat at dessert with distinguished travellers through the Indies. But in the year 1807 old Mr, Coates had died. As we may read in vol. lxxviii, of *The*

*Gentleman's Magazine,* 'the Almighty, whom he alone feared, was pleased to take him from this life, after having sustained an untarnished reputation for seventy-three years,' a passage which, though objectionable in its theology, gives the true story of Romeo's antecedents and disposes of the later calumnies that declared him the son of a tailor. Realizing that he was now an orphan, an orphan with not a few grey hairs, our hero had set sail in quest of amusing adventure.

For three months he took the waters of Bath, unobtrusively, like other. well-bred visitors. His attendance was solicited for all the most fashionable routs, and at assemblies he sat always in the shade of some titled turban. In fact, Mr. Coates was a great success. There was an air of most romantic mystery that endeared his presence to all the damsels fluttering fans in the Pump Room. It set them vying for his conduct through the mazes of the Quadrille or of the Triumph, and blushing at the sound of his name. Alas ! their tremulous rivalry lasted not long. Soon they saw that Emma, sole daughter of Sir James Tylney Long, that wealthy baronet, had cast a magic net about the warm Antiguan heart. In the wake of her chair, by night and day, Mr. Coates was obsequious. When she cried that she would not drink the water without some delicacy to banish the iron taste, it was he who stood by with a box of vanilla-rusks. When he shaved his great moustachio, it was at her caprice. And his devotion to Miss Emma was the more noted fr that his own considerable riches were proof that

it was true and single. He himself warned her, in some verses written for him by Euphemia Boswell, against the crew of penniless admirers who surrounded her:

*'Lady, ah! too bewitching lady! now beware*
*Of artful men that fain would thee ensnare*
*Not for thy merit, but thy fortune's sake.*
*Give me your hand—your cash let venals take.'*

Miss Emma was his first love. To understand his subsequent behaviour, let us remember that Cupid's shaft pierces most poignantly the breast of middle-age. Not that Mr. Coates was laughed at in Bath for a love-a-lack-a-daisy. On the contrary, his mien, his manner, were as yet so studiously correct, his speech so reticent, that laughter had been unusually inept. The only strange taste evinced by him was his devotion to theatricals. He would hold forth, by the hour, upon the fine conception of such parts as Macbeth, Othello and, especially, Romeo. Many ladies and gentlemen were privileged to hear him recite, in this or that drawing-room, after supper. All testified to the real fire with which he inflamed the lines of love or hatred. His voice, his gesture, his scholarship, were all approved. A fine symphony of praise assured Mr. Coates that no suitor worthier than he had ever courted Thespis. The lust for the footlights' glare grew lurid in his mothish eye. What, after all, were these poor triumphs of the parlour ? It might bethat contemptuous Emma, hearing the loud salvos of the gallery and boxes, would call him at length her lord.

At this time there arrived at the York House

Mr. Pryse Gordon, Whose memoirs we know. Mr. Coates himself was staying at number ** Gay Street, but was in the habit of breakfasting daily at the York House, where he attracted Mr. Gordon's attention by 'rehearsing passages from Shakespeare, with a tone and gesture extremely striking both to the eye and the ear.' Mr. Gordon warmly complimented him and suggested that he should give a public exposition of his art. The cheeks of the amateur flushed with pleasure*. 'I am ready and willing,' he replied, 'to play "Romeo" to a Bath audience, if the manager will get up the play and give me a good "Juliet" ; my costume is superb and adorned with diamonds, but I have not the advantage of knowing the manager, Dimonds.' Pleased by the stranger's ready wit, Mr. Gordon scribbled a note of introduction to Dimonds there and then. So soon as he had 'discussed a brace of muffins and so many eggs,' the new Romeo started for the playhouse, and that very day bills were posted to the effect that 'a Gentleman of Fashion would make his first appearance on February 9 in a *role* of Shakespeare.' All the lower boxes were immediately secured by Lady Belmore and other lights of Bath. 'Butlers and Abigails,' it is said, 'were commanded by their mistresses to take their stand in the centre of the pit and give Mr. Coates a capital, hearty clapping.' Indeed, throughout the week that elapsed before the *premiere,* no pains were spared in assuring a great success. Miss Tylney Long showed some interest in the arrangements. Gossip spoke of her as a likely bride.

The night came. Fashion, Virtue, and Intellect thronged the house. Nothing could have been more cordial than the temper of the gallery. All were eager to applaud the new Romeo. Presently, when the varlets of Verona had brawled, there stepped into the square—what !—a mountebank, a monstrosity. Hurrah died upon every lip. The house was thunderstruck. Whose legs were in those scarlet pantaloons ? Whose face grinned over that bolster-cravat, and under that Charles I I . wig and opera-hat? From whose shoulders hung that spangled sky-blue cloak? Was this bedizened scarecrow the Amateur of Fashion, for sight of whom they had paid their shillings ? At length, a voice from the gallery cried, 'Good evening, Mr. Coates,' and, as the Antiguan—for he it was—bowed low, the theatre was filled with yells of merriment. Only the people in the boxes were still silent, staring coldly at the *protege* who had played them, so odious a prank. Lady Belmore rose and called for her chariot. Her example was followed by several ladies of rank. The rest sat spellbound, and of their number was Miss Tylney Long, at whose rigid face many glasses were, of course, directed. Meanwhile the play proceeded. Those lines that were not drowned in laughter Mr. Coates spoke in the most foolish and extravagant manner. He cut little capers at odd moments. He laid his hand on his heart and bowed, now to this, now to that part of the house, always with a grin. In the balcony-scene he produced a snuff-box, and, after taking a pinch, offered it to the bewildered Juliet. Coming

down to the footlights, he laid it on the cushion of the stage-box and begged the inmates to refresh themselves, and to 'pass the golden trifle on.' The performance, so obviously grotesque, was just the kind of thing to please the gods. The limp of Hephaestus could not have called laughter so unquenchable from their lips. It is no trifle to set Englishmen laughing, but once you have done it, you can hardly stop them. Act after act of the beautiful love-play was performed without one sign of satiety from the seers of it. The laughter rather swelled in volume. Romeo died in so ludicrous a way that a cry of 'encore' arose and the death was actually twice repeated. At the fall of the curtain there was prolonged applause. Mr. Coates came forward, and the good-humoured public pelted him with fragments of the benches. One splinter struck his right temple, inflicting a scar, of which Mr. Coates was, in his old age, not a little proud. Such is the traditional account of this curious *debut.* Mr. Pryse Gordon, however, in his memoirs tells another tale. He professes to have seen nothing peculiar in Romeo's dress save its display of fine diamonds, and to have admired the whole interpretation. The attitude of the audience he attributes to a hostile cabal. John R. and Hunter H. Robinson, in their memoir of Romeo Coates, echo Mr. Pryse Gordon's tale. They would have done well to weigh their authorities more accurately.

I had often wondered at this discrepancy between document and tradition. Last spring, when I **was**

in Bath for a few days, my mind brooded especially on the question. Indeed, Bath, with her faded memories, her *tristesse,* drives one to reverie. Fashion no longer smiles from her windows nor dances in her sunshine, and in her deserted parks the invalids build up their constitutions. Now and again, as one of the frequent chairs glided past me, I wondered if its shadowy freight were the ghost of poor Romeo. I felt sure that the traditional account of his *debut* was mainly correct. How could it, indeed, be fake? Tradition is always a safer guide to truth than is the tale of one man. I might amuse myself here, in Bath, by verifying my notion of the *debut* or proving it false.

One morning I was walking through a narrow street in the western quarter of Bath, and came to the window of a very little shop, which was full of dusty books, prints and engravings. I spied in one corner of it the discoloured print of a queer, lean figure, posturing in a garden. In one hand this figure held a snuff-box, in the other an opera-hat. Its sharp features and wide grin, flanked by luxuriant whiskers, looked strange under § Caroline wig. Above it was a balcony and a lady in an attitude of surprise. Beneath it were these words, faintly lettered : *Bombastes Coates wooing the Peerless Capu that's 'nough (that snuff)* 1809. I coveted the print I went into the shop.

A very old man peered at me and asked my errand: I pointed to the print of Mr. Coates, which he gave me for a few shillings, chuckling at the pun upon the margin.

'Ah,' he said, 'they're forgetting him now, but he was a fine figure, a fine sort of figure.'

'You saw him?'

'No, no. I'm only seventy. But I've known those who saw him. My father had a pile of such prints.'

'Did your father see him?' I asked, as the old man furled my treasure and tied it with a piece of tape.

'My father, sir, was a friend of Mr. Coates,' he said. 'He entertained him in Gay Street. Mr. Coates was my father's lodger all the months he was in Bath. A good tenant, too. Never eccentric under my father's roof—never eccentric'

I begged the old bookseller to tell me more of this matter. It seemed that his father had been a citizen of some consequence, and had owned a house in modish Gay Street, where he let lodgings. Thither, by the advice of a friend, Mr. Coates had gone so soon as he arrived in the town, and had stayed there down to the day after his *debut*, when he left for London.

. 'My father often told me that Mr. Coates was crying bitterly when he settled the bill and got into his travelling-chaise. He'd come back from the playhouse the night before as cheerful as could be. He'd said *he* didn't mind what the public thought of his acting. But in the morning a letter was brought for him, and when he read it he seemed to go quite mad.'

'I wonder what was in the letter!' I asked. 'Did your father never know who sent it?'

'Ah,' my greybeard rejoined, 'that's the most curious thing. And it's a secret. I can't tell you.'

He was not as good as his word. I bribed him delicately with the purchase of more than one old book. Also, I think, he was flattered by my eager curiosity to learn his long-pent secret. He told me that the letter was brought to the house by one of the footmen of Sir James Tylney Long, and that his father himself delivered it into the hands of Mr. Coates.

'When he had read it through, the poor gentleman tore it into many fragments, and stood staring before him, pale as a ghost. "I must not stay another hour in Bath," he said. When he was gone, my father (God forgive him !) gathered up all the scraps of the letter, and for a long time he tried to piece them together. But there were a great many of them, and my father was not a scholar, though he was affluent.'

'What became of the scraps?' I asked. 'Did your father keep them?'

'Yes, he did. And I used **to** try, when I **was** younger, to make out something from them. **But** even I never seemed to get **near it. I've never** thrown them away, though. They're in **a box.**'

**I** got **them** for a piece **of gold that I could ill spare—some score or so of shreds of yellow paper, traversed with pale ink. The joy of the archæologbt** with **an unknown papyrus, of the detective with a clue, surged in me. Indeed, I was not sure whether I was engaged in private inquiry or in research; so recent, so remote was the mystery. After two days'**

labour, I marshalled the elusive words. This is the text of them :

MR. COAXES, SIR,

They say Revenge is sweet. I am fortunate to find it is so. I have compelled you to be far more a Fool than you made me at the *fete-champetre* of Lady.B. & I, having accomplished my aim, am ready to forgive you now, as you implored me on the occasion of the *fete.* But pray build no Hope that I, forgiving you, will once more regard you as my Suitor. For that cannot ever be. I decided you should show yourself a Fool before many people. But such Folly does not commend your hand to mine. Therefore desist your irksome attention &, if need be, begone from Bath. I have punished you, & would save my eyes the *trouble* to turn away from your person. I pray that you regard this epistle as privileged and private.

E. T. L. 10 of February.

The letter lies before me as I write. It is written throughout in a firm and very delicate Italian hand. Under the neat initials is drawn, instead of the ordinary flourish, an arrow, and the absence of any erasure in a letter of such moment suggests a calm, deliberate character and, probably, rough copies. I did not, at the time, suffer my fancy to linger over the tessellated document I set to elucidating the reference to the *fete-champetre.* As I retraced my footsteps to the little bookshop, I wondered if I should find any excuse for the cruel faithlessness of Emma Tylney Long.

The bookseller was greatly excited when I told him I had re-created the letter. He was very eager to see it. I did not pander to his curiosity. He even offered to buy the article back at cost price. I asked him if he had ever heard, in his youth, of any scene that had passed between Miss Tylney Long and Mr. Coates at some *fete-champetre.* The old man thought for some time, but he could not help me. Where then, I asked him, could I search old files of local newspapers ? He told me that there were supposed to be many- such files mouldering in the archives of the Town Hall.

I secured access, without difficulty, to these files. A whole day I spent in searching the copies issued by this and that journal during the months that Romeo was in Bath. In the yellow pages of these forgotten prints I came upon many complimentary allusions to Mr. Coates : 'The visitor welcomed (by all our aristocracy) from distant Ind,' 'the ubiquitous,' 'the charitable *riche.'* Of his 'forth-coming impersonation of Romeo and Juliet' there were constant puffs, quite in the modern manner. The accounts of his *debut* all showed that Mr. Pryse Gordon's account of it was fabulous. In one paper there was a bitter attack on 'Mr. Gordon, who was responsible for this insult to Thespian art, the gentry, and the people, for he first arranged the *whole production'—an* extract which makes it clear that this gentleman had a good motive for his version of the affair.

But I began to despair of ever learning what happened at *the fete-champttre.* There were accounts

of 'a grand garden-party, whereto Lady Belper, on March the twenty-eighth, invited a host of fashionable persons.' The names of Mr. Coates and of 'Sir James Tylney Long and his daughter' were duly recorded in the lists. But that was all. I turned at length to a tiny file, consisting of five copies only, *Bladdud's Courier,* Therein I found this paragraph, followed by some scurrilities which I will not quote :

'Mr. C**t*s, who will act Romeo *(Wherefore art thou Romeo?)* this coming week for the pleasure of *his fashionable circle,* incurred the contemptuous wrath of his Lady Fair at the Fete. It was a sad pity she entrusted him to hold her purse while she fed the gold-fishes. He was very proud of the honour till the gold fell from his hand among the gold-fishes. How appropriate was the misadventure ! But Miss Black Eyes, angry at her loss and her swain's clumsiness, cried : "Jump into the pond, sir, and find my purse *instanter!"* Several wags encouraged her, and the ladies were of the opinion that her adorer should certainly dive for the treasure. "Alas," the fellow said, "I cannot swim, Miss. But tell me how many guineas you carried and I will make them good to yourself." There was a great deal of laughter at this encounter, and *the haughty damsel turned on her heel,* nor did she vouchsafe another word to her *elderly* lover.

When recreant man
Meets lady's wrath, &c &c.'

So the story of the *debut* was complete ! Was

ever a lady more inexorable, more ingenious, in her revenge ? One can fancy the poor Antiguan going to the Baronet's house next day with a bouquet of flowers and passionately abasing himself, craving her forgiveness. One can fancy the wounded vanity of the girl, her shame that people had mocked her for the disobedience of her suitor. Revenge, as her letter shows, became her one thought. She would strike him through his other love, the love of Thespis. 'I have compelled you,' she wrote afterwards, in her bitter triumph, *to be a greater Fool than you made me.* She, then, it was. that drove him to his public absurdity, she who insisted that he should never win her unless he sacrificed his dear longing for stage-laurels and actually pilloried himself upon the stage. The wig, the pantaloons, the snuff-box, the grin, were all conceived, I fancy, in her pitiless spite. It is possible that she did but say : The more ridiculous you make yourself, the more hope for you.' But I do not believe that Mr. Coates, a man of no humour, conceived the means himself. *They* were surely hers.

It is terrible to think of the ambitious amateur in his bedroom, secretly practising hideous antics or gazing at his absurd apparel before a mirror. How loath must he have been to desecrate the lines he loved so dearly and had longed to declaim in all their beauty and their resonance ! And then, what irony at the daily rehearsal ! With how tad a smile must he have received the compliments of Mr. Dimonds on his fine performance, knowing how different it would all be 'on the night' 1

Nothing could have steeled him to the ordeal but his great love. He must have wavered, had not the exaltation of his love protected him. But the jeers of the mob were music in his hearing, his wounds love-symbols. Then came the girl's cruel contempt of his martyrdom.

Aphrodite, who has care of lovers, did not spare Miss Tylney Long. She made her love, a few months after, one who married her for her fortune and broke her heart. In years of misery the wayward girl worked out the penance of her unpardonable sin, dying, at length, in poverty and despair. Into the wounds of him who had so truly loved her was poured, after a space of fourteen years, the balsam of another love. On the 6th September, 1823, at St. George's, Hanover Square, Mr. Coates was married to Miss Anne Robinson, who was a faithful and devoted wife to him till he died.

Meanwhile, the rejected Romeo did not long repine. Two months after the tragedy at Bath, he was at Brighton, mingling with all the fashionable folk, and giving admirable recitations at routs. He was seen every day on the Parade, attired in an extravagant manner, very different to that he had adopted in Bath. A pale-blue *surtout,* tasselled Hessians, and a cocked hat were the most obvious items of his costume. He also affected a very curious tumbril, shaped like a shell and richly gilded. In this he used to drive around, every afternoon, amid the gapes of the populace. It is evident that, once having tasted the fruit of notoriety, he was loath to fall back on simpler fere. He had

**become a prey to the love of absurd ostentation. A lively example of dandyism unrestrained by taste, he parodied in his person the foibles of Mr. Brum* mell and the King. His diamonds and his equipage and other follies became the gossip of every newspaper in England. Nor did a day pass without the publication of some little rigmarole from his pen. Wherever there was a vacant theatre—were it in Cheltenham, Birmingham, or any other town —he would engage it for his productions. One night he would play his favourite part, Romeo, with reverence and ability. The next, he would repeat his first travesty in all its hideous harlequinade. Indeed, there can be little doubt that Mr. Coates, with his vile performances, must be held responsible for the decline of dramatic art in England and the invasion of the amateur. The sight of such folly, strutting unabashed, spoilt the prestige of the theatre. To-day our stage is filled with tailors'-dummy heroes, with heroines who have real curls and can open- and shut their eyes and, at a pinch, say 'mamma' and 'papa.' We must blame the Antiguan, I fear, for their existence. It was he---- the rascal—who first spread that *seemæ sacra fames.* Some say that he was a schemer and impostor, feigning eccentricity for his private ends. They are quite wrong; Mr. Coates was a very good man. He never made a penny out of his performances; he even lost many hundred pounds. Moreover, as his speeches before the curtain and his letters to the papers show, he took himself quite seriously. Only the insane take themselves quite seriously.**

**It was the unkindness of his love that maddened him. But he lived to be the lightest-hearted of lunatics and caused great amusement for many years. Whether we think of him in his relation to history or psychology, dandiacal or dramatic art, he is a salient, pathetic figure. That he is memorable for his defects, not for his qualities, I know. But Romeo, in the tragedy of his wild love and frail intellect, in the folly that stretched the corners of his 'peculiar grin' and shone in his diamonds and was emblazoned upon his tumbril, is more suggestive than some sages. He was so fantastic an animal that Oblivion were indeed amiss. If no more, he was a great Fool. In any case, it would be fun to have seen him.**

***London*, 1896.**

## *'Diminuendo*

IN the year of grace 1890, and in the beautiful autumn of that year, I was a freshman at Oxford. I remember how my tutor asked me what lectures I wished to attend, and how he laughed when I said that I wished to attend the lectures of Mr. Walter Pater. Also I remember how, one morning soon after, I went into Ryman's to order some foolish engraving for my room, and there saw, peering into a portfolio, a small, thick, rock-faced man, whose top-hat and gloves of *bright* dog-skin struck one of the many discords in that little city of learning or laughter. The serried bristles of his moustachio made for him a false-military air. I think I nearly went down when they told me that this was Pater.

Not that even in those more decadent days of my childhood did I admire the man as a stylist. Even then I was angry that he should treat English as a dead language, bored by that sedulous ritual wherewith he laid out every sentence as in a shroud —hanging, like a widower, long over its marmoreal beauty or ever he could lay it at length in his book, its sepulchre. From 'that laden air, the so cadaverous murmur of that sanctuary, I would hook it at the beck of any jade. The writing of Pater had never, indeed, appealed to me„ *ἀλλ' αἰεί,* having regard to the couth solemnity of his mind, to his philosophy, his rare erudition, *τινα φῶτα μέγαν καὶ*

*καλὸν ἐδέγμην.* And I suppose it was when at length I saw him that I first knew him to be fallible.

At school I had read *Marius the Epicurean* in bed and with a dark lantern. Indeed, I regarded it mainly as a tale of adventure, quite as fascinating as *Midshipman Easy,* and far less hard to understand, because there were no nautical terms in it. Marryat, moreover, never made me wish to run away to sea, whilst certainly Pater did make me wish for more 'colour' in the curriculum, for a renaissance of the Farrar period, when there was always 'a sullen spirit of revolt against the authorities'; when lockers were always being broken into and marks falsified, and small boys prevented from saying their prayers, insomuch that they vowed they would no longer buy brandy for their seniors. In some schools, I am told, the pretty old custom of roasting a fourth-form boy, whole, upon Founder's Day still survives. But in my school there was less sentiment. I ended by acquiescing in the slow revolution of its wheel of work and play. I felt that at Oxford, when I should be of age to matriculate, a Variegated dramatic life' was waiting for me. I was not a little too sanguine, alas!

How sad was my coming to the university ! Where were those sweet conditions I had pictured in my boyhood? Those antique contrasts? Did I ride, one sunset, through fens on a palfrey, watching the gold reflections on Magdalen Tower ? Did I ride over Magdalen Bridge and hear the consonance of evening-bells and cries from the river below? Did I rem in to wonder at the raised

gates of Queen's, the twisted pillars of St Mary's, the little shops, lighted with tapers?. Did bull-pups snarl at me, or dons, with bent backs, acknowledge my salute ? Anyone who knows the place as it is, must see that such questions are purely rhetorical. To him I need not explain the disappointment that beset me when, after being whirled in a cab from ,the station to a big hotel, I wandered out into the streets. *On aurait dit* a bit of Manchester through which Apollo had once passed ; for here, among the hideous trams and the brand-new bricks —here, glared at by the electric-lights that hung from poles, screamed at by boys with the *Echo* and the *Star*—here, in a riot of vulgarity, were remnants of beauty, as I discerned. There were only remnants.

Soon also I found that the life of the place, like the place, had lost its charm and its tradition. Gone were the contrasts that made it wonderful. That feud between undergraduates and dons—latent, in the old days, only at times when it behoved the two academic grades to unite against the townspeople—was one of the absurdities of the past, The townspeople now looked just like undergraduates and the dons just like townspeople. So splendid was the train-service between Oxford and London that, with hundreds of passengers daily, the one had become little better than a suburb of the other. What more could extensionists demand ? As for me, I was disheartened. Bitter were the comparisons I drew between my coming to Oxford and the coming of Marius to Rome. Could it be

that there was at length no beautiful environment wherein a man might sound the harmonies of his soul ? Had civilization made beauty, besides adventure, so rare? I wondered what counsel Pater, insistent always upon contact with comely things, would offer to one who could nowhere find them. I had been wondering that very day when I went into Ryman's and saw him there.

When the tumult of my disillusioning was past, my mind grew clearer. I discerned that the scope of my quest for emotion must be narrowed. That abandonment of one's self to life, that merging of one's soul in bright waters, so often suggested in Pater's writing, were a counsel impossible for to-day. The quest of emotions must be no less keen, certainly, but the manner of it must be changed forthwith. To unswitch myself from my surroundings, to guard my soul from contact with the unlovely things that compassed it about, therein lay my hope. I must approach the Benign Mother with great caution. And so, while most of the freshmen were doing her honour with wine and song and wreaths of smoke, I stood aside, pondered. In such seclusion I passed my first term—ah, how often did I wonder whether I was not wasting my days, and, wondering, abandon my meditations upon the right ordering of the future ! Thanks be to Athene, who threw her shadow over me in those moments of weak folly!

At the end of term, I came to London.' Around me seethed swirls, eddies, torrents, violent cross-currents of human activity. What uproar ! Surely

I could have no part in modern life. Yet, yet for a while it was fascinating to watch the ways of its children. The prodigious life of the Prince of Wales fascinated me above all; indeed, it still fascinates me. What experience has been withheld from His Royal Highness? Was ever so supernal a type, as he, of mere Pleasure? How often he has watched, at Newmarket, the scud-a-run of quivering homuncules over the vert on horses, or, from some night-boat, the holocaust of great wharves by the side of the Thames; raced through the blue Solent; threaded *les coulisses*! He has danced in every palace of every capital, played in every club. He has hunted elephants through the jungles of India, boar through the forests 6f Austria, pigs over the plains of Massachusetts. From the Castle of Abergeldie he has led his Princess into the frosty night, Highlanders lighting with torches the path to the deer-larder, where lay the wild things that had fallen to him on the crags. He has marched the Grenadiers to chapel through the white streets of Windsor. He has ridden through Moscow, in strange, apparel, to kiss the catafalque of more than one Tzar. For him the Rajahs of India have spoiled their temples, and Blondin has crossed Niagara along the tight-rope, and the Giant **Guard done drill** beneath **the chandeliers** of **the Neue** Schloss. Incline **he** to **scandal,** lawyers **are proud to** whisper their **secrets in his ear. Be he gallant, the ladies are at his feet.** *Ennye,* **all the wits from Bernal Osborne to Arthur Roberts** have **jested for him. He has been 'present always at the focus**

where the greatest number of forces unite in their purest energy,' for it is his presence that makes those forces unite. .

*'Ennuye?* I asked. Indeed he never is. How could he be when Pleasure hangs constantly upon his arm ! It is those others, overtaking her only after arduous chase, breathless and footsore, who quickly sicken of her company, and fall fainting at **her** feet. And for me, shod neither with rank nor riches, what folly to join the chase ! I began to see how small a thing it were to sacrifice those external 'experiences,' so dear to the heart of Pater, by a rigid, complex civilization made so hard to gain. They gave nothing but lassitude to those who had gained them through suffering. Even to the kings and princes, who so easily gained them, what did they yield besides themselves? I do not suppose that, if we were invited to give authenticated instances of intelligence on the part of our royal **pets,** we could fill half a column of the *Spectator*. In fact, their lives are so full they have no time for **thought, the** highest energy of man. Now, it was to thought that *my* life should be dedicated. Action, **apart** from its absorption **of** time, would war **otherwise against the pleasures** of intellect, which, for **me, meant** mainly **the** pleasures of imagination. **It is only (this is a platitude) the things one has not done, the faces or places one has not seen, or. seen but darkly, that have charm. It is only mystery—such mystery as besets the eyes of children—that makes things superb. I thought of the voluptuaries I had known—they seemed so sad, so**

ascetic almost, like poor pilgrims, raising their eyes never or ever gazing at the moon of tarnished endeavour. I thought of the round, insouciant faces of the monks at whose monastery I once broke bread, and how their eyes, sparkled when they asked me of the France that lay around their walls. I thought, *pardie*, of the lurid verses written by young men who, in real life, know no haunt more lurid than a literary public-house. It was, for me, merely a problem how I could best avoid 'sensations,' 'pulsations,' and 'exquisite moments' that were not purely intellectual. I would not attempt to combine both kinds, as Pater seemed to fancy a man might. I would make myself master of some small area of physical life, a life of quiet, monotonous simplicity, exempt from all outer disturbance. I would shield my body from the world that my mind might range over it, not hurt nor fettered. As yet, however, I was in my first year at Oxford. There were many reasons that I should stay there and take my degree, reasons that I did not combat. Indeed, I was content to wait for my life.

And now that I have made my adieux to the Benign Mother, I need wait no longer. I have been casting my eye over the suburbs of London. I have taken a most pleasant little villa in——ham, and here I shall make my home. Here there is no traffic, no harvest. Those of the inhabitants who do anything go away each morning and do it elsewhere. Here no vital forces unite. Nothing happens here. The days and the months will pats by

me, bringing their sure recurrence of quiet events. In the spring-time I shall look out from my window and see the laburnum flowering in the little front garden. In summer cool syrups will come for me from the grocer's shop. Autumn will make the boughs of my mountain-ash scarlet, and, later, the asbestos in my grate will put forth its blossoms of flame. The infrequent cart of Buszard or Mudie will pass my window at all seasons. Nor will this be all. I shall have friends. Next door, there is a retired military man who has offered, in a most neighbourly way, to lend me his copy of *The Times*. On the other side of my house lives a charming family, who perhaps will call on me, now and again. I have seen them sally forth, at sundown, to catch the theatre-train ; among them walked a young lady, the charm of whose figure was ill concealed by the neat waterproof that overspread her evening-dress. Some day it may be . . . but I anticipate. These things will be but the eosy accompaniment of my days. For I shall contemplate the world.

I shall look forth from my window, the laburnum and the mountain-ash becoming mere silhouettes in the foreground of my vision. I shall look forth and, in my remoteness, appreciate the distant pageant of the world. Humanity will range itself in the columns of my morning paper. No pulse of life will escape me. The strife of politics, the intriguing of courts, the wreck of great vessels, wars, dramas, earthquakes, national griefs or joys ; the strange sequels to divorces, even, and the mysterious suicides of land-agents at Ipswich—in

all such phenomena I shall steep my exhaurient mind. *Delicias quoque bibliothecae experiar.* Tragedy, comedy, chivalry, philosophy will be mine. I shall listen to their music perpetually and their colours will dance before my eyes. I shall soar from terraces of stone upon dragons with shining wings and make war upon Olympus. From the peaks of hills I shall swoop into recondite valleys and drive the pigmies, shrieking little curses, to their caverns. It may be my whim to wander through infinite parks where the deer lie under the clustering shadow of their antlers and flee lightly over the grass ; to whisper with white prophets under the elms or bind a child with a daisy-chain or, with a lady, thread my way through the acacias. I shall swim down rivers into the sea and outstrip all ships. Unhindered I shall penetrate all sanctuaries and snatch the secrets of every dim confessional.

Yes ! among books that charm, and give wings to the mind, will my days be spent. I shall be ever absorbing the things great men have written ; with such experience I will charge my mind to the full. Nor will I try to give anything in return. Once, in the delusion that Art, loving the recluse, would make his life happy, I wrote a little for a yellow quarterly and had that *succes de fiasco* which is always given to a young writer of talent. But the stress of creation soon overwhelmed me. Only Art with a capital H gives any consolations to her henchmen. And I, who crave no knighthood, shall write no more. I shall write no more. Already I feel myself to be a trifle outmoded. I belong to the

**Beardsley period. . Younger men, with months of activity before them, with fresher schemes and notions, with newer enthusiasm, have pressed forward since then. *Cedo junioribus.* Indeed, I stand aside with no regret. For to be outmoded is to be a classic, if one has written well. I have acceded to the hierarchy of good scribes and rather like my niche.**

***Chicago*, 1895.**

# MORE

TO

**MLLE. DE LA RAMEE**

WITH THE AUTHOR'S COMPLIMENTS

AND TO

**OUIDA**

WITH HIS LOVE

*From inilluminable catacombs—to wit, files of the* **Saturday Review**, *the* **Daily Mail**, *the* **Outlook**, **Tomorrow**, *and the* **Musician**, *to whose editors I am indebted for much courtesy—/ have rescued these few creatures of my fancy, deeming them perhaps worthy of a brighter haven. There was a host of others, which Sentiment urged me to rescue also. But I have forborne. Nor have I admitted to this haven any of these little creatures without scrutiny and titivation.*

*M.B.*

## *Some Words on Royalty*

IN the memoirs of Count———, privately printed last year, you will find, if you can gain access to them, many secrets told in a sprightly, yet most authoritative, manner; little that is incredible, little that is not amazing, nothing refutable. The Count has cast upon *la haute politique*, that stage without footlights, many lurid 'limes,' illuminating for us the faces of all the players and even enabling us to understand something of the plot. For years the trusted Minister of the late Emperor———of ——, the Count has much court-lore to communicate, and is terribly frank about the master whom he served so faithfully until, in 188-, he was ousted from favour by the machinations of a jealous and not too scrupulous cabal. I, who had always been taught to regard this monarch as a wise, gifted, and courageous gentleman, if not actually as a hero, am pleasantly shocked to find him designated with such unkind terms as *'faine'ant,'*—the memoirs are written in the Volapuk of diplomacy—and *'**rot** de paille,'* and *'petit bonhomme a tete montee,"* Indeed, it is undoubtedly **when** he is describing **the** life and the character of **the** Emperor that my author is at his most intimate, his best. Seldom **has** so realistic **a** portrait of a modern monarch **been painted for our pleasure. Much** as **we talk and read about royal personages, we know really less about them than about any other kind of human beings.**

We see the princes of our country caracoling past us in pageants, illustrious monsters whose breasts are all agleam and aglimmer with the symbols of fifty victories at which they were not present, and bunt with enough ribandry to trick forth fifty dairy-maids for a fair. We tell ourselves that beneath all their frippery they are human beings. We have heard that one is industrious, another is genial, another plays the fiddle or cbllects stamps. And then, maybe, we see them at Newmarket, and we know that, for all the elaborate simplicity of their tweeds and billycocks, they are not as we are, but, rather, creatures of another order, 'specimens of an unrelated species.' We note the curious uniformity of their faces, almost wondering whether they are masked. Those heavy, handsome, amiable, uninteresting and uninterested faces, are they indeed (not masks but) true mirrors of souls which a remote and esoteric life has gradually impoverished ? We know that there is a crimson drugget which underlies their every footstep from the cradle to the mausoleum ; we know that their progress is beneath an awning, along that level drugget, through an unbroken avenue of bare and bowed heads. They cannot mingle with their fellows. They are kept from all contact with realities. For them there is no reciprocity, no endeavour, no salt of life. 'It is a miserable State of Minde,' wrote a philosopher who was also a courtier, 'to have few Things to desire and many Things to feare. And yet that commonly is the case of Princes,' Fear kept human the Princes of other days. We have taken away their

fear now, and we still leave them no loophole for desire. What, we might well wonder, will be the descendants of this race apart, of these men who neither marry nor give in marriage save among their own order? Would anyone choose to be born, in their purple, to their life of morbid and gaudy humdrum? Better, surely, to be thrown, like the ordinary child, into a life of endeavour, with unforeseen chances of success or failure. It is this scroll of chances that makes life tolerable, makes it wonderful. The life of every royal person in England begins and must needs end on the same high, smooth plane. But who shall cast the horoscope of an ordinary child? Who knows the vicissitudes of his journey? Be he suckled in a pit, or in a castle on a mountain, who shall prophesy the level of his last bed? Cast him up naked to the pit's edge, send him in purple down the wide steps of his father's casde, you know not how long he shall fare in the gloom or light of his origin, nor whither, and by what hostelries, he shall pass. He may come to a dark woodland, where, all night long, the ferns snap under the feet of elusive Dryads, and the moon is privy to the whole grief of **Philomel. He may never leave that gentle labyrinth of leaves, or he** may tarry there **but** for one night. **Mocked and footsore, he may shuffle along the highways, till he** come to that city whose **people stone him or make him ruler over them. Exile or cmpery may be his, flowers or ashes, an aureole or a noose. There are seas for his drowning, and whirlwinds for his overwhelming, and sheer roeks for his ascent.**

He shall clutch and falter and be afraid. No blood-hounds but shall follow swiftly on his track, nor any nets but shall enmesh him. He shall laugh and conquer. He shall prosper in a great dominion. In strength and scorn there shall not be his equal. But the slaves whom he tortured shall prick him in his exultation. His wine-cup shall be a cup of gall, and a harpy shall lurk in the canopy of his bridal bed. In the blood of his children they shall bathe him. From a clear sky the lightning shall slant down on him. And the ground shall yawn for him in the garden of his design.

That, despite certain faults of exaggeration, is a piece of quite admirable prose ; but let it not decoy the reader from consideration of the main theme. Count———, whose memoirs are my cue, does not seem to have weighed the conditions of royal life. Had he done so, he would have cooled his caustic pen in the lymph of charity, and one would have lost many of his most delightful *mots* and anecdotes. His simply records, out of the fulness and intimacy of his knowledge, many suggestive facts about a monarch in whom a royal environment had not paralysed the ordinary, bright instincts of human nature. In recording with gusto the little strategies used by his master in the pursuit of fun or the flight from duty, the Count moves his reader to tears rather than to laughter.

One of his anecdotes I must really make known, not merely because it is a good sample and deals with a famous incident, but also because it has a suggestive symbolism of its own. Many of my

readers can remember the sensation caused in the spring of a late seventy by the attempted assassination of Emperor ——. As his Imperial Majesty was being driven out of the palace gates for his daily progress through the capital, a man in the crowd fired at him with a revolver. The miscreant was immediately seized, and, but for the soldiery, would have been torn limb from limb. 'Luckily,' wrote Reuter's correspondent, 'the Emperor, who was accompanied as usual by Count——and an aide-de-camp, was untouched. As so often happens in such cases, the assassin, doubtless through excitement, entirely missed his aim. The remarkable thing was the coolness and courage displayed by the Emperor. So far from evincing any alarm, he continued to salute the crowd on either side, smilingly as ever, as though nothing at all had happened ; nor was his drive in any way curtailed. As the news spread, a vast crowd of people collected round the palace, and the Emperor, in answer to their continued cheers, at length appeared upon the balcony and bowed repeatedly.'

In the light of the Count's version the Emperor's 'coolness and courage' are somewhat discounted. It seems that, about three years before, the Emperor had declared that he was going to give up the custom of the daily drive : he hated driving, he hated saluting, he hated being stared at. The Count represented to him how unwise it would be to disappoint the people. Finding the Emperor obstinate in his distaste, he conceived the idea of a waxen figure, made in the likeness of his master,

with practicable joints worked by interior .mechanism. The Emperor promised to endure his drives for the present, and, after secret negotiations with a famous firm in England (conducted by the Count himself, who came over incognito), the figure was completed and duly delivered at the Imperial Palace. It was SO constructed that, when wound up, it turned its head slowly from side to side, with a slight bend of the body, raising its hand in salute. It was considered an admirable likeness, though the Count declares that *Ha figure etait un peu trop distinguec.'* At any rate, arrayed as a Colonel of the ——Dragoons and driven quickly through the capital, it was good enough to deceive the Emperor's loyal subjects. As I need hardly say, it was at this automaton that the revolver was fired. According to the memoirs, the Emperor himself, in a false beard, was standing near the assassin, and was actually arrested on suspicion, but managed to escape his captor in the *melee* and reached the palace in ample time to bow from the balcony The Count argues that the only sufferer in the affair is the poor wretch who was hanged merely for shooting at a dummy, and who has never even got the credit he deserved for a very good shot; the bullet pierced right through the dummy's chest, and, says the Count, had it but lodged one-eighth of an inch lower down, it must have inevitably stopped the mechanism.

Even if the whole of this tale be but the naughty figment of a favourite in disfavour, it is, at any rate, suggestive, A mob doffing its head-gear, day after

day, to a dummy ! How easily, after all, could one get a dummy so constructed as to hold a *levee* or sit through an opera, to open a bridge or lay a stone 'well and truly.' There are some persons who would fain abolish altogether the institution of royalty. I do not go so far as they. Our royal family is a rather absurd institution, no doubt. But then, humanity itself is rather absurd. A State can never be more than a kindergarten, at best, and he who would fain rule men according to principles of right reason will fare no better than did poor dear Plato at Syracuse. Put the dream of the *doctrinaire* into practice, and it will soon turn to some such nightmare as modern France or modern America. Indeed, fallacies and anomalies are the basis of all good government. A Crown, like a Garter, implies no 'damned merit'; else were it void of its impressive magic for most creatures. Strictly, there is no reason why we should worship the House of Hanover more than we worship any other family. Stricdy, there was no reason why the Children of Israel should bow down before brazen images. But man is not rational, and the spirit of idolatry is strong in him. And, if you take away his idol, that energy which would otherwise be spent in kotowing will probably be spent in some less harmless manner. In every free public there is a fund of patriotic emotion which must, somehow, be worked off. I may be insular, but I cannot help thinking it better that this fund should be worked off, as in England, by cheering the members of the royal family, rather than by upsetting the current ministry, as in France.

**The main good of royalty, then, and the justification of those fabulous sums of money that we sacrifice annually for its support, lie in its appeal to that idolatrous instinct which is quite unmoved by the cheap and nasty inmates of the Elysee or of the White House. In this century we have greatly "restricted the sphere of royal power, insomuch that royalty cannot, as it once could, guide directly the tend of politics : politically, it does but 'act by its presence.' But one should not forget that a Court is for ornament, as well as for use. A capital without a Court, be the streets never so beautiful, is even as a garden where the sun shines not. As a flock of sheep without a shepherd, so is the Society that has no royal leader to set its fashions, chasten its follies, or dignify its whims with his approval. Gaiety, wit, beauty, some measure even of splendour, may be compassed in the *salons* of a republic ; but distinction comes not in save with one who must be received at the foot of the staircase. In fact, royalty is indispensable : we cannot spare it. But, you may well ask, are we justified in preserving an institution which ruins the lives and saps the human nature of a whole family ? What of those royal victims whom we sacrifice to our expediency ? I have suggested that royal functions could be quite satisfactorily performed by automata made of wax. There, I think, lies the solution of our difficulty. Perhaps, even now, did we but know, it is the triumphs of Tussaud at whose frequent sight our pulses beat with so quick an enthusiasm. If it is so, I do not blame our royal family for its**

**innocent subterfuge. I should welcome any device to lighten the yoke that is on their necks. I should be glad if more people would seriously examine the conditions of royalty, with a view to ameliorating the royal lot. Would that every one could gain access to the memoirs of Count———! They might serve as an excellent manual, containing, as they do, so much that is well-observed. But they are so frankly written that they cannot, I fear, be made public before many, many years have elapsed. Perhaps the brief trumpet-note which I have sounded will be enough to rouse humanitarianism, in the meantime.**

## *'Punch'*

**IT is from the bound volumes of *Punch* that small boys derive their knowledge of life. That, I suppose, is why small boys are always so old-fashioned in their ideas. They do not—how should they ?—know that lineal art can represent life and life's types only through certain symbols, certain conventions : they imagine these symbols and conventions to be realistic portraiture. Even in later years, when they have detected how wide and fluid a thing life is, they do yet conceive many real things through the false conventions of John Tenniel, George Du Maurier, Charles Keene, and the rest I myself, steeped in Du Maurier's innumerable drawings, am always surprised when I see a *nouveau riche* whose shirt-front no diamond stud irradiates with conventional lines. Also, when I go to a party of any kind, I expect always to find there, grouped impressively, an elderly Statesman with a star and riband, a tall Artist with a beard, a Bishop with gaiters, a long-haired Musician with a fiddle under his arm, an old General with a grey moustache, and a young barrister with side-whiskers. My study of Keene, likewise, has brought me to this beliefr-in which I shall most likely die—that a tipsy man always has a white cravat straggling over his left shoulder, and that cabmen are, as a class, witty. But if these two artists deceive me, dealing, so far as they could, directly with life, how**

**much more did Tenniel, the maker of symbolic cartoons, deceive me! *Beatus insipiens,* I never dreamt that the Duke of Argyll did not always, wear a kilt. Even now, when I go to France, I expect to see every man with moustache and imperial, after the pattern of Louis Napoleon, and every woman with short skirts, *sabots,* and cap-of-liberty. I am not rid, even now, of the notion that every English burglar goes about his work in knee-breeches, with a fur cap on his head, a mask over his face, and a 'jemmy' protruding from a side-pocket. And so, whenever, in the dead of night, I hear scrapings and shufflings down below, I seek refuge in renewed sleep. Gould I persuade myself that the burglar was but an ordinary individual in trousers, I would take candle and poker and send him about his business. As it is, I am quite unable to cope with burglars, and so they come rather often. Thus may a man suffer for his ideals.**

**It is a painful thing, youth's awakening to the fallacies of its first mentor, *Punch.* I remember well a great shock I received in my first term at Oxford. I had arranged to go with some other undergraduates to Kcmpton Park. I had never been on a race-course in my life : my knowledge of race-courses was bounded by Tenniel's annual cartoon for Derby Day, doubly impressive by reason of its double page. How horrified I was, on the eve of the races, to hear that we were not going to drive to Kempton on a coach ! 'How else. c€uld one go ?' I asked. 'By train,' my friends answered. 'But *can* one go to a race by train?* I objected ;**

'has it ever been done?' My friends, older and of more experience than I, assured me that it was the only possible way. They assured me, the next morning, when I joined their breakfast at the *Mitre,' that I could not possibly go 'dressed like that.' (I was wearing a light frock-suit and a white top-hat with a green veil round it. In my hand was an open betting-book, and between my lips a small straw.) I, in my turn, commented sarcastically upon their own appearance. I told them that they might choose to make themselves ridiculous, but that I did not; that I should go alone to the races. Gradually they proved to me that I was in the wrong. I had just time to go back to my rooms, change my clothes, and catch the train. But I felt that the whole spirit of the thing had evaporated. When we reached the course, there was not one gipsy to tell me my fortune, nor any troupe of niggers to sing to me, nor any welsher for me to chase out of the ring and duck in a horse-pond. **There** was **but** a crowd of noisy and unremarkable persons, such as one might see any day in the **Strand.** No one snatched at my watch-chain. No **dog** ran down the cleared course, but only some **outspread** horses, which looked, in the distance, **absurdly like the horses in that 'race-game' of my childhood. My friends and I disbursed small sums of money to various bookmakers, receiving small paper tickets in return. My friends and I gained nothing by our indiscriminate charity. The sun was ferociously hot. We left before the last race, dusty and reserved.**

Well! As historian, *Punch* still holds his sway over little boys. But as jester for adults he is at present labouring under a cloud, and his weekly appearance is not the event it yet was even within my recollection. No one is excited nowadays at the prospect of *Punch* ; yet I assure all my juniors that, when I was a small boy, Wednesday morning marked an epoch in each week. So early as Monday, the members of each family would begin to revel in anticipation. Tuesday evening was a time of ill-suppressed excitement, and, at bed-time, sleep wooed even the eldest as coyly as it woos children on their birthday-eves. When the sun rose, the most incorrigible lie-a-bed could scarce await the delivery of hot water. Even the cockscomb would telescope his toilet. Family prayers would be read quickly, sometimes even abbreviated for the day, and the last Amen was ever signal for an ugly rush to the plate where the new *Punch* was reposing. A bundle of heads, young and old, hung over the crisp pages. What sort of Britannia had Tenniel done ? How had Du Maurier satirized Sir Gorgius Midas or Mrs. Ponsonby de Tomkyns? Had Sambourne made Gladstone into a shark or a canary or a buffalo or what ? Not until nightfall had the full sweets of the comic paper been exhausted. Thursday was felt to be something of a blank, an anti-climax,

But Time is a sad iconoclast, and this family idol, though it has not been utterly shattered, has been knocked from its high pedestal. *Punch* still plays his part in English family home life, but his-

part is comparatively humble, and he no longer takes precedence of the morning paper. In the smoking-rooms of clubs he contends with a score of comic rivals. Everybody affects to despise him, and his jokes merely raise the eyebrows of the community. . 'Don't you think that *Punch* gets more stupid every week?' has superseded 'Have you been to many theatres lately?' Mr. Burnand has this consolation, at least, that his paper is not ignored. There are few people who do not look through it every week, and few who do not talk about it. Quite lately, indeed,' it was the object of many attacks from other newspapers. One journal published, week by week, an unkind analysis of the current number. This 'Scheme for the Reformation of *Punch** was a thing of great unconscious humour—imagine a man sitting down, industriously marking the jokes which do not come up to his standard of wit, industriously copying them out, writing an article to explain their defects, and warning their makers that they must do better next week. Without wishing to perpetuate the use of ah old and generally foolish sneer, I must say that such a proceeding was peculiarly English*. The *Star's* portentous *employe* did not stop short at criticism, but even dabbled in creation, apparently that we might see what humour can and should be. Alter eulogizing Mr. Phil May, and expressing his regret that this artist had no worthy colleague on the staff, *'let us,'* he said brightly, *'have not only a Phil May, but also a Phil June, a Phil July, a Phil August, a Phil September, a Phil October, a Phil November, and a Phil,*

*December.** It would be interesting to see the man who wrote that. But I do not agree with the writer's contempt for all Mr. May's colleagues. So far as I can see, the drawings in *Punch*, and the jokes they illustrate, are not less good than they have been in former times. Certainly they are better than the efforts of other comic papers. *Punch* is no longer the close concern it was when Du Maurier had three drawings, and Keene two, in every number. The admission of many artists' work makes the paper far more interesting—to me, at least; and, though there are many drawings without technical merit and without humour, there are many others which make atonement. The influence of Mr. Raven Hill and Mr. Phil May seems salutary. They deal with jokes which depend on illustration—physical jokes, or jokes of character—and they neglect, rightly, third-rate quips of conversation, which form the staple of most artists on the other comic papers. 'She: "Who discovered the circulation of the blood?"—He : "A Johnny called Harvey!"—She : "Then who discovered Harvey's sauce?"' I have invented this as a fair sample of the jests in the more modern comic papers, or in the sad enclosure which serious papers set aside for purposes of mirth. Whether such jests require, or are in any way strengthened by a picture of a *dicolletee* girl sitting in the shadow of a standard-lamp, with a bald man bending over the back of her chair, is a question on which I have already made up my mind.

The ordinary complaint against *Punch seems* to

be that he has lost the two last letters of his name, and is merely the mouthpiece through which Mr. Burnand forces an old-fashioned and discredited form of humour. For my own part I have never sympathized with Dr. Johnson's view of the pun and its maker, and I have often admired the feats of H. J. Byron. Mr. Burnand has made many good puns in his day, and is .still making good puns, nor has he any.reason to be ashamed of them. A good pun, properly used, is one of the best bells in the jester's cap. Why its tinkle should be received, in all places and on all occasions. with groans of mock despair, I have never been able to understand. But it is a pity that Mr. Burnand should enlarge it to the size of a muffin-bell and let it drown the whole carillon. Perhaps he knows his own business best. I have no wish to be ponderous and dictatorial. I do not consider, as his mentors seem to consider, that he has in *Punch* a sacred trust of National Humour. "Nor am I so foolish as to suppose that any diatribe will cure him of a phase of fun to which he has, at length, exclusively devoted himself. I prefer him as he was when he wrote that delightful work of humour and insight, that epic farce, 'Happy Thoughts.' But, being no magician, I do not expect him to produce another 'Happy Thoughts' at my bidding. In point of fact, Time, not Mr. Burnand, has been the bane of *Punch.* Satire should be irresponsible, tilting at the strong and the established as well as at the momentary follies of the day. When *Punch* was young, he had the courage of his own levity. But *Punch* is old now, pompous and

respectable, exemplary in all relations of life. No more does he bob wickedly from side to side, banging everything with his cuddled stick. He grins and squeaks and bludgeons only in the cause of law and order, and is most polite to the hangman. He has become a national institution.

Yes ! scoff at this comic paper as you will, it is as much a national institution as the *Times.* It is no longer the force it was once, but its position is yet strengthened with every year. You cannot root it out. Try to take it in good humour. If you cannot laugh with it, as I do often, laugh lightly at it, as you laugh lighdy at its rival in Printing House Square. Blowitz and Mr. Smalley, Mr. Lang and Mr. Humphry Ward—to say nothing of such outside humorists as Pigott—all. these amuse you gently, pleasantly. Why be so angry with poor little Bouverie Street ? Come ! make the best of it. It is your own dullness that has made comic papers necessary. You are of a nation which can't laugh at large and must needs have certain specified places and occasions for its mirth. You find nothing funny in Mr. Balfour. You take Mr. Asquith quite seriously. But you split your sides at the mere name of Ashmead-Bartlett. Those of you who are journalists put anything funny that they may have to say at the beginnings of their. articles, and then start afresh with a 'but seriously.' As if—but I could never explain. Only; remember this, that you are very dull dogs, who do not deserve comic papers half so good *as Punch* and the *Times.*

## *Actors*

ONE never hears any writer or painter declaring that he has made an inviolable rule never to read a criticism of his own work. One cannot imagine any artist, save an actor or a singer, trampling a press-notice under foot, or pasting it on hi* bed-post. How is it, one wonders, that the swords of the dramatic and of the musical critics are so keen and terrible, their roses so very precious ? Assume not idly that actors and singers have no faith in their own work, nor scoff at them as being creatures of a too high stomach. Try rather, try soberly, to perceive what circumstances of their art make these men and women strangely sensitive. When you have found in what respect the practice of their art differs from the practice of other arts you will perhaps have found, also, the secret of their difference from other artists. The writer's work is given to you between the covers of a book; the painter's on a piece of flat canvas ; the actor's in the lineaments of his own face, the port of his own body, the various inflections of his own voice. In criticizing his work you criticize, also, him. Academically, you may object that, what you really criticize is nothing but his work, his impersonation. Academically, you may be quite right. ' But that is not the point. The actor, having to devote all his time to the development of his emotions, is the least logical creature in the world, and the least likely to be

**comforted by nice distinctions. He cannot detach himself, as you detach him, from his work. Very silly of him but, when you come to consider it, quite natural ! So far as he is concerned—and I am here concerned with him and his feelings—'in criticizing his work, you criticize, also, him.' Wonder not at his sensitiveness!**

***The Actor's medium is himself.*** **If some such obvious formula were more remembered, the silly denunciations, directed against actors from this or that quarter, on this or that ground, might be far fewer. Many people have, for instance, been terribly shocked by the internecine feuds of the theatre. There is more jealousy, say they, among actors than among any other artists. They seem to have forgotten singers, but I need not dispute their proposition. Merely would I submit my obvious formula. Writers and painters are . not free from jealousy, and their jealousy is but the less poignant because it is vicarious. They envy one another through one another's work. Actors envy one another.**

**The charitable influence of my formula is indeed manifold. Ponder my formula! It must soften the most rasping accuser when he declares that actors are vulgarly discontent with their mere art and are always flooding the newspapers with details of their private lives. It is because actors, in the pursuit of their art, display *themselves,* that the public takes a keen interest in all their circumstances. You,must blame, not the actors, but the public* Even supposing (Which is foolish) that these 'per-**

sonal paragraphs' are generally inspired by their subjects, they would not be printed unless the public wished to read them. As a matter of fact, actors are no more desirous of irrelevant fame than, are any other artists. It is the public which wishes, quite naturally, to know all about them. The journalists, quite naturally, seek to gratify the public.

No one, of course, could deny that the dramatist suffers by reason of the actor's great vogue. Stricdy speaking, the actor is but one of the media of dramatic art. Being a live medium, he occupies what is, speaking strictly, a false position. The history of the drama in all its rises and declines is the history of the dramatist's sure eclipse by the actor. At first, the actor was but' an inanimate medium, a masked convention. Æschylus had nothing to fear from him, though it may have been with a certain prescience of danger that he became, like our Shakespeare, his own protagonist. But, as time went on, the Athenians began to listen not merely to the words, but also to the manner of their recital. One actor was preferred to another by reason of his ampler gesture or his more significant appeal. We know that, in the decadence, he overshadowed the dramatist, and had plays 'written round' him, quite in the modern way. Even as now, the dramatist was greatly annoyed. Even as then, the dramatist is quite helpless. He may rail against the actor, but he can avail against him no more than could Frankenstein against his o*wn* monster. The public, for whom the dramatist must needs write, in whose sight is the actor.

pays its homage, quite naturally, to the actor. The, poor, groaning dramatist must needs accommodate himself to the victorious, oppressive, indispensable middleman. You may shed a tear for him, but you cannot, in view of my formula, blame his middleman (or live medium) for undue selfishness. Like the convivial Porson, when he could not light his bedroom candle with an extinguisher, you must 'damn the nature of things.'

Ponder my formula ! The actor's art is evanescent, and he must needs, therefore, be rather hectic in his desire for fame. Good books and good pictures are monuments, which, once made, are always there and may take fresh garlands ; but the actor's finest impersonation, repeated night after night, is a thing of no substance, exists not but from his lips, perishes with him. Other artists can afford to wait. It is not only that they, as men who. work not in the actual presence of the public, value praise less highly; it is also that their art will endure. For them the immediate verdict is not irrevocable. Time turns their rude public into a polite posterity.. But it is 'now or never' with the actor. One knows how the gayest assemblage of youth may be chilled by a reference to Macready or Edmund Kean. Theatrical reminiscence is the most awful weapon in the armoury of old age. It am sure that much of the respect which we pay to an elderly man is due to our suspicion that he could avenge any slight by describing, the late. Charles Matthews in *Cool as a Cucumber.* It is curiously exasperating to hear about a great alitor whom we have not seen;^So

far from honouring, we abominate, his memory. Actors are like pet birds. When a pet bird dies, there may be, for those who knew it in the day of its song and its ruffling plumage, some poor comfort in the sight of its stuffed body. For others, there is only a sense of depression. The most unsuccessful 'super' on the stage may always console himself with the thought that he is, at least, a cut above David Garrick.

'Into the night go one and all.' But the gods are not ruthless. They have been kind to these players. We need not weep. In their day, these players are blest supremely. What other artists, save singers, can match their laurels? Their art dies with them, but I think that in the immediateness, the directness of their fame, they are supremely recompensed. Great writers, great painters, must needs suffer many years of insult or of neglect. Most often, when the tardy paean is sung in their honour, they are too old or too bitter to be gratified by its sound. Nor is the paean, even if they still care to hear it, so loud and so near as to the actor. Mr. Meredith does not receive one 'call' at the end of any chapter, soever noble. When Mr. Whistler puts the finishing touches to a paper-lithograph, soever exquisite, even Mr. Joseph Pennell does not clamber upon the window-sill and throw in a bouquet. Yet may both Mr. Meredith and Mr. Whistler be accounted lucky. Artists, not less great than they, have died without honour, consoled only by the sure knowledge that their work will survive gloriously; Their work does, indeed, sur-

**vive, but it is not immbrtal. Even the writings of William Shakespeare will perish in the next ice-age. The whole history of this world is but as a moment in eternity, and happy is that man whose fame is the accompaniment of his own life. Such a man is the actor. Do not grudge him his honours. Do not blame him for his love of them. Ponder my formula, 'and, look you! mock him not!'**

## *Madame Tussaud's*

TO plume one's self on a negative virtue, is surely the cheapest form of self-righteousness, and I am, not puffed up when I declare that I never was 'one of those miserable males' who are ever seeking Sensations' and 'experiences.' Indeed, I have often suspected that these seekers are but the figment of certain philosophic brains. We all, naturally, have moments of boredom and the desire for diversion. In such a moment, lately, I myself did stray beyond the portal of a scarlet edifice in the Marylebone. Road and did wander among wax-works. My visit may have been a 'sensation' or an ' experience,' or. both, but it was not at all nice. In future I shall stick" to *ennui.*

What is it that pervades this congress of barren effigies ? Why is their atmosphere so sinister, so subtly exhaustive ? For all creatures, it is said, life ebbs lowest and death's meridian is in those chill, still intervals before the sun's relapse or resurrection. I can well imagine that no invalid, laid in either interval among these wax-works, could survive for many minutes. They frightened me, I remember, when I was a little child and was taken to see them as a treat. In a sense, they frightened me again, yesterday. But my fear, when I came among them, did not arise from' any notion that they were real men and women, bewitched into an awful calm. I could not have cried to be taken home. Nay, I

could not tear myself from their company. Powerless of escape, as in a dream, I must needs wander on, pausing before each one of those cadaverous and ignoble dolls, hating the tallowy faces and glass eyes that stared back at me ; the rusty clothes; the smooth, nailless, little hands. I wished to Heaven I had never come into the place, yet must I needs stay there. The orchestra, playing lively tunes, did but intensify the gloom and horror of the exhibition. One would prefer no music in a sarcophagus. Why were they ranged here, these dolls ? What fascination had they? They were not lifelike. They gave me no illusion.

I remembered how Ouida, in one of her earlier books, had told us of one who came to the dim hall of some Florentine villa, and, gazing round at the pagan statues that were there, had fancied himself in the presence of the immortal gods, and had abased himself before them. Could any man, I wondered, entering Madame Tussaud's initial chamber, fancy that the old Kings and Queens of England had come to life ? Mrs. Markham being his sole authority for most of their faces, he would not be: hampered by any positive conceptions. For aught one knows, Richard Cœur de Lion may have had some such face as yonder person on the dais, and King Stephen's image may be the image of King Stephen. But oh, what stiff and inadequate absurdities! That fatuous puppet, called MR, Gladstone, in the next room, is scarcely less convincing. And even when the familiar features of some man or woman have been moulded correctly,

how little one cares, how futile it all seems! The figures are animated with no spark of life's semblance. Made in Man's image, they are as Man to God. Even from that elaborately set scene, representing a Drawing Room at the Court of St. James, one can draw no possible illusion. True that the Royal personages, of whose models it is composed, are better subjects for ceraceous art than are any humbler folk. The high remoteness of their life tends to clear them of obvious vivacity, and these wax-works are apt travesties of faces whose Olympian calm is unmingled with Olympian contemplativeness. But even this crowd of models is a failure. See how each figure stands solitary ! It is only those imperceptible nerve-currents, passing from one being to another, that can create a homogeneous scene.

Though these wax-works are made in so close an imitation of life, they have, indeed, less verisimilitude than the outcome of any fine art. They are most nearly akin with statuary, I suppose, in that they are themselves a form of plastic art. But statuary, as Pater pointed out, in a pregnant (if rather uncouth) sentence, moves us to emotion, 'not by accumulation of detail, but by abstracting from it' I think that wax-works fail, because they are not made within any of those 'exquisite limitations' of colour, texture, proportion, to which all visual arts must be subjected. Life, save only through conventions, is inimitable. The more closely it be aped, the more futile and unreal its copy. Weill and herein, perhaps, lies the secret

**of that enervation which wax-works do produce in many of their beholders. Good painting and good sculpture inspire us with some illusion, thus compensating us for what were otherwise the fatigue of gazing at them. But the best wax-works can only be regarded as specimens of ingenuity, mysterious and elaborate, always abortive. One marvels not that Æneas wept when he saw Troy's fall frescoed on the walls of Carthage. But could Louis Napoleon, coming up from Chislehurst and visiting Madame Tussaud's, have turned away from the presentment of his lost pomp, with so terrible a heart-cry as *'Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris'* ? I can hardly suppose that any one who ever saw his own wax-work did not feel mortified and sickened. I can imagine a man being haunted, for the rest of his life, by the knowledge that a ghastly double of himself is standing, all day long, over a number to be gazed at and 'looked out' in the catalogue—is standing there, all night long, in the dark. Is the condemned murderer, I wonder, ever appalled by the thought of his sure survival under Madame's roof? Does he ever realize that, soon after he, poor wretch, has been slung down to eternity, another figure will be propped up in, the Chamber of Horrors?**

**Such were the speculations that filled my brain, as I roamed morbidly around the exhibition. Though with every moment my vitality seemed to be ebbing lower and lower, though I cursed myself bitterly for being there, I could not tear myself from that gaunt hierarchy of tongueless orators,**

**patriots without blood, and kings whose insignia are coloured glass. The unreality of everything oppressed me, in brain and body, with an indescribable lassitude. I felt dimly that the place was evil, everything in it evil. Life was a sacred thing —why had it been profaned here, for so many years ? Whence came this hateful craft ? With what tools, in what workshop, who, for whose pleasure, fashioned these obscene images ? Images ? Yes, of course they were images. . . . But why should Garibaldi and those others all stare at me so gravely ? Had they some devil's power of their own, some mesmerism? It flashed upon me that, as I watched them, they were stealing my life from me, making me one of their own kind. My brain seemed to be shrinking, all the blood ceasing in my body. I would not watch them. I drooped my eyelids. My hands looked smooth, waxen, without nerves. I knew now that I should never speak nor hear again, never move. I took a dull pride, even, in the thought that this was the very frock-coat in which I had been assassinated. . . . With an effort, I pulled myself together. Looking neither to the right nor to the left, I passed, through that morgue of upstanding corpses, to the entrance, down the marble staircase, out into the street. ... Ah ! it was' good to be in the street !**

## *Groups of Myrmidons*

IT is a custom of the little clubs at Oxford to be photographed in every Summer Term. Some of them are antique enough to have existed before photography, and so the port, lineaments, and costume of their first members have gone unrecorded for their pious successors. But the club which claimed me had been initiated in days not so remote ; it dated, indeed, only from a decade which had seen, mourned, and forgotten the demise of the daguerreotype. Our club-room was a gallery of 'groups' that told the full story of the past and illuminated with the pale rays of sentiment .every page of our worn minute-book. Often, as J sat there, gazing round at those records of forgotten faces and modes discarded, my heart was softened towards photography. Surely, in some dark corner of every camera, there lurks a good fairy who enchants every plate as it is exposed. The enchantment may not be, is not, obvious at first—it does not make the developed plate less hideous, less harshly mechanical. Yet the enchantment is there, nevertheless, and, after the lapse of years, it fills the photograph with a curious grace. The very coarser ness and crudity of the process are turned, to good use. In very virtue of its unintelligent realism, an old photograph gains a pathos which is to be found in old pictures. When we look at an old picture, be it bad or good, our minds turn to him by whom,

**rather than to him of whom, it was painted. But, while the painter always obtrudes himself on us in his work, and there is no escaping him, who in the world ever thinks about a photographer? It is because it was done in an instant, that every 'group' seems so real and, despite the conventionality and stiffness of its attitudes, so natural. We know what a Babel of talk and laughter had been suspended only an instant before, and how it burst forth again with double force an instant later, when the camera had done its duty. The 'groups' of my old club are things snatched from the very heart of Oxford. There is symbolism in the fact that nearly all of them have the same background—the window of a certain room on the ground floor of the New Buildings. The men vanish, and their places are filled by others. Whiskers and velveteens give way gradually to flannels and smooth faces. But 'wines' are conducted with the same ceremonial as when *Up in a Balloon, Boys !* and *Have you seen the Shah ?* were the liefest ditties. Bonfires, are eternally renewed, in the same grey quadrangles and are'danded round in the same old fashion. Windows are smashed with relentless regularity, though their frames last for ever. The dawn creeps through them and still finds young Bacchanals curling one another, with the same old freedom, over unlimited loo. Aristotle, with his Ethics, and Plato, with his Republic, cudgel the brains of every successive generation. Academic gowns are cut exactly as they were when men wore them over doublets and trunk-hose. The youngest freshman will be**

gathered, hereafter, to his fathers, and on that night Great Tom will still be droning the hundred-and-one strokes he droned on the night when the hoariest of the dons was born into the world. No ! Oxford never changes. It is well that the undergraduates, the bits of coloured glass in the kaleidoscope, do not realize their transience. Every wall frowns down on them, but they pay no heed. They are full of youth and buoyancy and self-importance—masters of the whole place. , Certainly these old photographs are pregnant with irony and with pathos. They are eloquent as the walls themselves. See how the President always wears a very grave aspect, befitting his tremendous office, and sits in the middle of the group, facing the camera with arms imperially folded !

Where are they, these leaves which the unsparing wind has scattered ? Where are they, the outcast citizens of this gay and tiny commonwealth, these old 'Myrmidons' ? *0 male dilapsos*,. how, in what real warfare, are they, who loitered here, in Capua, faring now ? In the Book of Fate *(q. v. passim)*, the name and address, the past and future, of every one' of them, I doubt not, are duly, entered. But, for me, as for all who have never dipped into that fascinating work of reference, there is a pleasure in studying these old groups, in guessing the character of every member from his port and lineaments, and learning in the light of his peculiar costume the vain whims of Fashion. In my time, it was seldom that any of these old members came among us. The lapse of less than a lustre means, a new generation

in Oxford, and, after the departure of all his comrades' comrades, Oxford is but a husk of barren and bitter-sweet memories to its revisitor. Now and again, however, some wistful, bearded stranger would appear in our midst, revealing himself as one of our own order, and would dine at the house-dinner on Sunday. We respected him as a man of the world ; he envied us for what we were. But our jokes were as incomprehensible to him, I fancy, as were his.anecdotes tedious to us. We were very polite to him indeed. But 'young barbarians' are far too happy to be sentimental, and their hearts do not go out readily to their forerunners. They, know not Joseph, and they don't want to know him. For myself, I rather liked Joseph, and would listen with real pleasure to his reconstruction of the past, and encourage him to tell me of those whose aspects the photographer had handed down to me. Thus, with the help of an occasional Joseph, I came to know a little about some of those old heroes; how they had bearded the bursar, or bonneted the proctor, or slipped the porter ; how one had since, been killed in Afghanistan, and another had' been twice married, and another was sheep-farming in Australia and 'doing very well'; and another had 'gone under,' as Joseph had always foreseen. For the most part, they seemed to have cast behind them for ever their days and' nights of gambling and hard drinking, and to have become decent, prosperous gentlemen who lived in various counties and met each other seldom. Those others of whom I heard nothing have probably met a similar fate.

I seem to see every one of them as a portly, be-gaitered man sitting in his study, with the 'groups' of his period hanging upon the wall behind him. Of all the Myrmidons, there is only one who has achieved great fame. The 'group' in which he appeared (prepare, reader, to be disappointed—I could not afford the cheap jest you are expecting) is dated 1870, and the name inscribed under his figure is a name which has passed already, with its dead bearer, into the political history of our time. There he sits, the future leader of the Fourth Party and of the House itself, among his fellow-Myrmidons —a moody boy, dressed, after the fashion of the day, in a suit of very large checks. His hands are resting on a white hat, and, though the photograph is somewhat faded, one can discern on his upper lip the faint presage of that moustache which was to give the cue to innumerable caricaturists. Except his eyes, there is no feature to distinguish him from any of the young bloods around him. But we, who know now all that Fate was holding for him, cannot but pause, with some stirring of our hearts, under this portrait of him as he was at Merton. How quickly the laurel-branch was to grow for him ; how greatly to flourish ; to be cut off how untimely, yet not before all the leaves on it were withered ! Would one rather be, as, I take it, they who were here portrayed with him still are, sane, healthy, happy, stupid, obscure, or have led, like that young tribune, a short, swift life of triumph and tragedy? Which of these two lots would one rather draw? Which is the luckier ? I do not know.

so far as I can, I avoid that channel of all that is unloveliest in London, the Strand. Some folk profess a charm in it. Me it has repelled always. Was ever anywhere so monotonous a current of harsh faces as flows there? Anxiety, poverty, and bedragglement on the pavement, and drivers cursing one another in the blocked traffic; hoarse hucksters on the curb, and debauchees lolling before the drinking-bars—the charm of the scene is rather too abstruse for me, I admit. And if the road be aswill with mud, and the hoofs of every horse be four muddy fountains; if the day be that most depressing of all days, Saturday, and the hour of that day be five o'clock, when every theatre is vomiting an audience, Heaven help one who does not love the Strand for its own sake. I pressed through the wet mob, and, with a blind instinct for safety, tore myself out of it at a corner that was labelled 'Wellington Street.' I stood for a moment, composing myself. Then I walked slowly up this way of sanctuary. At the stage-door of the Gaiety Theatre loitered the solitary, melancholy figure of a young man. The figure had been dressed with pathetic care. A crooked stick hung from one arm, and an eyeglass was screwed into the face. The hat, which was worn at a raffish angle, had evidently been medicated with some oily nostrum. The scarf-pin had been bought from a hosier. The boots

had that blue and blotchy surface which means varnish on common leather. In the coat was a cheap bunch of Parma violets. The figure was 'seeing life.' It belonged not to the gilded youth, but was probably some poor City clerk who had gone by himself,, that afternoon, to the pit or perhaps to the upper boxes, and had now, greatly daring, strolled round to regard Lais in mufti. That he knew not Lais, that it was a damp afternoon, that he was going to have a frugal tea at the Aerated Bread Shop, that he would never take any true part in the joys which were his aspiration—these things mattered little to the tragic ass before me. He was persuading himself, for a brief span, that his was a career of brilliant profligacy. He was 'making believe.' He was quite happy. Insomuch that, until two of the emerging girls looked at him, nudged each other, and did a contemptuous titter which caused him to walk quickly away, crimson with humiliation, I was rather envious of him. As I watched his retreating figure, I reflected that there is in every fool's paradise an undergrowth of real brambles, and that it is well to be on the side of the angels who stand discreetly without, whilst others rush in quite regardless of their feet. How much better for that young man, had he been content to be, without masquerade, simply himself; content to take the humble pleasures of his own class, without pretending to those pleasures which are meant for men of 'luckier birth'! In such aspiration the Friend of Man may discern something fine, some earnest of equality to come. But, as a matter

of fact, class-encroachment, as practised in this country, will bring us no nearer to Socialism; indeed, it can but strengthen the barrier's of class. In England the poor want to live like the rich. When they shall want the rich to share their poverty, then there may be some possible danger of a Millennium. If he would have his ideas realized, the Socialist must first kill the Snob. As yet, he has not even challenged him. When he does, I shall back the Snob to beat him. I shall be willing to lay very, very long odds.

Every human creature weaves for himself and wears an elaborate vesture of illusion. All of us pretend. And we pretend in order that we may impress others, not ourselves, and our pleasure is proportionate to our success in making others believe us to be, something finer than we are. We grudge no time that is wasted, no convenience that is sacrificed to that end. Gregarious animals, we are gluttons for effect, and the pains we take to produce effect are the chief tragedy of our existence. Not long ago, in the high-street of a small suburb, I saw a symbol that was even more tragic than the symbolic young man at the stage-door. I saw a bow-window through which a bust of Minerva gazed down at me. Minerva's back had been turned upon the inmates of the room not in Divine discourtesy, but by the very inmates. Imagine the back view of a bust ! I need not enlarge upon this curious sight. All of us, in our several ways, avert Minerva's head, not, I fear, from any consideration for a wise goddess nor with any wish to spread

**wisdom among our neighbours. We do but want to be envied, and for envy we will pay any price. To enjoy, simply, the things that are ours, is a philosophy beyond us. We value them not, save as material for false display, for deception. Be sure that the inmates of the room in the high-street knew nothing of Minerva, that they had made their purchase merely from the vague love of a genteel culture which was not theirs. For what is ours by natural right we care nothing. In our code possession is nine points of ennui, and we delight only in things alien to us. Our young men ape the wisdom and weariness of eld, whilst eld would fain dance, with stiff limbs, to the joyous and silly tunes of adolescence. What we have not, we simulate; and of what we have, we are heartily ashamed. We pull long faces to hide our mirth, and grin when we are most wretched. We are all of us, always, in everything, straining after contraries. Cicero plumed himself on his poor statesmanship, and Congreve was humiliated because Voltaire treated him as a writer rather than as a gentleman, and Gustave Dore", contemptuous of his true gifts, broke his heart in the vain ambition to be a painter. Philosophers make ghastly efforts to,be frivolous, and—but I will leave the reader of this essay to complete my antithesis.**

## *An Infamous Brigade*

NOT many nights ago, as I was hastening through the frost, I saw a strange glamour in the sky. 'Is it Tithonus,' I wondered, 'shamed forth, at length, by his Lady's taunts?' The glamour grew. I thought Aurora had followed her Lord, and was beseeching him to return. But a cabman, whom I consulted,. told me it was not Tithonus, nor Aurora, but only some wharf burning by the river. I let him drive me there. Through a rattle of dark alleys sped we, through brawls and squalor. Under the red glory of flames that were reduplicated in sky and water, we rested. Than the roaring of those great flames had I yet heard, than their red glory seen, nothing lovelier.

Yet, under my very eyes, there was an organized attempt to spoil this fair thing. Persons in absurd helmets ran about pouring cascades of cold water on the flames. These, my cabman told me, were firemen. I jumped out and, .catching one of them by the arm, bade him sharply desist from his vandalism. I told him that I had driven miles to see this fire, that great crowds of Londoners, poor people with few joys, were there to see it also, and I asked him who was he that he should dare to disappoint us. Without answering my arguments, **he warned me** that **I** must not interfere with him 'in the discharge of his duty.' The silly crowd would not uphold me, and I fell back, surreptitiously

slitting his water-hose with a penknife. But what could I avail ? The cascades around me were ceaseless, innumerable. Every moment dashed up fresh firemen, imprecant on cars, behind wild horses. In less than an hour, all was over. The flames had been surrounded, driven back and stricken, at length, as they lay, cowering and desperate, in their last embers. But, as they died, there leapt from my heart's core a great residuary flame of indignation. It is still burning.

For my friends assure me that beautiful fires are constantly springing up and are never spared. This fire brigade, as it is called, is a regular organization, winked at, if not openly encouraged, by the municipal authorities. It has its ramifications in all parts of London. It can produce, at five minutes' notice, its hundreds of hired ruffians, such as I saw that night by the river, none hindering them at their work. I know that vandalism is recurrent in all history. In the days of civil strife, our fairest monuments were marred by the fanatics of Cromwell. Athens wept over the Hermacopeia. The cultured Roman saw, as we see, helmeted Goths charging with hoarse threats through the city. But not secretly nor with fear of retribution, not in hostility to us nor in spiritual fervour, are planned the nightly outrages of 'Commander' Wells and his merry men. Ah ! we make a poor community. Americans, as yet inferior to us in the appreciation of most fair things, are far more spirited than we are about fires. Many yeah ago, when all Chicago was afire, the Mayor, watching it from the Lake-Side, ex-

claimed in a loud voice, 'Who will say now that ours is not the finest city in all the world?' I remember, too, that some years ago, on the eve of my departure from Chicago, a certain citizen, who was entertaining me at supper, expressed his great regret that they had not been able to show me one of their fires. And indeed it must be splendid to see those twenty-three-story buildings come crashing down in less time than was required to build them up. In Chicago, extinction is not attempted. Little value is set on bricks and mortar. A fire is enjoyed; then the building is reproduced and burnt down again at leisure. But we, who pull down, year by year, old inns and almshouses, because they are obsolete in usage, despite their prettiness and their tradition, we, in London, suffer to be saved any wharf or warehouse, however beautiful its encircling flames, however hideous it.

And here is a strange anomaly ! Whilst there are Companies, which honour with gifts of gold and silver, anyone whose silly tenement Vesta has deigned to visit, the Law still loads with chains anyone who may be found to have planned the happy occasion. I am far from exalting arson to the level of a fine art. Nothing is easier than to be an incendiary. All you want is a box of matches and a sense of beauty. I know, too, that fires have often been made for unworthy ends, for the gratification of revenge or, even, personal vanity. Nero set light to Rome that he might divert the ears of the musical critics from his indifferent fiddling, and fires, I am told, are mysteriously frequent' in the

little Duchy of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. But it is absurd that no distinction is made between motives of self-interest and the desire for a pretty scene. Perpend ! I stay for a few days in the country. I see some hay-ricks in a field. After dark I set light to them. Am I to be punished for doing so ? Probably, I admit, the rural police would not dream of suspecting me, and would forthwith arrest the last farm-labourer who had been discharged from the place. But that does not alter the principle of the thing. I should be sorry that another should suffer for me, but, having done no wrong, I certainly should not give myself up.

Vain, though, to cavil at the follies of the law, as exemplified here and there, until the public has been thoroughly aroused on the general question of its right to the unspoilt enjoyment of fires ! The sentimentalist may prattle of life-saving, but we must think, rather, of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. And, as a matter 6f fact, the strongest objection to the fire-brigade may be raised on behalf of those very persons whom it professes to benefit. Perpend, reader, once more ! You are a householder. You are sleeping in the dead of night. The insidious savour of smoke awakens you. You rush out on to the landing, only to find the staircase enveloped in smoke, whose dense volumes are flame-cloven. Escape is impossible ! You rush back and rouse your wife and children. In half-conscious terror, they cling to your knees. It is the most tragic moment of your life. You feel that the Ministers of Fate have

compassed you about, that Death is grinning at you from their ranks and will soon beckon. Already the smoke is curling round you, already ; . . The sash of the window is thrown up. In jumps a perfect stranger in fancy dress and,proceeds to play snapdragon with you and your wife and children. An anti-climax ! The whole scene ruined ! You are bundled down a ladder, protesting that an Englishman's house is his castle. Some scores of licensed practical-jokers are below with their squirts, and you are drenched to the skin, as likely as not. Finally, you are put to bed in some neighbour's house. So ends your tragedy, reader.

Not forgetting that before the next dawn breaks your house may be wet ashes and you its unwilling survivor, try now, reader, to take an altruist view. For the fire-brigade is most hateful, not because it invades the sanctity of our home-life, but because it takes constantly from so many citizens their enjoyment of fair things. I know that the fire-brigade is strong. It will die hard. Years hence, it may still be flourishing. But, meanwhile, one should not be idle. I am forming an Artists' Corps, whose aim will be to harass the members of the fire-brigade on all occasions. I am maturing an elaborate system of false alarms, and I shall train my recruits to waylay the enemy in their onrush, seize the bridles of their horses, cut their reins. We, too, shall hold ourselves in readiness to start off at five minutes' notice, but there will be no furious driving, no terrorizing of harmless traffic. We shall go about our work in a quiet, gentlemanly manner ; ser-

**vants, not tyrants of the. public. Though at first, necessarily, our organization will be small, we shall extend it gradually, I hope. We shall, in time, despise mere guerilla warfare and take our stand upon the very field of battle. Each one of us will trail a sinuous hose. It will not be filled with water. It will be filled with oil.**

## *The Sea-Side in Winter*

**1 AM always fascinated by the thought of a great statesman *en vacance.* How he must love to look from the window of his library and see, not the courtyard of government-offices, but the balustered terrace and the green, familiar undulations of his own park. On the grass, there is no scurry of government-clerks, special messengers, private secretaries, but only the foolish foregathering of the deer. His children are at play on the terrace. His books line the high walls around him. Save that blot of scarlet, his despatch-box, there is nothing to harass him in his quietude. On my table, too, there are but a quill and a few sheets of foolscap. Around me are the usual ornaments of sea-side lodgings. Through a little bay-window I look out over the wide sea. I have looked, so, through many little bay-windows. But, on my heart, I do not distinguish them one from another ; they are all as one for me, all symbolize home for me, quietude and home. A fine park, seen through an oriel window, is for its inheritor, and you shall search vainly for my name in the *Landed Gentry.* But all the green acres of the sea are mine, and I cast a territorial eye over them. The fishing-boats that browse on them are my deer. My balustered terrace is the Parade.' Yes I in whatever sea-side town I find myself I am filled with a quiet pride, a restfulness of possession. With the first breath**

of its wet salt, all the stains of the town are purged, the vapours blown quite away. I am, like Sir Willoughby Patterne, 'not a poet,' and so the sea does not move me, as it moves Mr. Swinburne, to superb dithyrambs, nor send me searching, as it sends Mr. William Watson searching, for adjectives long enough to express unqualified approval. For me, the sight of it is sacramental, not because it has any power to overwhelm my soul, but because it alone can restore that sense of self-importance, which London takes from me. For me, *θάλαττα κλύζει πάντα κακά*, indeed.

I like it best in the dead season of Winter. The little towns that dot the south coast and have their absurd season in August or September, are pathetic in all other months, but especially, I think, in those wintry months when all the echoes of their late gaiety are so long dead and so far from re-awakening. I am fond of coming in Winter to a place whose Season I do already know. Last August, I was here, in little L——. February finds me here again, but almost alone, and dressed like Ovid in exile, and with the snows of yester year hanging over me in a grey sky. Hardly a sign is there of human habitation, though the shops are still open, with the same names over them. The same small crescents, so Early-Victorian and demure, still face the sea. Their every window bears that monotonous plea, 'Apartments.' The Parade stretches put before me, a white streak of desolation, flecked with a few figures. There stanids the blind man by his telescope, through which no one,, not even in the

height of the Season, ever looked. One or two old gentlemen, perfectly betweeded, walk with a rather furtive jauntiness that is begotten of gout and the desire to conceal gout. They doff their hats gallandy to the one or two lady-residents who pass by, hardy, strapping creatures with black straw hats and crooked walking-sticks. Christmas roses ! Yes, and there are the orphans, a long double-file of small queerly-dressed girls, carrying spades and pails, just as they did in the Summer. They are going down to their dreary task of building. If one of them tried to escape, I suppose she would be shot down like a Dartmoor convict. And here are the tarred lobster-pots lying in the road, and that is where the town band used to play every morning, and there sang the comic singers in a crowd of children. I sit down in one of those glass shelters, which were once, and will be again hereafter, so full of nurses, and I light the cigarette of melancholy. Another, a more affluent, girls' school soon files past me. The girls are chattering briskly, and the wind waves their hair behind them, as they walk. It was their holiday, I suppose, when I was here in the Summer. What a grotesque governess backs the procession !

After the first day or so, my melancholy leaves me. The very loneliness of the place does but accentuate my proprietary sense. From the midst of all this lifeless monotony I stand out, a dominant and most romantic personage. Were I in London, who would notice me, no prince there? Evert here, in the Season, I had but a slight pre-eminence

**over other visitors. But now I need but show myself to create a glow of interest and wonder. The blind man, standing by his telescope, knows my tread, and tries, I think, to picture my appearance. The old gentlemen see in me the incarnation of splendid youth; the shop-people, a dispenser of great riches ; the school-girls, a prodigy of joyous freedom from French verbs. I could not have levied these tributes in the month of August. Nor could I have relished so heartily as now the simple pleasures which the sea-side always can afford. Everything is delightful. I look forward to everything. As I walk Stationwards for the morning papers, I can scarcely contain my great interest in current events ; and, later, when I have learnt all that is troubling that city whose happy exile I am, how pleasant to lean over the Parade's railing and watch Neptune's troupe of performing waves ! I know not how these wild things have been trained, but to see them as they advance, a *chasse roulee,* the little ones a-front, the big ones following, I could almost fancy they were dancing for their own pleasure, rather than from any fear of the trident. Neptune is the *doyen* of our showmen, but, in spite of his immense popularity, he is always introducing new features. His waves were at Broadstairs, not long ago, when I was there. They were; actually carrying up sea-weed in their white teeth and arranging it in strips on the sand. When I threw them a pebble they curled over and bowed to me. Here, too, some of the bigger ones have been taught to leap over the Parade. I wish Neptune would**

bring them to London. Perhaps, however, they would be less amusing there. Every pleasure is here so generously magnified. I do even enjoy my meals—the simpler the food, the more Gargantuan my appetite. I wonder how I can ever have sat out the tedious comedy of dinner, when it is possible to enjoy that variety-entertainment, high tea, in which ham and scones and shrimps and hard-boiled eggs and honey all take their short, delightful 'turns.' And then, when one is well satisfied, to emerge, not into the garish Strand, but upon the dark sea-front, and to feel, as one notes the shimmer of the moon across the waters, that the lamp-posts are shining with a grotesquely similar radiance across the mud of every thoroughfare in London.

At the end of a week, spent in such a place as this, where the focus of all things has been deranged for my pleasure, I have so far forgotten London as a place of* real dwelling that I have no great dread of my return. My holiday is over, but I am so permeated with happiness that my departure is not grievous. My self-conceit, so carefully fostered here, has grown out of all bounds, and I, who came here as a mere proprietor, leave like an Imperial Guest. Before I am driven to the railway-station, with sea-breezes for my escort, I present my land-lady with a' daguerreotype of myself, signed by my own hand.

## *If I were Ædile*

SINCE first met, in Spring Gardens, a certain mischievous and meddlesome body of men, we have heard much of the proposed improvement of London —betterment' is the very expressive word they use. 'London clean! London beautiful!' is their cry, fraught with sinister meaning to those who understand. As yet, indeed, they have not done very much harm. But that is not their fault. From the first they have been brimful of horrible intentions. Even Hampstead was not sacred to them. 'An uncouth heath!' they would seem to have exclaimed, 'This must be seen to.' And so the dear wilds of Hampstead, its knolls and ridges and tiny precipices, began to be levelled, bettermented, brought up to date. And the pale refugees from London, who love to clamber there, never but wondering that so fair and strange an upland overhangs the city of their travail, found smooth walks and strong railings set there, and flower-beds, far superior to the furze-bushes. Then the fist of Public Opinion was shaken so angrily that the Councillors quaked before it and, snatching up their pick-axes and their two-foot rules, their trpwels and their packets of seeds, went stumbling away down the hill. Awhile, they lay low. But soon they came up on Chelsea Reach, smiling; hoping, doubtless, that the mists which do ever shroud that dear place, sanctified by so many painters and poets,

would hide their embankment till it were complete. Somebody saw their ominous figures groping along the bank. An alarm was raised. The plans of the. embankment were seized. Bohemia's fist was shaken to. its foundations. The Councillors scuttled away, growling. And, ever since, they have been much more careful. They have learnt that sacred suburbs must not be lightly desecrated, and they while away their time with threats against the Metropolis, which has fewer champions. Lo here ! is the burning question of the Strand. The Councillors have popped across the Channel and come back raving about Boulevards. If one German Baron could do so much for Paris, what could not a lot of earnest Radicals do for London ? Lo ! there is the burning question of Piccadilly. The Radicals are ashamed of Piccadilly, so narrow, so irregular is it. But they point the finger of righteous pride at that new railing, which bounds the courtyard of Devonshire House. The old wall of brown brick, this railing's predecessor, they had long regarded as a grave insult to themselves and the democracy. Had it threatened the lives of the foot-passengers, they would have had it down in less than no. time; but it was solid. All they could do was to stamp around, calling it 'grimy' and 'most unsightly.' People confessed that they had never thought of it in that light, but that, since their attention had been drawn to it, they certainly did think the wall was most hideous. Radical editors stood under it and blew their trumpets for its downfall, And the Duke of Devonshire did not'

say to them, as he should have said, 'Be damned to you !' but gave them a railing.

Well! I am not of the stuff which stems the tide of democracy. A delicate and Tory temperament precludes me from conversation with Radicals. But I did, during the agitation I have described, address to them, through their *Daily Chronicle*, an oblique remonstrance. *I* pointed out to them that noblemen's courtyards were a very curious, very charming survival, and that their arrogant mystery should not be disturbed. Alas ! I paid the penalty of the *poseur*. My letter was taken as a joke. The only passage in it which seemed to impress the Radicals, was a little quibble to the effect that the wall should stand, if only to veil the ugliness of the house behind it. They seemed to think there was something in that. Beauty is not indispensable to architecture. The very ugliest of houses is often, *διὰ τὸ μέγεθος*, impressive, even apart from its associations, and can arouse in those who see it emotions of profound awe. I will not enumerate the many buildings in London, which, destitute as they are both of beauty and of association, one yet values for the impressive dignity of their aspect. Devonshire House, moreover, is' full of grim style. Its disclosure to the street does not offend me, except for this reason : that there were many fine houses in Piccadilly and but one fine, invisible courtyard.

Radical eyebrows and Radical shoulders rise, I am sure, at this declaration.. I wish it were not impossible for me to receive the Radicals personally and speak to them. A deputation, in my room;

would learn much. It would hear these words : 'You are all of you very excellent, very ignorant, men. Meaning well in your schemes of "Betterment," you.know nothing whatever about architecture. Style, character, beauty, tradition, are unintelligible to you. London is not a beautiful town, I know, but its aspect has fine qualities, to be revered. These qualities are the result of certain historical contrasts between the nobility, the burgesses, and the mob. You chafe at these contrasts. The razure of the Duke of Devonshire's wall is a perfect symbol of your policy. You think that, by the removal of old barriers, by the creation of open spaces, you can rid London of its sombreness, make it bright and cheerful and "Frenchy," make it beautiful. If London were swept away by another fire, and you were allowed to rebuild it, you would take Paris for your model,' would you not ? That shows you have no sense of national character, of the inherent-sombreness in Englishmen, which gay surroundings would but make ridiculous. You would rebuild London on some uniform plan, would you not ? I daresay, then, you admire New York. You have never been there? You should go. Meanwhile, in London, there is no prospect of a holocaust, and you can but tinker. In the country, you inveigh against the parks of noblemen and claim them for the public. In London you call noblemen's courtyards' "grimy." Well, you are powerful. Cripple these noblemen, if you must, with Death Duties and give their revenues to the mob. But spare them, and spare us, the fine flavour

**of their seclusion. It gives me no pleasure to address you. Yet, now that I am doing so, I< will extend my speech, slightly. I am told that you are gradually destroying the tripartite nature of the English people ; that you are drawing down the aristocracy, and drawing up the mob, into the middle class. Let me tell you, indeed, you probably know, that the equality of man is an ideal which cannot be fulfilled. Some kind of chaos you may, in time, establish. The laws of contrast, which govern mankind, will very soon reduce that chaos to order. A new tyranny will take the place of the old. That is all. And the old tyranny of birth, which is also the tyranny of style, will be mourned bitterly, when it has passed away. I will answer no questions, hear no speeches. The deputation will now withdraw.'**

**Some kind of authority is, doubdess, needed to direct the architectural changes in a great city. That persons so inept as they to whom I have spoken this imaginary address should be intrusted with any fraction of such authority, is an æsthetic scandal. Nor can we congratulate ourselves on the Ayrtons and Lefevres, who have been our Ædiles. I should be glad to see the powers of the First Commissioner of Works greatly extended, and his office held by an artist, not by a party-hack. The functions of such a minister would, of course, be rather, to protect than to destroy or to construct. If I were chosen for the post, I should exercise little originality, much reverence ; recognizing that Time- is an architect, with whose work one should not**

lightly tamper, A new building I should judge, not on its own merits, nor according to my own preferences, but in reference to its surroundings, also, and to its owner. If, for instance, I had been Ædile in '94, and the plans of Mr. Beit's house in Park Lane had been duly submitted to me, I should have passed them readily. I know that the house looks rather absurd, now that it is finished. *On dirait* some little bungalow wafted by an evil magician from the shores of Bexhill-on-Sea. But in its way it is interesting—who could ever have fancied that a millionaire would be so unassuming? And, in a hundred years, it may even look, pretty. Nor does it spoil the aspect of Park Lane, whose charm, indeed, depends upon variety.

On the other hand, I should never have allowed Lord Rosebery to thump down that loud, scarlet note among the brown and green harmonies of Berkeley Square. . I should keep a very jealous guard upon Berkeley Square. With its perfect tone, its quietude, with Lord Bath's dolphins, Lord Lansdowne's long wall, the old and pleasant anomaly of Gunter's, it is an ineffably distinguished place. Grosvenor Square is so wild a motley that I would make no rules there. But in St. James' Square, that superb example of all that is best, and greatest, and most gloomy in our architecture, I would be a despot indeed. The receivers of money, who have occupied so great a part of it, I would ruthlessly drive forth, and in their empty houses I would reinstate the impoverished noblemen, whose ancestors once lived there. Who cares that the place

is insanitary? History haunts it. The ghosts of many centuries gather upon its doorsteps. Every window has the pathos of a frame wherefrom some great picture has been born. From one, Nell Gwynne waved her naughtily-embellished fingers. From another poor Caroline dropped her clumsy curtseys to the mob. At that window, yonder, not so long since, sat The Rupert of Debate,' glowering through his spectacles and cursing his swathed foot. . .''. Yes, I would be a real despot in St. James' Square.

As I have suggested, my functions would be mainly negative. But there are some things in London which I should destroy. There is one especially fatuous kind of ornamentation which I should spare not for one moment. I should make very short work of any Victorian statues I saw standing about. There are many of them. There is no escape from them. For sculpture is the most obtrusive of all arts. Its elemental grandeur, its breadth of aspect, swiftly impressive, and the archaic hardiness of its material, give it a right *in aere, in fiigore, in imbri.* It was the supreme decoration of great cities. It is the supreme disfigurement of great cities. None but a sculptor and his mother would deny that it is a lost art. And yet, whenever an eminent person dies, we know (nor seem to care) that, within a year or two, his friends will have foisted on some street or square a marble abortion so obscene that no one in any future generation can, by any possibility, forget him. I am the last person to disparage grotesques; but I do not think

they are quite a nice means of commemorating our mighty dead. If England, in her old age, is beginning to lose her memory and cannot, without some system of mnemonics, remember the names of her great sons, she had better make up her mind to forget them at once. At any rate, she really must dispense with such ghastly reminders as the work of her modern sculptors. No doubt she will object that statuary is the one kind of art that can be made obvious. But, if I were Ædile, this objection would not move me for one instant. I should point out to her that it is better to sacrifice even memory than to sacrifice personal appearance, and I should direct her to the National Portrait Gallery.

I should make rather a good Ædile. I do not deny that, as a private individual and a caricaturist, passing through Knightsbridge, I have often been grateful for that gilt-splashed effigy of Lord Strathnairn. In Piccadilly Circus, I am often convulsed by the Gilbertian humour of that little Mercury. But official responsibilities would sober me, and, whatever the qualms of my own facetious spirit, all the Victorian statues in London would soon be toppling down. I should unleash my gangs of skilled iconoclasts at the marble feet of every poet and hero, philosopher and philanthropist. Albert the Good would not escape me, nor that vague embryo of Sir Walter Besant, which, even now, on very clear days, we can see towering over the Thames Embankment, nor . . . Why ! what an ass am I ! ' I shall never be Ædile. Statues will continue

**to bob up around us, till every corner has its side-splitter. And meanwhile, in the alleged poverty of our national defences, it will be comfortable to know that we need not fear Mummius.**

## *Sign-Boards*

**WHY do artists no longer paint sign-boards for our pleasure? They should really do so. Sign-boards were far more congenial than posters to their talent. No painter of distinction ever succeeds in doing posters. Unable to rid him of his own knowledge, he cannot learn the rather harsh conditions that they impose. But the sign-board is a ground for his very own work. Its function is not, like the poster's function, merely to arrest the casual eye and proclaim a ware, but rather to attract and fascinate one, and to make one, haply, enter the shop it overhangs. Thus is all scope given for a more delicate technique, a subtler fancy. Mere masses of colour, crude intensity of conception, wherewithout posters fail, were quite unnecessary, were inappropriate. The Neo-Romantics, the dalliers with pretty sentiment, would paint admirable sign-boards. I am sure that one painted by Mr. Conder would ensure patronage to the most incompetent modiste. Mr. Will Rothenstein, again, were a handy man for the tailors. But all good painters would do well, after their kind, in an art which yielded triumphs to Hogarth and Holbein, to Gorreggio and 'Old' Grome.**

**Therefore, let not the shopkeepers tarry, but let them go with gold to the places where artists dwell. That they should hang out sign-boards is not, surely, an unreasonable request. Signs they have**

**never wholly abandoned. The, chemist's window is still signalized by its array of lurid vessels, dear to little children. A brazen sheep droops, even now, over some hosiers' doors, and a few of those old Highlanders, the least offensive statues we have, maybe seen fingering the snuff-horn, even now. A survival of mere sentiment ! These signs were invented for the enlightening of customers, long ago, when few were scholarly enough to read a superscription. But now, of course, every one is taught to read. Nor will the survival of these signs stem that abominable torrent of education, which is flooding, but will never fertilize the land. 'Why then,' asks the shopkeeper, 'should I spend my money on a sign-board?' Sir, I will explain. I do not ask you to revive those old conventional designs, as who should hang a green bush before a tavern, what not and so forth. Adopt, rather, a fanciful and original sign-board, peculiar to the character of your own wares, peculiar, also, to the painter of it. From the point of custom, your money will be well spent. And your board will, moreover, teach you to chasten your shop-window, whose ordering you understand so ill. But 'shop-windows,' you object, 'have made these boards unnecessary. They are attractive enough in themselves.' You are wrong, believe me ! Your window is -quite repulsive. But the sign-board, being itself an absolute symbol, will teach you how very well it is to symbolize, rather than to parade, your wares.' Are you a jeweller ? You fill your window with a garish and unseemly chaos of all you have:**

bracelets, sleeve-links, penknives, tiaras—*toute la boutique*. Your rival in Paris, even in New York, is much wiser. He understands the value of a reticent symbolism. Very little puts he into his window. What he puts is good. Men and women, beholding, praise it. Their imagination has been stirred, their appetite whetted for ,the, things that are withheld, and they long to enter in at the door. Last winter, in the Rue de la Paix, I saw a jewel-window, sir, that should serve for an example to you. It was lined with scarlet velvet and illustrious with electric light. In the very middle of it, lay, like a bomb in a palace, one beautiful black pearl. Had I been rich, I must have entered. Are you a florist ? I blame you less for your profusion. For flowers, being things of Nature, do not need any artistic ordering, and your window, with its lilies and forget-me-nots and lilac-branches, is a chance patch of the country, not unwelcome to us. Yet you, also, might expose but one single daffodil, on some days. And as for the crude efforts of your neighbour, the butcher, to create a pastoral atmosphere, I cannot think of them but with utter contempt. Let him put up all his shutters and keep the dreadful secrets of the slaughter-house to himself. Mr. Sydney Cooper shall do him a sign-board. ; And why should the sea give up its dead to fishmongers who harrow us with the corpses ? And why does the Stereoscopic Company reveal to us the ugliness of everybody in England?

Sign-boards will be to our shopkeepers an object lesson in this reticent symbolism, as to our painters

**a new ground for their art, a new source of honest pennies. Above all, they will give a new charm to the town. For not only will shop-windows, under their influence become beautiful, but the sign-boards themselves, in their long vista, will add to the fair aspect of many streets. In Bond Street, that modish alley, they will have their value, I think. I have seen the old banners that depend from either side of the St. George's Chapel, at Windsor. They have their value.**

# *Ouida*

THE Democracy of Letters will exasperate or divert you, according to your temperament. Me it diverts merely. It does no harm to literature. Good books are still written, good critics still criticize, in the old, quiet way; and, if the good books are criticized chiefly by innumerable fools hired to review an imponderable amount of trash, I do not really see that it matters at all. The trash itself is studied, now and again, by good critics and so becomes a spring-board for good criticism, and it were unfair as it were useless, therefore, to shield good books from the consideration of ordinary reviewers. You may call it monstrous that a good writer should be at the mercy of such persons, but I doubt whether the good writer is himself aggrieved. He needs no mercy. And, as a matter of fact, the menaces hurled by the ordinary reviewers, whenever something new or strange confronts them, are very vain words indeed, and may at any* moment be merged in clumsy compliments. A good critic—and by that term I mean a cultured man with brains and a temperament—may at any moment come by, and, if he praise, the ordinary reviewers, most receptive of all creatures, will praise also. I was glancing lately through a little book of essays, written by a lady. At the end of the book were printed press-notices about a volume of this lady's book of verse. Among these gems, and coruscating

beyond the rest, was one graven with the name of Mr. William Sharp : 'In its class I know no nobler or more beautiful sonnet than "Renouncement" ; and I have so considered it ever since the day when Rossetti (who knew it by heart), repeating it to me, added that it was one of the three finest sonnets ever written by women.' Such a confession as Mr. William Sharp's is not to be found in the ordinary press-notice, but that is merely, because the ordinary reviewer is of a less simple and sunny disposition than our friend, and speaks not save as one having his own authority. Nevertheless, he is in no wise more clever than Mr. Sharp (or Captain Sumph), and very likely he did not even know Rossetti. Whether Mr. Sharp liked this sonnet before he met it under high auspices, is a point which may never be made clear, but there can be no doubt that the method of the ordinary reviewer is to curse what he does not understand, until it be explained to him. The element of comedy becomes yet stronger if the reviewers be subsequently assured that the explanation was all wrong. Who shall forget the chorus! of adulation that rent the welkin for the essays of this very lady whose sonnet Mr. Sharp 'so considered' ? Two great writers had greatly praised her. I, humble person, mildly suggested that their praise had been excessive, and gave some good reasons for my opinion. Since then, the chorus has been palpably less loud,, marred even by discordant voices. I do not pride myself particularly on this effect; I record it only because it gives a little instance of a great law.

Simpler, more striking, and more important, as an instance of reviewers' emptiness, is the position of Ouida, the latest*of whose long novels, *The Massarenes,* had what is technically termed 'a cordial reception'—a reception strangely different from that accorded to her novels thitherto. Ouida's novels have always, I believe, sold well. They contain qualities which have gained for them some measure of Corellian success. Probably that is why, for so many years, no good critic took the trouble to praise them. The good critic, with a fastidiousness which is perhaps a fault, often neglects those who can look after themselves; the very fact of popularity—he is not infallible—often repels him; he prefers to champion the deserving weak. And so, for many years, the critics, unreproved, were ridiculing a writer who had many qualities obvious to ridicule, many gifts that lifted her beyond their reach. At length it occurred to a critic of distinction, Mr. G. S. Street, to write an 'Appreciation of Ouida,' which appeared in the *fellow Book.* It was a shy, self-conscious essay, written somewhat in the tone of a young man defending the moral character of a barmaid who has bewitched him, but, for all its blushing diffidence, it was a very gentlemanly piece of work, and it was full of true and delicate criticism. I myself wrote, later, in praise of Ouida, and I believe that, at about the same time, Mr. Stephen Crane wrote an appreciation of his own in an American magazine. In a word, three intelligent persons had cracked their whips—enough to have called the hounds off,

Nay more, the furious pack had been turned suddenly into a flock of nice sheep. It was pretty to see them gambolling and frisking and bleating around *The Massarenes.*

Ouida is not, and never was, an artist. That, strangely enough, is one reason why she had been so little appreciated by the reviewers. The artist presents his ideas in the finest, strictest form, paring, whittling, polishing, In reading his finished work, none but a few persons note his artistic skill, or take pleasure in it for its own sake. Yet it is this very skill of his which enables the reviewers to read his work with pleasure. To a few. persons, artistic skill is in itself delightful, insomuch that they tend to overrate its importance, neglecting the matter for the form. Art, in a writer, is not everything. Indeed, it implies a certain limitation If a list of consciously artistic writers were drawn up, one would find that most of them were lacking in great force of intellect or of emotion ; that their intellects were restricted, their emotions not very strong. Writers of enormous vitality never are artistic : they cannot pause, they must always be moving swiftly forward. Mr. Meredith,. the only living novelist in, England who rivals Ouida in sheer vitality, packs tight all his pages with wit, philosophy, poetry, and psychological analysis.' His obscurity, like that of Carlyle and Browning, is due less to extreme subtlety than to the plethoric abundance of his ideas. He cannot stop to express himself. If he could, he might be more popular. The rhapsodies of Mr. Swinburne, again, are so over-

whelmingly exuberant in their expression that no ordinary reader can cope with them ; the ordinary reader is stunned by them before he is impressed. When he lays down the book and regains consciousness, he has forgotten entirely what it was all about. On the other hand, reticence, economy, selection, and all the artistic means may be carried too far. Too much art is, of course, as great an obstacle as too little art; and Pater, in his excessive care for words, is as obscure to most people as are Carlyle and Browning, in their carelessness. It is to him who takes the mean of these two extremes, to that author who expresses himself simply, without unnecessary expansion or congestion, that appreciation is most readily and spontane6usly granted.

Well ! For my own part, I am a dilettante, a *petit maitre. 1* love best in literature delicate and elaborate ingenuities of form and style. But my preference does not keep me from paying due homage to. Titanic force, and delighting, now and again, in its manifestation. I wonder at Ouida's novels, and I wonder still more at Ouida. I am staggered when I think of that lurid sequence of books and short stories and essays which she has poured forth so swiftly, with such irresistible *elan.* What manner of woman can Ouida be ? A woman who writes well never writes much. Even Sappho spent her whole life in writing and rewriting some exquisite, isolated verses, which, with feminine tact, she handed down to posterity as mere fragments of her work. In our own day, there are some ladies who write a large number of long books but I am

sure that the 'sexual novel' or the 'political novel,' as wrought by them, must be as easy to write as it is hard to read. Ouida is essentially feminine, as much *une femme des femmes* as Jane Austen or 'John Oliver Hobbes,' and it is indeed remarkable that she should yet be endowed with force and energy so exuberant and indefatigable. All her books are amazing in their sustained vitality. Vitality is, indeed, the most patent, potent factor in her work. Her pen is more inexhaustibly prolific than the pen of any other writer ; it gathers new strength of its every dip into the ink-pot. Ouida need not, and could not, husband her unique endowments, and a man might as well shake his head over the daily rising of the indefatigable sun, or preach Mai-thusianism in a rabbit-warren, as counsel Ouida to write less. Her every page is a riot of unpolished epigrams and unpolished poetry of vision, with a hundred discursions and redundancies. She cannot say a thing once ; she must repeat it again and again, and, with every repetition, so it seems to me, she says it with greater force and charm. Her style is a veritable cascade, in comparison with which the waters come down at Lodore as tamely as they come down at Shanklin. And, all the while, I never lose interest in her story, constructed with that sound professional knowledge, which the romancers of this later generation, with their vague and halting modes, would probably regard as old-fashioned. Ouida grips me with her every plot, and—since she herself so strenuously believes in them—I can believe even in her characters. True, they are not real,

**when I, think of them in cold blood. They are abstractions, like the figures in early Greek tragedies and epics before psychology was thought of—things of black or white, or colourless things to illustrate the working of destiny, elemental puppets for pity or awe. Ouida does not pretend to the finer shades of civilized psychology. Her men and women of Mayfair are shadows, as I see when I am not under the direct spell of her writing, and she reproduces real life only when she is dealing with childish or half-savage natures—Cigarette the *vivandiere*, Redempta the gipsy, Italian peasants, dogs and horses. She cares for the romance and beauty and terror of life, not for its delicate shades and inner secrets. Her books are, in the true sense of the word, romances, though they are not written in Wardour Street. The picturesqueness of modern life, transfigured by imagination, embellished by fancy, that is her *forte*. She involves her stock-figures—the pure girl, the wicked woman, the adorable hero and the rest—in a series of splendid adventures. She makes her protagonist a guardsman that she may describe, as she alone can, steeplechases and fox-hunts and horses running away with phaetons. Or she makes him a diplomat, like Strathmore, or a great tenor, like Coreze, or a Queen's messenger, like Erceldoune, or something else—anything so that it br lurid and susceptible of romance. She ranges hither and thither over all countries, snatching at all languages, realizing all scenes. Her information is as wide as Macaulay's, and her slips in local colour are but the result of a careless omniscience. That**

she should have referred to 'he pointing of the *digito monsirari,'* and headed one of her chapters with the words 'Thalassis! Thalassis!' and made the Queen present at a Levee, and thrown one or two false side-lights on the Oxford Eights Week, may seem very terrible to the dullards who think that criticism consists in spotting mistakes. But the fact remains that Ouida uses her great information with extraordinary effect. Her delight in beautiful things has been accounted to her for vulgarity by those who think that a writer 'should take material luxury for granted.' But such people forget, or are unable to appreciate, the difference between the perfunctory faking of description, as practised by the average novelist—as who should say 'soft carpets,' 'choice wines,' 'priceless Tintorettos'—and description which is the result of true vision. No writer was ever mere finely endowed than Ouida with the love and knowledge of all kinds of beauty in art and nature. There is nothing vulgar in having a sense of beauty—so long as you have it. Ouida's descriptions of boudoirs in palaces are no more vulgar nor less beautiful than her descriptions of lakes and mountains.

With their fair, silken moustachios and their glengarries and their velvet jackets, Ouida's guardsmen, pegs for luxury and romance, are vastly stimulating. I should like to have peered through the cloud of Turkish' that did always involve them, and have seen Lord Vaulerois tossing aside a pile of millefleurs-scented notes and quaffing curacoa, as he pondered the chances of Peach-Bloom for the

Guards' Steeplechase, or the last mad caprice of Lela Liette ! Too languid, as he lay there on his divan, to raise the vinaigrette to his nostrils, he was one who had served his country through more than one campaign on the boiling plains of the Sahara ; he who, in the palace of a *nouveau .ricke,* had refused the bedchamber assigned to him, on the plea that he could not sleep under a false Fragonard; had often camped *d la belle etoile* in the waste places of Central Asia ; thrice he had passed through the D.G. as calmly as he would swim the Hellespont or toss off a beaker of rosy Comet-Wine ; with his girlish hands that Duchesses envied he had grappled lions in the jungle, and would think nothing of waiting for hours, heedless of frost and rain, to bring down some rocketer he had marked in a warm corner at Crichel or Longleat. Familiar with Cairene Bazaars as with the matchless deer-forests of Dunrobin, with the brown fens round Melton Mowbray, as with the incomparable grace and brilliance of the Court of Hapsburg ; *bienvenu* in the Vatican as in the Quirinal; deferred to by Dips and Deores in all the *salons* of Europe, and before whom even Queens turned to coquettes and Kings to comrades ; careless, caressed, *insouciant;* of all men the beloved or envied ; inimitable alike in his grace of person and in the perfection of his taste ; passing from the bow-windows of St. James's to the faded and fetid alleys of Stamboul, from the Quartier Brecla to the Newski Prospect, from the citron-groves of Cashmere, the gay fuchsia-gardens of Simla, to **the** hideous chaos of Illinois, a region scorched by

the sirocco, swept by inextinguishable prairie-fires, sepultured in the white shrouds of remorseless blizzards, and—as though that were not enough—befouled with the fumes and crushed with the weight of a thousand loathsome cities, which are swift as the mushroom in their growth, far more deadly than the *fungus fatalis* of the Midi—it was here, passing with easy nonchalance as the foal passes from one pasture to another, with a flight swifter than the falcon's, luxurious in its appurtenance as a Shah's seraglio ; it was here, in these whirling circles of intrigue and pleasure and romance, and in this span of an illimitable nomady, that flew the nights and days of Philip, nineteenth Marquis of Vaulerois, as the world knew him—'Fifi' of the First Life.

I am glad that in her later books Ouida has not deserted 'the First Life.' She is still the same Ouida, has lost none of her romance, none of her wit and poetry, her ebullitions of pity and indignation. The old 'naughtiness' and irresponsibility which were so .strange a portent in the Medio-Victorian days, and kept her books away from the drawing-room table, seem to have almost disappeared ; and, in complement of her love of luxury for its own sake, there is some social philosophy, diatribes against society for its vulgar usage of luxury. But, though she has become a mentor, she is still Ouida, still that unique, flamboyant lady, one of the. miracles of modern literature. After all these years, she is still young and swift and strong, towering head and shoulders over all the other

**women (and all but one or two of the men) who are writing English novels. That the reviewers have tardily trumpeted her is amusing, but no cause for congratulation. I have watched their attitude rather closely. They have the idiot's cunning and seek to explain their behaviour by saying that Ouida has entirely changed. Save in the slight respect I have noted, Ouida has not changed at all. She is still Ouida. That is the high compliment I would pay her.**

## *The Blight on the Music Halls*

*O Love ! When you're in love-*
*Love makes a man*
*Feel awf'lly peculiar.*
*0 Love! When you're in love—*
*With a Jane or a Julia,*
*Man falls in love !*

THESE words, and their music, not less exquisite, I owe to the erudition of a certain painter, who seems to have spent most of the evenings of his life in Music Halls and can bring forth from the store-house of his memory many fatuous, forgotten choruses. Through the old 'Oxford' these words resounded from the great throat of George Ley-bourne, nightly, years ago. Now they are not remembered. They buzz no longer in brains that are fulfilled with later melodies ; and save, haply, in a far county, by an old farmer, whose quiet life has not expunged the memory of his visit to the town, you do nowhere hear them carolled. I am glad to resuscitate their rhythm : bugle-notes to wake sleeping memories in some breasts; more melancholy for me, fainter, than scent of soever long-kept lavender.

They belong to the unregenerate period of the Music Halls. In sense and sentiment and syntax, they differ vastly from anything that one hears now. Yet, in their day, they were vastly popular, were typical, indeed, of all the songs sung in the old

'Oxford' or the 'Albert' or the 'Hoxton Palace of Varieties.' To that sea of billicocks, the audience, through that fog of cheap tobacco-smoke, With 'the glare of footlights cast up on to his crumpled shirt-front and making a dark cavern of his mouth, the Lion Comique bawled out always some such crude, conventional ditty. And, when his turn was done, and he had swaggered off that stage whose back-cloth was ever a green glade with a portico or two of white marble, on tripped his sister-artist, the badly-rouged Serio, gaudy in satinette, energetic, hoarse, and without any talent. Young or old she might be, gracious or uncomely, might trip off, at last, *non sine pastoricia fistula* or in a storm of approval —what matter? She was ever the same Serio. The convention was never broken.

Well I I know these things only by tradition. If I fare to the Transpontine Halls, I find but -an embarrassed remnant of the old performers, striving to live up to the imitators of Chevalier and Marie Lloyd. Reason, variety, refinement have crept gradually in, till one shall sigh in vain for the fatuous and delightful days of

*Oh the Fairies! Oh the Fairies!*
*They are so tender,*
*The feminine gender!*
*Oh the fairies! Oh the Fairies!*
*Oh for the wings of a Fairy Queen !*

But one must not marvel that those days are over. With sumptuous palaces erected in the heart of London, and with the patronage of fashion, new modes were bound to come in, sooner or later,

The homely humour of James Fawn and Bessie Belwood was superseded, ere long, by Chevalier, with his new and romantic method ; by Gus Elen, with his realistic psychology and his admirably written songs ; by Marie Lloyd, with her swift *nuances.* Meanwhile—a new art! Every one was interested. Every one had seen Mr. Sickert's paintings. Soon other painters began to frequent the Halls. Mr. Arthur Symons cut in, and secured the Laureateship. Mr. Anstey wrote satires. Mr. Frederic Wedmore began to join in the choruses with genteel gusto. And now, when, forwearied with the demands of an intellectual life, I stray into the Tivoli, and would fain soothe my nerves with folly, I find an entertainment that is not only worthy of attention, but is even most exigent of all my aesthetic faculties. There is a swift succession of strongly, variously defined personalities, all trained and talented and self-conscious; all in pretty or appropriately grotesque costumes ; all imitating this or that phase of modern life within the limits of their new art. The words of their songs are quite pregnant with character and wit. The music to which they are set is no longer the eternal variation on one or two themes, but is often novel and always adapted to the words' meaning. When fatuousness and vulgarity take their turn, themselves are in the nature of a surprise, startling, not soothing. I find no repose for my faculties in the Tivoli The atmosphere, from the stage,of it is surcharged with artisttic conscience. One knows that every; performer is, in private life, a charming and serious

person, whose photograph is reproduced in the illustrated papers, from time to time, with a description of his domestic life and his valuable collection of proof-engravings, press-cuttings, and what not. The interviewers have told one that he has a grand piano in his drawing-room and often composes his own songs, and 'will sing no words that he could not individually express.' And one compares him, as he stands there, with that humble creature who sang, with very great success, years ago,

*Then say was he a coward?*
*Had he a coward's heart?*
*By acting in this manner, did*
*He play the coward's part?*
*It was his earnest wish*
*One day nobly to behave—*
*And he proved himself at last to be*
*The Bravest of the Brave.*

Does one, as I do, wish only for relaxation in Music Halls, he must needs go to Paris. There the Music Halls have been always kept in their proper perspective. Yvette Guilbert is but an accident. She was never *du Cafe Chdntant,* and I hope she will soon retire to the legitimate stage. It is creditable to the Parisians that, despite her talent and individuality, she never found an imitatress. She Was, indeed, the one jarring note in the *Ambassadenrs,* where, in a pale-green avenue, brilliant with white lights, one sought the restfulness of a fatuous convention; sought to be lulled by the eternal fat men, telling of *La Patrie* or of their *amourettes,* and by the voiceless, sprightly baggages;

who sing eulogies of *Les Militaires.* Part of their charm for me is that, unless I listen, I know not what they are saying in their alien tongue. But they caper and gesticulate gracefully, and the light, familiar music soothes me. I have often thought that a man might end his days very pleasantly in the *claque.*

Between the French and the old English convention there are several points of difference, but each is based upon a monotonous vulgarity. Perhaps some person, who understands the charm of monotony, will say that in time our Music Halls will reach a plane of monotonous refinement, and that all will then be well. All would then be better, doubtless. But we have already the Italian Opera, and we have the Albert Hall. I insist that vulgarity is an implicit element of the true Music Hall. Why should we have sought to eliminate it? Out of the vulgarity of the people did the Music Hall arise, nor will anyone be so foolish as to contend that, by tampering with its foundations, we shall go one step towards refining the people. In its early state, the Music Hall was a very curious and interesting phenomenon, a popular art. What better outlet for the people's vulgarity? For cultured persons, what better κάθαρσις of that laughing and contemptuous spirit, which Aristotle knew to be a danger? Vulgarity will, of course, last till the next Glacial Epoch, and we shall always be able to contemplate it. But we were fools to drive it from its most convenient haunt. Oh, for the wasted glories of the old Oxford! Oh, for one hour

**in the Hoxton Palace of Varieties ! I must be glad that a few fragments have been snatched for me from their irrepleviable ditties. And, for my part, I do rejoice, in Summer and in Spring, in Autumn and in Winter, this sweet refrain to sing :**

*He's a de-ar old pal of mine,*
*He helped me when I was down,*
*Lent me his aid,*
*Willingly,*
*With a smile, not a frown.*
*And if the day should come,*
*And my lucky star should shine,*
*I shall always be*
*Most happy to say*
*'He's a de-ar old pal of mine!'*

# *Prangley Valley*[1]

'ALL men kill the thing they love' was the keynote of a fine ballad which every one has read. And, indeed, it does seem that in all love, be it love for animate or inanimate things, there is an ogre-ish element; humanity, in its egoism, being unable to appreciate anything, unless it have also power to destroy it. The comparative indifference with which the ancients regarded landscape might be traced to their lack of tools for its destruction. We, in this century, suffer from no such lack, and our love of landscape is quite unbounded. We have water-towers wherewith to cap our little hills, railway-trains to send along the ridges of our valleys, coal-shafts to sink through ground where, for many centuries, forests have been growing. We have factories, too, for the marges of wide rivers, texts about pills and soaps for the enamelling' of meads, and telegraph-wires for the threading of air, and tall black chimneys for all horizons. Month in, month out, with tears blinding our eyes, we raise tombs of brick and mortar for the decent burial of any scenery that may still be lying exposed. A little while, and English landscape will have become the theme of antiquarians, and we shall be listening to learned lectures on scenology and gaping at dried

[1] *They who, having read pages 207-217, think that I ought to be Ætile, are earnestly requested not to read the beginning or the end of this essay.—M. B.*

specimens of the trees, grasses, and curious flowers that were once quite common in our counties.

I am glad that there are, in the meantime, still some fragments of country not built over. I make the most of them, whenever I am at leisure. I think that Prangley Valley is the fragment that most fascinates, me; partly because it is so utterly sequestered, yet so near to London, from Kew Gardens one may reach it in less than half-an-hour's walking, but the way to it lies through such devious and narrow lanes, that the wheel of no scorcher scars it, and it is unimpressed by any Arrian or Arriettian boot. Indeed, I have often wondered how the 'King's Sceptre,' a Jacobean inn which stands just above the Valley, can thrive so finely on so little custom. John Willet himself seemed not more prosperously paunched than the keeper of this inn, and, though I have never met any fellow-farer at his door, my advent does not seem to flutter him. The notion .that any human creature should care to drink old ale from one of his burnished tankards, or should admire the Valley over which he has always lived, seems to puzzle him rather, but not to excite him. It is very pleasant to sit on the settle that stands, in summer-time, across the lawn of his sloping garden; pleasant to sit there, among the hollyhocks and fuchsia-beds, and look down upon the little hollow Valley that is so perfect in its way. I am afraid it is not. a grand or an uncomfortable piece of scenery. It cannot lay claim to a single crag, peak, or torrent. It suggests the artfulness, rather than the forces, of Nature. Its charm is toy-

like. The stream that duly bisects it is so slight and unassuming that I have quite forgotten its name. I remember that my innkeeper once told me, with a touch of pride, that it was a tributary of the Thames. Perhaps it is, but it looks suspiciously like a riband. So neat, so nicely matched one to another, are the poplar-trees on the opposite brow of the Valley, that one fancies they must stand, as in the nursery, on rounds of yellow wood, and would topple at the touch. Among these amusing trees there is one solitary tenement It is a kind of pavilion, built of grey stone and crowned with a dome round which stand gilded statuettes of the nine Muses. I know not what happens, in it now, but it is said to have been designed by Sir Roland Hanning, physician-in-ordinary to Queen Adelaide, and used by him as a summer-house and library, whenever he was in residence at Kew. Seen from a distance, with the sun gleaming on its grey and gilt, the pavilion has an absurd charm of its own. Set just where it is, it makes, in draughtsman's jargon, a pretty 'spot' in the whole scheme. One can hardly believe, though, that anyone but a marionette ever lived there. Indeed, were it not for the sheep, which are browsing on the slope and are obviously real, and for their shepherd, who is not at all like Noah, one would imagine that the whole Valley was but a large,. expensive toy. A trim, demure prospect, unambitious, unspoilt ! The strange brightness of its verdure and the correctness of its miniature proportions make it seem, in the best sense of the word, artificial. If it has not been designed and

executed with intense care, it is certainly the luckiest of flukes. Greater it might be, but not better. I feel that, for what it is, it is quite perfect. So it soothes me, and I am fond of it.

I am not a railway-company, nor a builder, nor a County Councillor. I had no direct means of ruining Prangley Valley.' But I have written my encomium of it, and now it is likely to be infested by all the readers of this book and by most of their friends. I have given away my poor Valley. The prospector will soon be prospecting it, and across its dear turf the trippers will soon be tripping. In sheer wantonness, I have ruined my poor Valley. Certainly, all true love has its ogre-ish element.

## *Arisei Sir——!*

KNIGHTHOOD is a cheap commodity in these .days. It is modern Royalty's substitute for largesse, and it is scattered broadcast. Though all sneer at it, there are few whose hands would not gladly grasp the dingy patent. After all, a title is still a title. The provincial ,Mayor delights to think that, into whatsoever house he enter, his name will be announced with the very same prefix as would be the name of the best-emblazoned baronet, and that his wife will be as good, colloquially, as a Marchioness. Even now, the number of those who are not knighted exceeds the number of those who are. Time, doubtless, will reverse these figures. It is quite possible that, in the next century, forms of application for knighthood will be sent out annually to every householder and be thrown with other circulars into the waste-paper basket. Further still in the future, knighthood may be one of the lighter punishments of the Law. 'Forty shillings or a knighthood' sounds quite possible.

At present, there is no class more covetous of knighthood than that new class of writers which has come in on the wave of popular education. Well! they are an interesting class, these writers, and I should like them to be officially recognized. They are an honest, harmless crew, and I,'for one, should like to see them made happy. By all means let them be knighted and their craft be stamped

as a Profession. When Sir Walter Besant prattles to the fair readers of *The Queen* about the recognition of Literature as a Profession, he does not, of course, talk what is called sense ; but these writers, whom I have named, have nothing to do with Literature —they are simply the first instalment of those who will supply a new commercial demand by giving the mob such stuff as it can appreciate. Writing, as practised by them, is at any rate a Trade, though no one save Sir Walter would call it a Profession. Mr. Flimflam, the popular novelist, is frankly of the moment, and, when he dies, another will take his place and will supply the same kind of stuff, with such variations as the superficial changes of the market may require. Being a man of average intelligence, he fully realizes his transient position. He has no illusion that his works will outlive him, and his only hope is that they may continue to sell well up to the date of his death. He is in much the same position as is a great singer, who has to live his immortality in his life-time : he must needs make up in expansion what he cannot hope for in extent. Nor, indeed, is he coy of the' necessity. He pushes his joints all round the market-place and basks in every available searchlight. Some hours of the day he is bound to consecrate to his private life, in which, however, he keeps his readers very well, posted, lest they forget, lest they forget Probably, as the necessity for advertisement increases with the number of his rivals, he will have his house entirely rebuilt by a glazier, or he will pitch his writing-table in Trafalgar Square and sleep

on the Embankment. But even now his must be a sadly arduous life. He must be the guest of the evening at the Inkslingers' Annual Dinner in the Holborn Restaurant, and there he must make an impromptu speech full of quaintly characteristic sayings. He must be the observed of all observers at the soiree given by the Institute of Second-Hate Lady-Journalists, and be seen at Private Views, bronzed and vigorous after his recent cruise on the Norfolk Broads. He must supply one of the most attractive items at the Concert in aid of the 'Gunners' Orphanage' by giving a reading of two chapters from his military novel, *The Fifty-Second* (fiftieth thousandth), and be the victim of what might have proved a serious cab-accident, while he is being driven to the studio of Mr. Botch, R.A., who is painting him seated at a writing-table in the uniform of the North-Wilts Yeomanry (of which the popular author is an honorary captain). No one must know of the thousand-and-one little acts of delicate generosity with which Mr. Flimflam, not letting his right hand know what his left doeth, alleviates the lot of those old schoolmates who have been less successful than he in the struggle for life. After his, lecturing-tour through the States, he must be off either to Venice, of which he is very fond, for a well-earned rest, or to Stoke Poges, in order that he may put the finishing touches to his,new mediaeval novel, in which (it is an open secret) the love of Dante for Beatrice will be treated in a new and startling manner, though with all that reverence and wealth of local colour for which Mr. Flimflam's

name is guarantee. Interviewed (or his name is not Flimflam) he must perpetually be, and for every interview he must be specially photographed with his favourite pipe, or with his cat and dog—Mr. Flimflam is a great lover of animals—or playing parlour-golf with his only child, or riding on a 'sociable' with his wife, a charming brunette, very proud of her lord and master. It must be known that he does a bit of gardening, now and again, 'just to brush away *the* cobwebs,' and that he laughingly confesses to being something of a philatelist. A far-away look must come into his eyes—those grey, deep-set eyes !—as, slowly, quietly, he tells the interviewer the story of his early struggles in the old, old days. The twilight must come creeping slowly into the little room; the needlework must fall from Mrs. Flimflam's hands, as she too becomes absorbed in the oft-told tale. At length, Mr. Flimflam must say, almost abruptly, 'But all that's over now ! Come ! You have yet to see my bits of old oak. Yes; oak is quite a hobby with me. My wife here tells me I ought to have been a Druid!' Before the imervwer is sent on his way, with a cordial handshake and a hope that he will return,-it must have been elicited that Mr. Flimflam has contracts which will keep him at work well into the twentieth century, and that in politics he is a Radical, though a firm believer in the future of our Colonies, but that, as to entering Parliament, that is not in his hife-programme—'at least,' he may add significantly, n*ot* yet awhile!'

Poor fellow ! Why should he not receive his

**heart's desire? What shoulders are more appropriate than Mr. Flimflam's to the touch of the royal sword? Disappointment may embitter him, and, if he were to be bitter, what would become of his books ? If, on the other hand, his Sovereign summon him, I shall be at Paddington when, with elastic tread and boundless smile, he passes down the platform to the Windsor train. It will do my heart good to see him. For my own part, I should like him to have a life-peerage. We have our Law-Lords—why not our Novel-Lords ? It matters not what title he receive, so it be one which will perish, like his twaddle, with him.**

## *Fashion and Her Bicycle*

SHE still bestrides it, but how listlessly ! A little while, and she will suffer it to be wheeled into that *musee sentimentale* wherein she keeps, duly classified, specimens of her past foibles.

Let us tarry over the section there devoted to her foibles in the Victorian Era ! There is the sketch-book, whose leaves she did bedabble with timid water-colour, in the 'forties, and the score of Bellini's *Ah ! Non Giunge !* and Donizetti's *0 ! Luce di quest Anima !* which she did so wildly warble at the grand piano. Here are 'the gold arrow and the silver, the gold star and the silver,' her guerdon in archery ; there the gay mallet that sent her ball so deftly through the iron hoops to the peg ; there the cameo she won in the Spelling Bee. Fond memories of linking lie in that pair of roller-skates, of many hard-fought 'sets,' in that narrow, curved racquet. This is a piece of 'crewel-work': note the silken inscription, *Five O'clock Tea,* and the little figures at each corner, copied from the 'quaint' pages of Kate Greenaway. These are the fragments of a terra-cotta pigeon, shot by Fashion, soon after she had 'lived up to' that tea-pot of blue china. This plain mackintosh hid her diamonds when she went slumming. That is the very *lorgnon* through which she was wont to spy, from her seat on My Lord's bench, prisoners at the Old Bailey or at Assizes. Here is the skirt she danced in a few

years ago. This was her banjo. This was her rubicon-be'zique marker, recently added to the collection. This was her golf-club. And that long, space—what is going to be exhibited there ? Her bicycle.

I conceive that Fashion, when she goes the round of her museum, will riot tarnish this wheel with any tear. How should she? Craving some violent remedy for her *ennui*, she sought to emulate St. Catharine. She suffered, and flinched not. But, having once released herself, she will not, I think, even when her bruises shall have faded and her arm be unslung, wax fondly sentimental over the wheel of her long agony. She will remember it only as a horrid penance. Already she has dropped it from her conversation ; Rudge, Humber, Singer —she cares no longer to discriminate between machines which are, one and all of them, the devil's own patent. Indeed, she thinks, bicycling was ever the most tedious topic of conversation. It was also the most tedious form of exercise, save walking, known to the human race. It was but a strange, ingenious compound of dulness and danger. On a horse, Fashion would not mind risking her life, but there is a vast difference between a mount that is live and lovable and a mount that is manufactured of even the best steel. The one has fine qualities to be .quickened, and swill caprices to be curbed, and! is petulant or amenable, timid or too greatly daring, a thing of infinite surprises. The other hat but one invariable motion, to whatsoever speed you may choose to regulate it. So soon as you can

ride it, you have mastered all its charm and, unless you be a professional acrobat, you can teach it nothing. It kills some of its riders, and bores the rest. I do not wonder that Fashion will have no more of it. Possibly, in the mellow haze of retrospect, she may forgive it its dulness and its danger. But there is one sin which she will never forgive. It made her ugly and ridiculous. On it, for all the devices of her *couturier,* Fashion never looked aught but her worst. In pursuit of her other foibles, at least she had always managed to look nice. On the archery-lawn, gazing so seriously at 'the gold,' as she drew back her bow-string, paused, and let fly her arrow; linking, with her hands in a big muff and her fur cap tilted on the steep incline of her *chevelure;* at croquet, daintily imposing a Balmoral-booted foot on the ball; languorous in 'utter' draperies among the peacock-feathers of 1880; or as she wheeled and darted hither and thither over the tennis-court, or as she sat, with bowed head, plucking the strings of her banjo,-in such, attitudes as these, she was always a thing of gracious and delicate appeal. Perched to pedal the treadles, she was an effort, an anomaly, a fright.

I wish that Fashion's neglect could doom the bicycle. Of course, it cannot. The bicycle, long before it became Fashion's foible, had all the makings of a national institution, and Fashion's patronage has but speeded its triumphal progress, through England. Some things were created by Fashion herself, and perished so soon as she was

**weary of them. Others, merely adopted by her, are more abiding. Golf, for example, as the most perfect expression of national stupidity, has an assured, uncheckered future, and croquet, as the one out-door game at which people can cheat, will never be in prolonged abeyance, and bicycling, as a symptom of that locomotomania produced by usage of steam, will endure 'till we go back to the old coaches.' The bicycle is complementary to the steam-engine, doing for the horseless individual what the steam-engine does for the community. It was as inevitable as it is unlovely, and I must put up with it. For the proletariat, it is not merely a necessity, but a great luxury, too. It gratifies, that instinct which is common to all stupid people, the instinct to potter with machinery. In the hours of his leisure, if he be not riding, the cyclist is oiling his machine, or cleaning it when it is quite clean, or letting the air out of it for the simple pleasure of inflating it, or unscrewing it, or turning it upside down, or tapping it suspiciously with a pair of pincers. The sight of him is instructive. A mother's solicitude is not more tender than his. Observe him !**

**But, though the bicycle is a serious fact, and though Demos, with humped back and all the muscles of his face beetled down to one expression of grotesque and ghastly resolve, will continue to scorch through those clouds of dust which mercifully obscure his outlines or those baths of mud which he would have me share with him, yet I may bid a glad farewell to the bicycle as Fashion's foible.**

**To Fashion, the bicycle was but a new toy, not a necessity. The dame is rich, and can afford horses, and her horses will be a proud symbol of her superiority, hereafter as in the past. Next century, she will tower equestrian in the bikish chaos, and the horses of her barouche will shy among the serried motor-cars of the middle-class. For the moment, my chief curiosity is of her next foible. Motor-cars, even as toys, seem not to enrapture her. For the flying-machine she may have yet to wait. *En attendant ?* There are many things for her selection. The concertina is a rather nice instrument. Stilts are not to be despised. Mohammedanism is said to be fascinating, and so are tip-cat and the tight-rope.**

## *Going Back to School*

THE other evening, at about seven o'clock, I was in a" swift hansom. My hat was tilted at a gay angle, and, for all I was muffled closely, my gloves betokened a ceremonious attire. I was smoking *la cigarette d'appetit,* and was quite happy. Outside Victoria my cab was stopped by a file of other cabs, that were following one another in at the main entrance of the station.' I noticed, on one of them, a small hat-box, a newish trunk and a corded play-box, and I caught one glimpse of a very small, pale boy in a billicock-hat. He was looking at me through the side-window. If Envy was ever inscribed on any face, it was inscribed on the face of that very small, pale boy. There,' I murmured, 'but for the grace of God, goes Max Beerbohm!'

My first thought, then, was for myself. I could not but plume me on the contrast of my own state with his. But, gradually, I became fulfilled with a very great compassion for him. I understood the boy's Envy so well. It was always the most bitter thing, in my own drive to the station, to see other people, quite happy, as it seemed, with no upheaval of their lives ; people in cabs, who were going out to dinner.and would sleep in London ; grown-up people ! Than the impotent despair of those drives --I had exactly fifteen of them—I hope that I shall never experience a more awful emotion. Those drives have something, surely, akin with drowning.

In their course the whole of a boy's home-life passes before his eyes, every phase of it standing out against the black curtain of his future. The author of *Vice-Versa* has well analysed the feeling, and he is right, I think, in saying that all boys, of whatsoever temperament, are preys to it. Well do I remember how, on the last day of the holidays, I used always to rise early, and think that I had got twelve more whole hours of happiness, and how those hours used to pass me with .mercifully slow feet. . . . Three more hours ! . . . Sixty more minutes ! . . . Five ! . . • I used to draw upon my tips for a first-class ticket, that I might not be plunged suddenly among my companions, with their hectic and hollow mirth, their dreary disinterment of last term's jokes. I used to revel in the thought that there were many stations before G——. . . The dreary walk, with my small bag, up the hill ! I was not one of those who made a rush for the few cabs . . . The awful geniality of the House Master ! The jugs in the dormitory! . . . Next morning, the bell that woke me ! The awakening !

Not that I had any special reason for hating school! Strange as it may seem to my readers, I was not unpopular there. I was a modest, good-humoured boy. It is Oxford that has made me insufferable. At school, my character remained in a state of undevefopment. I had a few misgivings, perhaps. In some respects, I was always too young, in others, too old, for a perfect relish of the convention. As I hovered, in grey knickerbockers, on a cold and muddy field, round the outskirts of

a crowd .that was tearing itself limb from limb for the sake of a leathern bladder, I would often wish for a nice, warm room and a good game of hunt-the-slipper. And, when we sallied forth, after dark, in the frost, to the swimming-bath, my heart would steal back to the fireside in Writing School and the plot of Miss Braddon's latest novel. Often, since, have I wondered whether a Spartan system be really well for youths who are bound mostly for Gapuan Universities. It is true, certainly, that this system makes Oxford or Cambridge doubly delectable. Undergraduates owe their happiness chiefly to the consciousness that they are no longer at school. The nonsense which was knocked out of them at school is all put gently back at Oxford or Cambridge. And the discipline to which they are subject is so slight that it does but serve to accentuate their real freedom.. The sudden reaction is rather dangerous, I think, to many of them.

Even now, much of my own complacency comes of having left school. Such an apparition as that boy in the hansom makes me realize my state more absolutely. Why, after all, should I lavish my pity on him and his sorrows? *Dabit deus his quoque 'finem,* I am at a happier point in Nature's cycle. That is all. I have suffered every one of his ordeals, and I do not hesitate to assure him, if he chance to see this essay of mine, how glad I am that I do not happen to be his contemporary. I have no construe of Xenophon to prepare for to-morrow morning,' **nor** any ode of Horace to learn, painfully, by heart, I assure him that I have no wish nor any **need to**

**master, as he has, at this moment, the intricate absurdities of that proposition in the second book of Euclid. I have no locker, with my surname printed on it and a complement of tattered school-books. I burnt all my school-books when I went up to Oxford. Were I to meet, now, any one of those masters who are monsters to you, my boy, he would treat me even more urbanely, it may be, than I should treat him. When he sets you a hundred lines, you write them without pleasure, and he tears them up. When I, with considerable enjoyment and at my own leisure, write a hundred lines or so, they are printed for all the world to admire, and I am paid for them enough to keep you in pocket-money for many terms. I write at a comfortable table, by a warm fire, and occupy an arm-chair, - whilst you are sitting on a narrow form. My boots are not made 'for school-wear,' nor do they ever, like yours, get lost in a litter of other boots in a cold boot-room. In a word, I enjoy myself immensely. To-night, I am going to a theatre. Afterwards, I shall sup somewhere and drink wine. When I come home and go to bed, I shall read myself to sleep with some amusing book. . . . You will have torn yourself from your bed, at the sound of a harsh bell, have washed, quickly, in very cold water, have scurried off to Chapel, gone to first school and been sent down several places in your form, tried to master your next construe, in the interval of snatching a tepid breakfast, been kicked by a bigger boy, and had a mint of horrible experiences, long before I, your elder by a few years, have awakened,**

**very gradually, to the tap of knuckles on the panel of my bedroom-door. I shall make a leisurely toilet. I shall descend to a warm breakfast, open one of the little budgets which my 'damned good-natured friend,' Romeike, is always sending me, and glance at that mormng paper which appeals most surely to my sense of humour. And when I have eaten well of all the dishes on the table, I shall light a cigarette. Through the haze of its fragrant smoke, I shall think of the happy day that is before me.**

# *'A. B:*

EVERY **week, I am fain of certain serious and comic papers, solely for the sake of Mr. Alfred Bryan's drawings. Some of these papers are obscure, others are tedious, but, in that 'A. B.' irradiates each one of them, I never miss *Judy*, *The Entr' Acte*, *Moonshine*, *The Sporting and Dramatic Times*, and *Ally Sloper's Half Holiday*, Altogether, I owe a ratner heavy debt of gratitude to Mr. Alfred Bryan. Statistics are not, perhaps, a very high form of art-criticism, but I cannot help calculating, in an idle moment, that I see, every year, more than eleven hundred new examples of Mr. Bryan's work. None of that work is exquisite, as I need hardly say. It is but a monstrous profusion of odd jobs, including portraits, caricatures, political cartoons, studies in character, views of banquets or race-meetings, theatrical cartoons, advertisements, illustrations, and a vast number of other things. Omnicipient in material, the master of many styles, Mr. Bryan never trips nor blunders, and is always absolutely himself.**

**In these, days of feverish questing, when not to have discovered at least one new genius every month is as much as an art critic's place is worth, how comes it that Mr. Bryan still waits for his discovery ? There is more talent in his little finger than in half the emblazoned hierarchy of'pen-and-ink draughts-**

men,' on whose potterings and peddlings we all lavish so much admiration. Except Mr. Phil May and Mr. Raven Hill, there is no one, engaged in pen-and-ink work of a popular kind, who can be compared with him, merely in point of technical mastery. How comes it that the critics neglect him ? Our journals are packed with praise of Mr. Phil May, with dissertations on his 'line' and his *economy of means,' and his 'Dickens-like knowledge of, and sympathy with, the lower classes.' We never' tired of reading that, in private life, he is the prince of good fellows, and has an observant twinkle in his eye,, and does innumerable studies for his slightest drawings. None admits gladlier than I the brilliancy of his work. I was, indeed, one of his first admirers. Fourteen years ago, at a very tender age, I 'discovered' him in the *St. Stephen's Review,* and was very sorry when he ceased to draw for that paper. I know, moreover, that he has a most interesting personality, and that his life has been, full of changes and of adventures, nor do I grudge the journalises their copy. Of Mr. Bryan's personality I know nothing at all. Perhaps he is quite colourless. But I cannot, for the life of me, see that his work is less remarkable than Mr. Phil May's. I admit that art average drawing of Mr. May's is artistically more valuable than an average drawing of Mr. Bryan's. Mr; May is always doing his best, Mr. Bryan is not. Mr. May walks ardund, observes life, ruminates on it, selects some phases of it, looks out for suitable models, does his innumerable studies, and, finally, after a long process of rejection,

produces a drawing. There is no 'beastly pride' about Mr. Alfred Bryan. He would seem to be always scudding up and down for immediate material, tearing home, clutching at a pen and dashing off the'requisite number of drawings of the requisite kind—with a good riddance to the printer's devil at the door. Under such conditions, he cannot do his best, naturally. But Mr. Bryan at his worst is quite wonderful. He has an absolute knowledge of his craft, the very surest of hands. If he scamped all his drawings, they would be admirable. Indeed, his spontaneity is one of his greatest charms. I would willingly sacrifice the whole life-work of certain honoured draughtsmen for one of those astounding things in *The Entr' Acte.*

It has still to be asked why 'the British Public has not pressed Mr. Bryan, as it has pressed (say) Mr. F. C. Gould, to its Great Heart. Mr. Gould was certainly not placed there by the art critics, for, so far from taking that care of his *technique,* which does always impress them, he has no *technique* to take care of. His drawings are quite crude, quite flat, and, save as the designs of a clever partisan, quite worthless. Yet there he is ! And there he came, if I am not mistaken, through his own shrewdness. He specialized. His signature was soon associated with one journal and with one kind of cartoon. Last General Election raised his work to the level of a party-question and crystallized his fame. If one wish for. further proof that a narrow range is commercially helpful, let him consider the

dullard draughtsman, who produces, week after week, his race-horse or bicycle-girl or ballet-dancer or whatever-his-fake-may-be. But for his obsession, would this genius ever have become popular? It is Mr. Bryan's misfortune—and his charm and strength, also—that he has never specialized. He deals with everything and modulates his style for every .subject. All artists, I know, pass through certain phases of style in the course of their lives, !but Mr. Bryan keeps his various phases always ready, ail the week round, docketed (as who should say) or on tap. He does caricatures for *The Enr' Acte,* and though he is not malign enough to be a caricaturist by bent, his caricatures are the best I ever see, simple, swift, and slap-dash, *pro natura generis.* He does innumerable portraits, some slight, others elaborate, of all great and little celebrities, and I think that, in the trick of 'catching a likeness,' he has no rival. His portraits have not the psychological value of Mr. Leslie Ward's. 'Spy' steeps himself in the tone and character of his subject, whilst Mr. Bryan cannot afford time for that process. He gets his material solely from the surface, from the bare lineaments, at a glance, and, though he fails often in character, so sure is his eye that he never fails to portray quite faithfully the most insipid and 'unseizable' creature. His car* toons, again, in *Moonshine* are not so impressive as Sir John Tenniel's, though, doubtless, he would have been a knight ere now, had he confined himself to cartoons. Nor. have they so much *annaissance de cause* as one finds in those of Mr. F. G.

**Gould. But they are full of strength and humour and imagination. Alone, they would suffice for a great reputation. When, likewise, Mr. Bryan illustrates stories, his work might serve as a good example to the nincompoops of the monthly magazines, and he is positively able to get some effect out of those hideous 'process-blocks.' In fact, he is *capable de tout.* To his every undertaking, he brings a plastic, forcible style and a mastery of line. His most intricate pictures, filled with scores of figures, are all works of art, in their way, decorative and synthetic. You need but consider the work of his imitators (his only symptom of fame !) to see what a great artist he is. His profusion has blinded the eyes of the art-critics to his great merit. The art-critics judge him by one or two of his drawings, seen here or there, casually, and never do they suppose that he should be judged in the bulk of his work; His profusion has tired and glutted the public, which associates his name with nothing in particular. There is something sad in his profusion.**

*Not an eye*
*But is awearied of his common sight,*
*Save mine!*

**For myself, I should be sorry to see him engaged exclusively by one newspaper, and should not care if he were to do even a greater mimber of drawings than he does now. I like the cool regularity with which he keeps his various styles ajob. The modern juggler, spinning his unbroken cycle of a top-hat, two gloves, a cigar, and a spread umbrella, is not**

more marvellous than he. Mr. Paul Cinquevalli may not have mastered all the possibilities of his cigar. He cannot, perhaps, exhale.it through his eyelids or blow rings through his ears as some more single-minded persons can do. And Mr. Alfred Bryan, likewise, may not have got all that is to be got out of any one of his styles. Yet, his whole performance does interest me more than Mr. Phil May's, more than that of any popular black-and-white artist, who does the best of his kind. Mr. Bryan himself is probably unconscious that his work is at all wonderful. He is content to work for the passing moment, content that his drawings all go to quick oblivion. But I must venture to discriminate for him. There is one section of his work so admirable and so unrivalled that it deserves to be remembered always. In his theatrical sketches, nobody, I think, can approach him, nor can any of my superlatives do them full justice. For how long he has done those weekly sketches in *The Sporting and Dramatic,* I am not quite certain, but I should put the period at sixteen years. Anyone who has ever tried to draw actors or actresses front any part of the auditorium, or to get any positive and definite impression of those moving figures, will know how utterly hopeless the effort is. Mr. Bryan is sole master of the secret. His sketches of all the *dramatis persona,* even of those who only appear on the stage for a few moments, **are all** miracles of acute observation and **spontaneous humour.** Week by week they display his **talent at** its very best, its swiftest and most plastic. **One**

finds in them examples of all his many styles, of all his inventiveness. An anthology of them would be a nice tribute to Mr. Bryan's genius. It would be, also, an interesting record of the modern English stage. It ought to be made.

# *A Cloud of Pinafores*

THE modish appanage of Beauty in her barouche is not a spaniel, now, but a little child. The wooden wicket which, even in my day, barred the top-most of the stairs, has been taken off its hinges, and the Jewels roll down into Cornelia's drawing-room at will. Cornelia's callers are often privileged to a place at nursery-tea. The bread and butter is not cut thick, as in their day, and that old law, which made it precedent of cake, seems to have been rescinded. Nor is any curb set on little tongues. Cornelia and her callers grow glad in the frolic of ardess *apercus.* They are sick of *sevres* and scandal. Only the fresh air of the nursery can brace their frail bodies and keep up their weary eyelids.

Yes ! A casual optimist might prpclaim that the Victorian Era is harking back to its first simplicity. At the risk of saddening him, I must suggest that he examine his opinion. I fear there are flaws in it. Between the Georgian and Victorian, Eras came an interval of transition. Society was tired of its old pleasures, but did not quite, abandon them, It still masked and gambled, but only a little, in a quiet way, as by force of habit. It was really resting. And when William died and was succeeded by a young Queen, herself a symbol of all simplicity, it was ready for renunciation. It had regained its old strength, was strong enough to be simple. In the. gradual years, after the Queen-

widow had withdrawn herself, ceding the supremacy to her eldest son, Society slipped into its old ways. Surfeit came in due course. Men and women sought refuge in bizarre fashions : æstheticism, slumming, Buddhism. But now surfeit has come again. They look around. What is left to them? Simplicity ! But they are tired. There is no interval for rest. Also, they are less strong physically, intellectually stronger, than were their grandparents ; not strong enough, not weak enough, to be simple. But ah ! there is one thing left to them. They can, at least, contemplate simplicity. There is a nursery somewhere at the top of most houses. 'Let the children be brought down to lunch ! Let us. have tea with the children!'

One may trace, in the evolution of modern literature, a fairly exact parallel. But the cross-lines which connect the corresponding points on either side of this parallel are uniformly oblique. It may be too much to say that Life always copies Literature, yet certainly Literature is always a little ahead of Life. Thus we find that Pre-Raphaelite poets were at work before 1880, that Sir Walter Besant, too, was already bustling about the slums, and Buddha peeping from many a first, second, and third volume. Nor did Stevenson write his *Child's Garden*, nor Pater his *Child in the House*, to meet a demand which Was as yet uncreated ; nor, indeed, did either work attract any attention. But, now that children are booming, the publishers and the reviewers are all agog. Stevenson and Mr. Walter Crane are honoured with reprints. 'Mr. Pater's most ex-

quisite achievement is *The Child in the House*- *'Sentimental Tommy* is the supreme outcome of Mr, Barrie's genius'—'Mr. Kenneth Grahame's *Golden Age is* indeed a Golden Book.' Yes! CKildren are in vogue. The clear carillon of the coral-and-bells has penetrated even to the back-benches of the Divorce Court, and the assiduous, unimportant authors, who sat scribbling there, have torn up their flimsies and scuttled forth at the summons. *Faut etre dans le mouvement,* poor creatures ! For a while, they will make the scrap-screen their background. And if their heroine wear a pinafore, not a strange tea-gown 'of some clinging green material,' and prefer jam to laudanum and make-believe to introspection, I, for one, shall see nothing lamentable in the difference. Save as a guide to tendencies of the period, such writers do not interest me much.

I find a far subtler and more amusing guide in a little book entitled *The Children,* and written by a lady whose talent is pre-eminently, almost painfully, adult. Here, indeed, is a perfect example of our tecnolatry, our delight in the undirected oddities of children, our wistful effort to understand them as they are. We are told of a boy who, at the sea-. side, 'assumes a deep, strong, and ultra-masculine note, and a swagger in his walk, and gives himself the name of his father's tallest friend. The tone is not wholly manly; it is a tone of affairs, and withal careless ; it is intended to suggest business, and also the possession of a top-hat and a pipe, and is known in the family as his "official voice" ' How nicely sympathetic is this analysis of a mood

which, in my day, was called 'showing-off,' and was invariably discouraged! '"Listen to him, mother,"' says a little girl, '"he's trying to talk like God. He often does." ' In the unkind 'sixties this little girl would have been sent to bed as a blasphemer. In my day, she would have been told that what she said was irreverent, and that irreverence was a very terrible thing. She 'seemed thoroughly to understand the situation' is our author's comment. Indeed the modern feeling is that the child can do no wrong. Its very slips in grammar, its inconsequence, its confusion of names, are all treasured with a loving care and imbued with an exquisite significance. 'A nut-brown child of five was persuading another to play. "Oh come," she said, "and play with me at new maid." ' Formerly, no amount of hut-brownness would have saved her from an explanation that the game was called 'old' maid ; as it is, I am quite sure she was kissed for her mistake by whatever grown-up person overheard it.

Certainly, I should be the last to deprecate the vogue of children, if I were to regard it from a selfish and superficial standpoint. For if there be **one** thing; which people love more than to read about children, now, it is to read what children write. Had I not been *parmi Us jeunissimes,* I should **not** have made the little success I have. The public **does** not, **I** suppose, care greatly whether I write **Well nor** whether my premises and conclusions be correct B**ut** it knows me to be a child author, **and** likes **to** picture me at my desk, dressed in black

velveteen, with legs dangling towards the floor. If I filled this book with the pot-hooks and hangers, which were, till recently, my sole literary output, the public would be just as well pleased. But, though this sparkling tide flows all in my favour, I cannot quite approve of it. To me, there seems some danger in the prevalent desire to observe children in their quiddity, to leave them all to their own devices and let them develop their own natures, swiftly or slowly, at will. Perhaps I am bigoted and old-fashioned, out of touch with the time. But I must confess that, sometimes, my heart does even hark back to those stern old Georgian or Early Victorian days, when nurseries were governed in a spirit of blind despotism. Children were not then recognized as human creatures. They were a race apart; savages that must be driven from the gates ; beasts to be kept in cages; devils to whose voices one must not listen. Indeed, the very nature of children was held to be sinful. Lies and sloth, untidiness and irreverence, and a tendency to steal black currant jam, were taken to be its chief constituents. And so all nurseries, as one may learn from old books or from the oral tradition, were the darkened scene of temporal oppression, fitfully lighted with the gaunt reflections of hell-fire. How strange a picture is to be found in those books of 'cautionary verses for children,' irrelevantly entitled *The Daisy* and *The Cowslip*, Anything less flower-like than their tone could not be easily conceived. The good children who move through their pages are the merest puppets, worked by the monstrous

autocrat, Mamma, whilst the bad children, placed there as foils, are the most mechanical of drones and dunces. Never once does the authoress betray the briefest wish to treat children objectively. Yet, curious though it seem to modern ideas, she typifies the parents of her period.

Children were not neglected in those days. Their parents' sedulous endeavour was to force them up to a standard of mature conduct. They were taught that only their elders were good, and they were punished always in so far as they behaved childishly. See, even, how they were dressed ! Miss Caroline, when she walked out, was framed in a crinoline, and she shaded her ringlets with a minute parasol, whilst Master Richard, her brother, in nankeen trousers, was a small replica of his papa. Later, in the 'seventies and 'eighties, before the Child, as such, was cared for, we see the little girl still tricked out in the latest fashion of maturity; and the little boy masquerading as a highlander or as a sailor. Nowadays, they are both put into the limpest, simplest 'things.' The 'nineties wish children to be children, and nothing more. If—to take but one of the many pregnant comparisons suggested by *The Daisy* or *The Cowslip*—a little girl of this period "be suffering toothache, she is coaxed, by all manner. of sweet means, to the dentist's chair. **Her** fears could not anger anyone. She is a child. But read the 'cautionary verses' about two sisters, Miss Clara and Miss Sophie, who-'both had faded teeth.' Miss Clara, **like** a good **grown-up lady, realized that** a **short wrench were as nothing to**

such prolonged agony. Miss Sophie held back, trembling. No one reasoned with her. She was suffered to be a foil to the adult fortitude of her sister, whose

*teeth returned quite fresh and bright,*
*Whilst Sophie's ached both day and night.*

These are a type of the verses that were written for children of the last generation, as *The Fairchild Family* is a type of the prose. Even in books like *Struwelpeter* the elements of terror were lurking everywhere. When children came into the scheme of a novel, they were, with few exceptions, prigs like Little Nell and Paul Dombey ; dreary abstractions, foredoomed to the earliest of death-beds. In fact, real children were pariahs. That, you will say, was horrible and inhuman of their elders. It was. But I am inclined to think that, for the children themselves, it was a far more wholesome state of things. For the inherent nature of childhood is far brighter than the inherent nature of maturity. Childhood has no alien responsibilities, it is free from all the bitterness of knowledge and of-memory, is careless and hopeful. So that, if the nursery be turned into a free republic and be rid of its old gloom and vigilant authority, it must be the scene of absolute happiness, and its children, when the time comes for them to leave it, will be appalled by the serious side of life. Finding no pleasure in a freedom which they have always had, incapable of that self-control which long discipline produces, they will become neurotic, ineffectual

men and women. In the old days there could have been no reaction of this kind. The strange sense of freedom was a recompense for less happiness of heart. Children were fit for life.

Even from the standpoint of those elders, to whose jaded longing for simplicity the new form of education must be traced, there is great reason for misgiving. For it is probable that the effort to keep children simple by leaving them free, will but exterminate simplicity, at last. It is only oppression that can keep human beings as they are. Oppression never crushes natural instincts. All history proves that it does but intensify them. Wronged races are always primitive. Left to themselves, they develop. If Home Rule were granted, the Irish would soon lose their irresponsible gaiety, which centuries of oppression have preserved for them. Indeed, that is perhaps the most valid argument against Home Rule. Miss Caroline, likewise, and Master Richard, driven to bay by their elders, set their back against the nursery wall and were simple to the last. But Jock and Millicent, encouraged in all their childishness, having but their own natures to think of, will very soon become self-conscious. 'Whenever I can't stop laughing I have only to think of home.' These words were written by a little boy from his first boarding-school, and are quoted in *The Children.* So you see that introspection has set in already, and soon every high-chair will hold its lisping Rousseau or Marie Bashkirtseff. And soon there will be no more simplicity to contemplate. And what will a jaded world, straining

**at its tether, do then ? Personally, I should like to .think that this passion for simplicity was the sign of a lessening complexity. But wishes beget poor thoughts. I write what I believe to be true about this Victorian era. Good has been followed by evil, evil by the love of mysteries, the Jove of mysteries by the love of simple things. Observe that I write no fool's prattle about *le fin du stick.* A phase of social evolution happens to coincide with a certain point in the kalendar. That, of course, is a mere chance. But we may be allowed to laugh, when we see that this century, for which Science promised a mature perfection, is vanishing; in a white cloud of pinafores.**

## *At Covent Garden*

I AM quite indifferent to serious music, and I should not suffer from any sense of loss if all the scores of all the operas that have ever been written, and all the persons who might be able to reconstruct them from memory, were to perish in a sudden holocaust to-morrow. And yet I like going to Covent Garden. In June arid July it is not the least pleasant mode of whiling away the half-hour between dinner and supper. With its cool vestibules and colonnades and *foyers,* Covent Garden, despite its humble site and comparatively mean proportions, is an ideal place for a cigarette. Merely to wander behind the Grand Tier and read the illustrious names printed on the doors of the boxes—printed in mere black and white, just as my name will be printed on the label of this wretched book—is an experience to thrill hearts that are far less snobbishly impressionable than my heart is. I seem to breathe at every step I take in that circuit, the tart ozone of -distinction. The sultriness of no night in summer can rob me of the exhilaration which fills my being in that most high and rarefied and buoyant atmosphere. I seem to tread the circuit with very light feet. Soon I am of a mood for the auditorium. As I pass down one of the narrow stairways leading to that sea of sleek, heads and jewelled or feathered *coiffures,* the stalls, a stout gentleman unconsciously obstructs my path. As he makes way for me, I

recognize in him, from an old drawing in *Punch*, an hereditary legislator who was once in one of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinets. *En passant*, I tread upon his foot, that I may have the honour of apologizing to him. He bows courteously. I am happy. On the vast and cavernous stage, behind low-burning footlights, some opera or other is proceeding. The fiddlers are fiddling in a quiet monotone, not loud enough to drown the chatter in the stalls and boxes. All around me the people are chattering to one another like so many smart apes. Snatches of discussion here, and of flirtation there, are wafted past me, gaily, ceaselessly. I see the flash of eager gestures in white kid ; I see white shoulders, white gardenias, rouge under lurid œiliads, the quivering of *aigrettes*', the light on high collars highly-polished, and the sheen of innumerable diamonds, and the rhythmic sway of a thousand-and-one fans. Row upon row, the little dull-red boxes, receptacles of bravery and beauty, are sparkling, also, with ceaseless animation. To me they are like an exquisite panorama of Punch-and-Judy shows. Every lady, I think, should bring her lap-dog and set it on the ledge of her box, to consummate the illusion. Just above me, to my right, stretches an omnibus* box. Olympian! It is empty, save for one of whom nothing can be seen but a large *lorgnon* upheld by a pair of small, fat, tight-gloved hands. Who is it ? A great man, doubdess. Great; else he were not hidden. A *virtuoso*, too ; else he were less rapt. "Perhaps an Ambassador ; for his cuffs are cut in a foreign mode. Yes, I am sure those

**are the cuffs of an old diplomat, and that their wearer has sat, just so, hidden behind the curtain, in all the opera-houses of Europe—the Ring Theatre, the Theatre de la Monnaie, the Hof Opern-Haus, La Scala, and the rest. So will he yet be sitting next year, here or in some other city.**

**And the music, the incidental music, is being played all this while. I do not think it is Wagner's. Wagner is usually rather obtrusive and apt to forget his place. He forgets the deference due to the stalls and boxes, forcing their occupants to shout at the tops of their voices if they would be heard, and has a vulgar trick of playing to the Amphitheatre and its dowdy freight of' listeners. But he has done undeniably good work in humbling the singers. Thanks to him, the audience no longer spends its evening in prostration before a *prima donna.* Bouquets do not hurtle through the air, and the poor singers, with their diamonds, and their diet, and their rivalries, and their *roulades,* are not the cynosure they were in the 'seventies. Yet, there they still are, those tiny, inadequate puppets on that mammoth stage, mere-dots like the human figures on one of Turner's widest canvases ; here he still is, this fat little man in trunk hose, with yellow hair down his back, strutting, storming, spurning, suppliant, passionate, aspiring, desperate—all for the sake of a little lady in white, with her hands clasped across her breast and her face upturned to the property stars. These little marionettes with big voices, making so gigantic a pother about something,or other, have keen pathos in my sight—**

types of our poor estate, of our vanity, our pompous endeavouring, our insignificance, on the world's; stage. See ! The wee tenor is going to kill himself with a dagger. No ! The wee soprano prevents him. Tiny, intelligent, full of purpose, performing with all their might tasks for which I see no reason, they seem to me—these two—like a pair of ants on a pathway:

*'Hi motus animorum atque hœc certamina tanta*
*Ptdveris exigui jactu compressa quiescunt.'*

Hark ! They are in the midst of a stormy duet. I vow the little creatures fascinate me ! Here comes a whole army of ants in attitudes of surprise. The wee tenor beats his breast, the wee soprano, dashes down a cup of wine. I would not throw dust on them for all the world ! But some one, less kind than I, rolls down a great curtain, and the ants are hidden; The audience stops talking for a few moments'of rather languid applause. Men in the stalls stand up and stare around, sidle their way through the crush in Fops' Alley, and seek the Tiers. The Ambassador in the omnibus-box has dropped his *lorgnon* and is quite invisible now. And I reflect that, after all, the ants were rather absurd, and that, really, the house is rather hot, and that, on the whole, I will not stay for the last act*

## *The Case of Prometheus*

MR. RICHARD MITCHELL, than whom no traveller is held to be more reliable and (if I may say so) more prosaic, returned to this country.at the close of last year, after a long tour through Asiatic Russia. In the paper which he read lately before the Royal Geographical Society he reported a most curious and most important discovery. It seems that, in surveying the eastern side of Mount Caucasus, he espied through his telescope what appeared to be a naked figure on a rock near the mountain's summit. When he reached the little village of Tzeva in the valley, he told, what'he had seen to his innkeeper, who crossed himself repeatedly and was silent. Pressed by Mr. Mitchell to say if he knew anything of the figure, the man said that it must have been the *putchki velkotsin* (white captive) ; more he could not, or would not, communicate. Mr. Mitchell learnt from other peasants that the figure had been there for many years ; indeed, they thought, ever since God made the world. He offered money to anyone who would make an ascent with him—it seemed hopeless, at that time of year, that any man could without help gain so high an altitude—but the peasants, one and all, refused his offer with, every manifestation of superstitious awe. Mr. Mitchell then decided that he would try the ascent alone, and, next day, he set forth. He reached the spot whence he had first seen the figure, and, after

trying various paths, managed at length to reach a: point some three hundred feet below the" summit: Beyond this point the ground was utterly impassable. 'The sun was low in the west,' says Mr. Mitchell, 'but I could see clearly what was indeed a naked man chained by the wrists and ankles to an upstanding rock. I noticed that his body was covered with scars, but at first I was not-sure whether he was alive or dead. I shouted and waved my knapsack in the air. The captive turned his head in my direction, thus enabling me to get a full view of his face, which was that of a young man, though horribly drawn, emaciated, and rigid with exposure. His hair hung down over his'shoulders like a mantle, and it was weighted with long icicles. I shouted again. The captive uttered a faint moan. I could see the tears stream down his cheeks, freezing as they fell. He seemed to be trying to speak, but at that moment my attention was distracted, to an enormous golden eagle—larger than any I have ever seen—which had appeared in the sky and was wheeling slowly over the summit., In a few moments the creature swooped suddenly down and began, tearing at the wretched man's body. The sight sickened me so that I had to turn my head away, cursing my impotence to interfere. When I looked again, the bird was already soaring high in the air. In the failing light I could see that the captive had fainted and that blood,was flowing from a long wound in his side.[1] Night was falling, and after a desperate and fruitless effort to reach the summit, Mr. "Mitchell felt that he himself must either perish

of exposure or re-descend the mountain. So agitated was he by what had pass'ed that it was some hours before he realized, suddenly, that he had seen Prometheus. At Truoff, two days later, he communicated with the military governor of the province, whose only reply was to send him with an •escort across the frontier.

That this story is fiction no one who knows Mr. Mitchell's record could possibly aver. That Mr. Mitchell was a "prey to one of those illusions which do sometimes beset men on very high altitudes, is an equally untenable theory—as Mr. Mitchell himself said in the course of his lecture, he is 'an old mountaineer and had seen nothing unusual on the Himalayas.' The only question is whether the captive on the mountain is really (as Mr. Mitchell declares, and as I myself am persuaded) to. be identified with Prometheus. It is known that Prometheus, by order of Jupiter, was chained to the summit of this mountain ; that his punishment was to last for thirty thousand years ; that on every day of all those years he was to be preyed upon by Jupiter's own bird. So far, so good, But Professor Thorsby, in a letter to the *Times*, points out that Hercules is generally believed to have rescued Prometheus thirty years after sentence was passed. Now, this belief rests on very dubious authority. In the works of Diodorus there is no reference to any such rescue, and Sidonius Strabo himself, in the *Quiaestiones Olympianas*, expressly states that no such rescue occurred. At the very time when, according to Hesiod, Hercules was seen in the region of Mount

Caucasus, he was actually in Central Lydia, a slave at the court of Omphale, that frivolous Queen. And inasmuch, as during that period—and, indeed, during the rest of his mortal life--he was expiating his sins against the gods, and carefully qualifying for Olympus, it is in the highest degree improbable that he would have thrown away his chance of apotheosis by rescuing from divine wrath the very man who was of all men most hateful to Jupiter. Indeed, this rescue is, I think, a myth : one of those many exploits which have been vaguely attributed to Hercules, as. are conquests to Don Juan and *mots* to Sheridan. That Prometheus was still Vinctus in the days of Sulla, I shall anon suggest. That he is Vinctus to this day—and none, not even Professor Thorsby, denies that Mr. Mitchell has made out a good *prima facie* case to that effect—is a most surprising and shocking matter for our reflection. Since the middle ages, many philosophers have dwelt on the possibility that the gods of Greece and Rome are not dead. From time to time strange tales have come to us, as that Vulcan was a smith in Verona, Venus was a courtesan in Cyprus itself and some one suspiciously like Apollo had been seen herding sheep in Picardy. But since Prometheus has been seen in durance on Mount Caucasus it would seem that the gods, so far from trailing a menial existence on this earth, are actually still potent in Olympus. It is not my intention to foreshadow here the wide-reaching influence which Mr.' Mitchell's discovery is bound to exercise on the future of mankind. Modern faith and modem

thought will have to adapt themselves to the new conditions. Already the bishops and the savants are in a flutter, and the librarian of the Athenaeum tells me that the demand for *Lempriire* is quite unprecedented. But what most immediately concerns and moves me is the knowledge that a man is still suffering daily torture for an offence committed in the earliest age of the world's history, for an offence of which, moreover, he may not even have been guilty. At Rome, Demetrius Apollophanes, the sophist whom Sulla brought over from Samothrace, wrote a long treatise to show that Prometheus could not possibly have stolen fire from Olympus, that his trial had been, in fact, arbitrary, vindictive, and farcical, and that he ought to be released forthwith. For this treatise, which raised a storm of popular indignation, Demetrius was arraigned *de impietate in deos.* His friends out of Court sought to prove that the real thief had been, not Prometheus, but Mercury, Jupiter's spy and pander, who had stolen the fire either to gratify a whim of Dryope, or else, as some preferred to think, merely from that naughty impulse which had made him rob Mars of his sword, Apollo of his arrows, and Venus of her girdle. It was further alleged that Jupiter, unwilling to punish a valuable servant who knew much to his discredit, had fastened on Prometheus as a kind of scapegoat. • However, when the Sophist appeared in the Forum to stand his trial, public feeling was all for the prosecution. Every one felt that the honour of Olympus would be compromised by an acquittal. The judges declared that the Prometheus

affair was *res judicata,* and the defendant's advocate was strictly forbidden even to mention it, though the priests of Jupiter and the priests of Mercury all came down to the court and swore that Prometheus was guilty, and Demetrius now and again swore by all his literary works—which are not, I believe, extant—that Prometheus was innocent. The whole trial, indeed (if we can trust, the fragments of Eutropius, which is its only record), seems to have been rather inconclusive. I refer to it merely with a view to showing that the guilt of Prometheus is not such a certainty as it is sometimes thought to he. If Prometheus was wrongly convicted, no miscarriage of justice was ever more hideous to contemplate. If he was convicted rightly, the sentence passed on him was quite unduly severe. If he was indeed guilty, if it is indeed to his light fingers that we mortals owe our possession of fire, ought we not to regard him as one of our greatest benefactors —a man to whose fate we cannot decently be indifferent ? Fire is the element which, in its flight upward, typifies all that is noblest in man's nature, even as water is the symbol of man's weakness and inconstancy. Fire is the sacred element. Water, which cleanses, can corrupt also. Fire cleanses. It alone has power to refine and purge truly. Without it we walk in darkness and die in cold. And he,.the son of Iapetus, by whom, perhaps, we were made partakers of this Olympian treasure, is still chained to the rock, facing the terror of an old torment eternally renewed. Every evening, as the sun is setting, the eagle wheels over Mount Caucasus.

Lower and lower it wheels, while he who is its deathless prey shivers in his chains, and gazes up to it with terror in his eyes, and in a feint voice cries, out for pity from those who are always pitiless. The eagle hovers down. It pauses on spread wings, and Prometheus sees near to him the staring yellow eyes, the talons, the beak that will anon be ripping its familiar meal from his torn flesh.

Enough of words ! Prometheus must be rescued, and that without more delay. It is I who shall rescue him. To leave him in his present position were- a disgrace, not merely to Russia, but to the whole civilized world. These words have been written amidst the preparations for my departure. From Paris I shall travel straight through Europe, and, once my foot is on Mount Caucasus, I shall not rest till I have reached the summit. Mr. Mitchell declares that summit to be inaccessible till mid-summer. I shall find means to reach it now, nevertheless. I shall hail the captive with words of good cheer—*χαῖρε, Ἰαπετιονίδη* !—and with my, gun I shall shoot the eagle as it hovers over him at sunset, and with a file I shall free him of the rusty fetters that bind him to the rock. Dodging any thunderbolts that may be hurled at me, I shall pick up the shot eagle, and shall lead Prometheus gently down the mountain-side. When we reach the inn in the valley, I shall provide him with the tweed suit which I have ordered for him and am taking with me, the fur coat, the dressing-case whose fittings are marked I I . We shall be in London, if all go well, in time for the latter part of the season.

**I am sure Prometheus will be much lionized. But even if he be hot the success that I anticipate, I shall, at least, have done my duty, and the bird of Jupiter, stuffed, under a glass-case, will be always an ornament to my study and a pleasant souvenir of my trip.**