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VIEWS AND REVIEWS

Essays in Appreciation

BY

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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LITERATURE

TO THE MEN OF
'THE SCOTS OBSERVER'

PREFATORY

SUGGESTED by one friend and selected and compiled by another, this volume is less a book than a mosaic of scraps and shreds recovered from the shot rubbish of some fourteen years of journalism. Thus, the notes on Longfellow, Balzac, Sidney, Tourneur, *Arabian Nights Entertainments*, Borrow, George Eliot, and Mr. Frederick Locker are extracted from originals in *London*—a print still remembered with affection by those concerned in it; those on Labiche, Champfleury, Richardson, Fielding, Byron, Gay, Congreve, Boswell, *Essays and Essayists*, Jefferies, Hood, Matthew Arnold, Lever, Thackeray, Dickens, M. Théodore de Banville, Mr. Austin Dobson, and Mr. George Meredith from articles contributed to *The Athenæum*; those on Dumas, Count Tolstoï's novels, and the verse of Dr. Hake from *The Saturday Review*; those on Walton, Landor, and Heine from *The Scots Observer*, *The Academy*, and *Vanity Fair* respectively; while the *Disraeli* has been pieced together from *London*, *Vanity Fair*, and *The Athenæum*; the *Berlioz* from *The Scots Observer* and *The Saturday Review*; the

Tennyson from *The Scots Observer* and *The Magazine of Art*; the *Homer and Theocritus* from *Vanity Fair* and the defunct *Teacher*; the *Hugo* from *The Athenæum*, *The Magazine of Art*, and an unpublished fragment written for *The Scottish Church*. In all cases permission to reprint is hereby gratefully acknowledged; but the reprinted matter has been subjected to such a process of revision and reconstitution that much of it is practically new, while little or none remains as it was. I venture, then, to hope that the result, for all its scrappiness, will be found to have that unity which comes of method and an honest regard for letters.

W. E. H.

EDINBURGH, *8th May* 1890.

DICKENS

MR. ANDREW LANG is delightfully severe on those who 'cannot read Dickens,' but in truth it is only by accident that he is not himself of that unhappy persuasion. For Dickens the humourist he has a most uncompromising enthusiasm; for Dickens the artist in drama and romance he has as little sympathy as the most practical. Of the prose of *David Copperfield* and *Our Mutual Friend*, the *Tale of Two Cities* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, he disdains to speak. He is almost fierce (for him) in his denunciation of Little Nell and Paul Dombey; he protests that Monks and Ralph Nickleby are 'too steep,' as indeed they are. But of Bradley Headstone and Sidney Carton he says not a word; while of *Martin Chuzzlewit*—but here he shall speak for himself, the italics being a present to him. 'I have read in that book a score of times,' says he; 'I never see it but I revel in it—in Pecksniff and Mrs. Gamp and the Americans. *But what the plot is all about, what Jonas did, what Montague Tigg had to make in the matter, what all the pictures with plenty of shading illustrate, I have never been able to comprehend.*' This is almost as bad as the reflection (in a magazine) that Jonas Chuzzlewit is

A 'Frightful Minus.'

'the most shadowy murderer in fiction.' Yet it is impossible to be angry. In his own way and within his own limits Mr. Lang is such a thoroughgoing admirer of Dickens that you are moved to compassion when you think of the much he loses by 'being constitutionally incapable' of perfect apprehension. 'How poor,' he cries, with generous enthusiasm, 'the world of fancy would be, "how dispeopled of her dreams," if, in some ruin of the social system, the books of Dickens were lost; and if The Dodger, and Charley Bates, and Mr. Crinkle and Miss Squeers and Sam Weller, and Mrs. Gamp, and Dick Swiveller were to perish, or to vanish with Menander's men and women! We cannot think of our world without them; and, children of dreams as they are, they seem more essential than great statesmen, artists, soldiers, who have actually worn flesh and blood, ribbons and orders, gowns and uniforms.' Nor is this all. He is almost prepared to welcome 'free education,' since 'every Englishman who can read, unless he be an Ass, is a reader the more' for Dickens. Does it not give one pause to reflect that the writer of this charming eulogy can only read the half of Dickens, and is half the ideal of his own denunciation?

His Method.

DICKENS'S imagination was diligent from the outset; with him conception was not less deliberate and careful than development; and so much he confesses when he describes himself as 'in the first stage of a new book, which consists in going round and round the idea, as you see a bird in his cage go

about and about his sugar before he touches it.' 'I have no means,' he writes to a person wanting advice, 'of knowing whether you are patient in the pursuit of this art; but I am inclined to think that you are not, and that you do not discipline yourself enough. When one is impelled to write this or that, one has still to consider: "How much of this will tell for what I mean? How much of it is my own wild emotion and superfluous energy—how much remains that is truly belonging to this ideal character and these ideal circumstances?" It is in the laborious struggle to make this distinction, and in the determination to try for it, that the road to the correction of faults lies. [Perhaps I may remark, in support of the sincerity with which I write this, that I am an impatient and impulsive person myself, but that it has been for many years the constant effort of my life to practise at my desk what I preach to you.]' Such golden words could only have come from one enamoured of his art, and holding the utmost endeavour in its behalf of which his heart and mind were capable for a matter of simple duty. They are a proof that Dickens—in intention at least, and if in intention then surely, the fact of his genius being admitted, to some extent in fact as well—was an artist in the best sense of the term.

His Development.

In the beginning he often wrote exceeding ill, especially when he was doing his best to write seriously. He developed into an artist in words as he developed into an artist in the construction and the evolution of a story. But his development was

his own work, and it is a fact that should redound eternally to his honour that he began in newspaper English, and by the production of an imitation of the *novela picaresca*—a string of adventures as broken and disconnected as the adventures of Lazarillo de Tormes or Peregrine Pickle, and went on to become an exemplar. A man self-made and self-taught, if he knew anything at all about the 'art for art' theory—which is doubtful—he may well have held it cheap enough. But he practised Millet's dogma—*Dans l'art il faut sa peau*—as resolutely as Millet himself, and that, too, under conditions that might have proved utterly demoralising had he been less robust and less sincere. He began as a serious novelist with Ralph Nickleby and Lord Frederick Verisopht; he went on to produce such masterpieces as Jonas Chuzzlewit and Doubledick, and Eugene Wrayburn and the immortal Mrs. Gamp, and Fagin and Sikes and Sydney Carton, and many another. The advance is one from positive weakness to positive strength, from ignorance to knowledge, from incapacity to mastery, from the manufacture of lay figures to the creation of human beings.

His Results.

His faults were many and grave. He wrote some nonsense; he sinned repeatedly against taste; he could be both noisy and vulgar; he was apt to be a caricaturist where he should have been a painter; he was often mawkish and often extravagant; and he was sometimes more inept than a great writer has ever been. But his work, whether bad or good, has

in full measure the quality of sincerity. He meant what he did; and he meant it with his whole heart. He looked upon himself as representative and national—as indeed he was; he regarded his work as a universal possession; and he determined to do nothing that for lack of pains should prove unworthy of his function. If he sinned it was unadvisedly and unconsciously; if he failed it was because he knew no better. You feel that as you read. The freshness and fun of *Pickwick*—a comic middle-class epic, so to speak—seem mainly due to high spirits; and perhaps that immortal book should be described as a first improvisation by a young man of genius not yet sure of either expression or ambition and with only vague and momentary ideas about the duties and necessities of art. But from *Pickwick* onwards to *Edwin Drood* the effort after improvement is manifest. What are *Dombey* and *Dorrit* themselves but the failures of a great and serious artist. In truth the man's genius did but ripen with years and labour; he spent his life in developing from a popular writer into an artist. He extemporised *Pickwick*, it may be, but into *Copperfield* and *Chuzzlewit* and the *Tale of Two Cities* and *Our Mutual Friend* he put his whole might, working at them with a passion of determination not exceeded by Balzac himself. He had enchanted the public without an effort; he was the best-beloved of modern writers almost from the outset of his career. But he had in him at least as much of the French artist as of the middle-class Englishman; and if all his life he never ceased from self-education but went unswervingly in pursuit of

culture, it was out of love for his art and because his conscience as an artist would not let him do otherwise. We have been told so often to train ourselves by studying the practice of workmen like Gautier and Hugo and imitating the virtues of work like *Hernani* and *Quatre-Vingt-Treize* and *l'Education Sentimentale*—we have heard so much of the æsthetic impeccability of Young France and the section of Young England that affects its qualities and reproduces its fashions—that it is hard to refrain from asking if, when all is said, we should not do well to look for models nearer home? if in place of such moulds of form as *Mademoiselle de Maupin* we might not take to considering stuff like *Rizpah* and *Our Mutual Friend*?

Ave atque Vale.

YES, he had many and grave faults. But so had Sir Walter and the good Dumas; so, to be candid, had Shakespeare himself—Shakespeare the king of poets. To myself he is always the man of his unrivalled and enchanting letters—is always an incarnation of generous and abounding gaiety, a type of beneficent earnestness, a great expression of intellectual vigour and emotional vivacity. I love to remember that I came into the world contemporaneously with some of his bravest work, and to reflect that even as he was the inspiration of my boyhood so is he a delight of my middle age. I love to think that while English literature endures he will be remembered as one that loved his fellowmen, and did more to make them happy and amiable than any other writer of his time.

THACKERAY

His Worshippers.

It is odd to note how opinions differ as to the greatness of Thackeray and the value of his books. Some regard him as the greatest novelist of his age and country and as one of the greatest of any country and any age. These hold him to be not less sound a moralist than excellent as a writer, not less magnificently creative than usefully and delightfully cynical, not less powerful and complete a painter of manners than infallible as a social philosopher and incomparable as a lecturer on the human heart. They accept Amelia Sedley for a very woman; they believe in Colonel Newcome—'by *Don Quixote* out of *Little Nell*'—as in something venerable and heroic; they regard William Dobbin and 'Stunning' Warrington as finished and subtle portraitures; they think Becky Sharp an improvement upon Mme. Marneffe and Wenham better work than Rigby; they are in love with Laura Bell, and refuse to see either cruelty or caricature in their poet's presentment of Alcide de Mirobolant. Thackeray's fun, Thackeray's wisdom, Thackeray's knowledge of men and women, Thackeray's morality, Thackeray's view of life, 'his wit and humour, his pathos, and his umbrella,' are all articles

of belief with them. Of Dickens they will not hear; Balzac they incline to despise; if they make any comparison between Thackeray and Fielding, or Thackeray and Richardson, or Thackeray and Sir Walter, or Thackeray and Disraeli, it is to the disadvantage of Disraeli and Scott and Richardson and Fielding. All these were well enough in their way and day; but they are not to be classed with Thackeray. It is said, no doubt, that Thackeray could neither make stories nor tell them; but he liked stories for all that, and by the hour could babble charmingly of *Ivanhoe* and the *Mousquetaires*. It is possible that he was afraid of passion, and had no manner of interest in crime. But then, how hard he bore upon snobs, and how vigorously he lashed the smaller vices and the meaner faults! It may be beyond dispute that he was seldom good at romance, and saw most things—art and nature included—rather prosaically and ill-naturedly, as he might see them who has been for many years a failure, and is naturally a little resentful of other men's successes; but then, how brilliant are his studies of club humanity and club manners! how thoroughly he understands the feelings of them that go down into the west in broughams! If he writes by preference for people with a thousand a year, is it not the duty of everybody with a particle of self-respect to have that income? Is it possible that any one who has it not can have either wit or sentiment, humour or understanding? Thackeray writes *of* gentlemen *for* gentlemen; therefore he is alone among artists; therefore he is 'the greatest novelist of his age.' That is the faith of the true believer:

that the state of mind of him that reveres less wisely than thoroughly, and would rather be damned with Thackeray than saved with any one else.

His Critics.

THE position of them that wear their rue with a difference, and do not agree that all literature is contained in *The Book of Snobs* and *Vanity Fair*, is more easily defended. They like and admire their Thackeray in many ways, but they think him rather a writer of genius who was innately and irredeemably a Philistine than a supreme artist or a great man. To them there is something artificial in the man and something insincere in the artist: something which makes it seem natural that his best work should smack of the literary *tour de force*, and that he should never have appeared to such advantage as when, in *Esmond* and in *Barry Lyndon*, he was writing up to a standard and upon a model not wholly of his own contrivance. They admit his claim to eminence as an adventurer in 'the discovery of the Ugly'; but they contend that even there he did his work more shrewishly and more pettily than he might; and in this connection they go so far as to reflect that a snob is not only 'one who meanly admires mean things,' as his own definition declares, but one who meanly detests mean things as well. They agree with Walter Bagehot that to be perpetually haunted by the plush behind your chair is hardly a sign of lofty literary and moral genius; and they consider him narrow and vulgar in his view of humanity, limited in his outlook upon life, inclined to be envious, inclined to be tedious and pedantic,

prone to repetitions, and apt in bidding for applause to appeal to the baser qualities of his readers and to catch their sympathy by making them feel themselves spitefully superior to their fellow-men. They look at his favourite heroines—at Laura and Ethel and Amelia ; and they can but think him stupid who could ever have believed them interesting or admirable or attractive or true. They listen while he regrets it is impossible for him to attempt the picture of a man ; and, with Barry Lyndon in their mind's-eye and the knowledge that Casanova and Andrew Bowes suggested no more than that, they wonder if the impossibility was not a piece of luck for him. They hear him heaping contumely upon the murders and adulteries, the excesses in emotion, that pleased the men of 1830 as they had pleased the Elizabethans before them ; and they see him turning with terror and loathing from these—which after all are effects of vigorous passion—to busy himself with the elaborate and careful narrative of how Barnes Newcome beat his wife, and Mrs. Mackenzie scolded Colonel Newcome to death, and old Twysden bragged and cringed himself into good society and an interest in the life and well-being of a little cad like Captain Woolcomb ; and it is not amazing if they think his morality more dubious in some ways than the morality he is so firmly fixed to ridicule and to condemn. They reflect that he sees in Beatrix no more than the makings of a Bernstein ; and they are puzzled, when they come to mark the contrast between the two portraitures and the difference between the part assigned to Mrs. Esmond and the part assigned to the Baroness, to

decide if he were short-sighted or ungenerous, if he were inapprehensive or only cruel. They weary easily of his dogged and unremitting pursuit of the merely conventional man and the merely conventional woman; they cannot always bring themselves to be interested in the cupboard drama, the tea-cup tragedies and cheque-book and bandbox comedies, which he regards as the stuff of human action and the web of human life; and from their theory of existence they positively refuse to eliminate the heroic qualities of romance and mystery and passion, which are—as they have only to open their newspapers to see—essentials of human achievement and integral elements of human character. They hold that his books contain some of the finest stuff in fiction: as, for instance, Rawdon Crawley's discovery of his wife and Lord Steyne, and Henry Esmond's return from the wars, and those immortal chapters in which the Colonel and Frank Castlewood pursue and run down their kinswoman and the Prince. But they hold, too, that their influence is dubious, and that few have risen from them one bit the better or one jot the happier.

GENIUS apart, Thackeray's morality is that of a highly respectable British cynic; his intelligence is largely one of trifles; he is wise over trivial and trumpery things. He delights in reminding us—with an air!—that everybody is a humbug; that we are all rank snobs; that to misuse your aspirates is to be ridiculous and incapable of real merit; that Miss Blank has just slipped out to post a letter to

Which is Right?

Captain Jones; that Miss Dash wears false teeth and a wig; that General Tufto is almost as tightly laced as the beautiful Miss Hopper; that there 's a bum-bailiff in the kitchen at Number Thirteen; that the dinner we ate t' other day at Timmins's is still to pay; that all is vanity; that there 's a skeleton in every house; that passion, enthusiasm, excess of any sort, is unwise, abominable, a little absurd; and so forth. And side by side with these assurances are admirable sketches of character and still more admirable sketches of habit and of manners—are the Pontos and Costigan, Gandish and Talbot Twysden and the unsurpassable Major, Sir Pitt and Brand Firmin, the heroic De la Pluche and the engaging Farintosh and the versatile Honeyman, a crowd of vivid and diverting portraitures besides; but they are not different—in kind at least—from the reflections suggested by the story of their several careers and the development of their several individualities. Esmond apart, there is scarce a man or a woman in Thackeray whom it is possible to love unreservedly or respect thoroughly. That gives the measure of the man, and determines the quality of his influence. He was the average clubman *plus* genius and a style. And, if there is any truth in the theory that it is the function of art not to degrade but to ennoble—not to dishearten but to encourage—not to deal with things ugly and paltry and mean but with great things and beautiful and lofty—then, it is argued, his example is one to depreciate and to condemn.

His Style.

THUS the two sects: the sect of them that are with Thackeray and the sect of them that are against him. Where both agree is in the fact of Thackeray's pre-eminence as a writer of English and the master of one of the finest prose styles in literature. His manner is the perfection of conversational writing. Graceful yet vigorous; adorably artificial yet incomparably sound; touched with modishness yet informed with distinction; easily and happily rhythmical yet full of colour and quick with malice and with meaning; instinct with urbanity and instinct with charm—it is a type of high-bred English, a climax of literary art. He may not have been a great man but assuredly he was a great writer; he may have been a faulty novelist but assuredly he was a rare artist in words. Setting aside Cardinal Newman's, the style he wrote is certainly less open to criticism than that of any other modern Englishman. He was neither super-eloquent like Mr. Ruskin nor a Germanised Jeremy like Carlyle; he was not marmoreally emphatic as Landor was, nor was he slovenly and inexpressive as was the great Sir Walter; he neither dallied with antithesis like Macaulay nor rioted in verbal vulgarisms with Dickens; he abstained from technology and what may be called Lord Burleighism as carefully as George Eliot indulged in them, and he avoided conceits as sedulously as Mr. George Meredith goes out of his way to hunt for them. He is a better writer than any one of these, in that he is always a master of speech and of himself, and that he is always careful yet natural and choice yet seemingly spontaneous. He wrote as a very prince

among talkers, and he interfused and interpenetrated English with the elegant and cultured fashion of the men of Queen Anne and with something of the warmth, the glow, the personal and romantic ambition, peculiar to the century of Byron and Keats, of Landor and Dickens, of Ruskin and Tennyson and Carlyle. Unlike his only rival, he had learnt his art before he began to practise it. Of the early work of the greater artist a good half is that of a man in the throes of education: the ideas, the thoughts, the passion, the poetry, the humour, are of the best, but the expression is self-conscious, strained, ignorant. Thackeray had no such blemish. He wrote dispassionately, and he was a born writer. In him there is no hesitation, no fumbling, no uncertainty. The style of *Barry Lyndon* is better and stronger and more virile than the style of *Philip*; and unlike the other man's, whose latest writing is his best, their author's evolution was towards decay.

His Mission.

He is so superior a person that to catch him tripping is a peculiar pleasure. It is a satisfaction apart, for instance, to reflect that he has (it must be owned) a certain gentility of mind. Like the M.P. in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, he represents the Gentlemanly Interest. That is his mission in literature, and he fulfils it thoroughly. He appears sometimes as Mr. Yellowplush, sometimes as Mr. Fitzboodle, sometimes as Michael Angelo Titmarsh, but always in the Gentlemanly Interest. In his youth (as ever) he is found applauding the well-bred Charles de

Bernard, and remarking of Balzac and Dumas that the one is 'not fit for the *salon*,' and the other 'about as genteel as a courier.' Balzac and Dumas are only men of genius and great artists: the real thing is to be 'genteel' and write—as *Gerfeuil* (*sic*) is written —'in a gentleman-like style.' A few pages further on in the same pronouncement (a review of *Jérôme Paturot*), I find him quoting with entire approval Reybaud's sketch of 'a great character, in whom the *habitué* of Paris will perhaps recognise a certain likeness to a certain celebrity of the present day, by name Monsieur Hector Berlioz, the musician and critic.' The description is too long to quote. It sparkles with all the *fadaises* of anti-Berliozian criticism, and the point is that the hero, after conducting at a private party (which Berlioz never did) his own 'hymn of the creation that has been lost since the days of the deluge,' 'called for his cloak and his clogs, and walked home, where he wrote a critique for the newspapers of the music which he had composed and directed.' In the Gentlemanly Interest Mr. Titmarsh translates this sorry little libel with the utmost innocence of approval. It is *The Paris Sketch-Book* over again. That Monsieur Hector Berlioz may possibly have known something of his trade and been withal as honest a man and artist as himself seems never to have occurred to him. He knows nothing of Monsieur Hector except that he is a 'hairy romantic,' and that whatever he wrote it was not *Batti, batti*; but that nothing is enough. 'Whether this little picture is a likeness or not,' he is ingenuous enough to add, 'who shall say?' But,—and here speaks the bold

but superior Briton—'it is a good caricature of a race in France, where geniuses *poussent* as they do nowhere else; where poets are prophets, where romances have revelations.' As he goes on to qualify *Jérôme Paturot* as a 'master piece,' and as 'three volumes of satire in which there is not a particle of bad blood,' it seems fair to conclude that in the Gentlemanly Interest all is considered fair, and that to accuse a man of writing criticisms on his own works is to be 'witty and entertaining,' and likewise 'careless, familiar, and sparkling' to the genteelest purpose possible in this genteelest of all possible worlds.

DISRAELI

His Novels.

To the general his novels must always be a kind of caviare; for they have no analogue in letters, but are the output of a mind and temper of singular originality. To the honest Tory, sworn to admire and unable to comprehend, they must seem inexplicable as abnormal. To the professional Radical they are so many proofs of innate inferiority: for they are full of pretentiousness and affectation; they teem with examples of all manner of vices, from false English to an immoral delight in dukes; they prove their maker a trickster and a charlatan in every page. To them, however, whose first care is for rare work, the series of novels that began with *Vivian Grey* and ended with *Endymion* is one of the pleasant facts in modern letters. These books abound in wit and daring, in originality and shrewdness, in knowledge of the world and in knowledge of men; they contain many vivid and striking studies of character, both portrait and caricature; they sparkle with speaking phrases and happy epithets; they are aglow with the passion of youth, the love of love, the worship of physical beauty, the admiration of whatever is costly and select and splendid—from a countess to a castle, from a duke

to a diamond; they are radiant with delight in whatever is powerful or personal or attractive—from a cook to a cardinal, from an agitator to an emperor. They often remind you of Voltaire, often of Balzac, often of *The Arabian Nights*. You pass from an heroic drinking bout to a brilliant criticism of style; from rhapsodies on bands and ortolans that remind you of Heine to a gambling scene that for directness and intensity may vie with the bluntest and strongest work of Prosper Mérimée; from the extravagant impudence of *Popanilla* to the sentimental rodomontade of *Henrietta Temple*; from ranting romanticism in *Alroy* to vivid realism in *Sybil*. Their author gives you no time to weary of him, for he is worldly and passionate, fantastic and trenchant, cynical and ambitious, flippant and sentimental, ornately rhetorical and triumphantly simple in a breath. He is imperiously egoistic, but while constantly parading his own personality he is careful never to tell you anything about it. And withal he is imperturbably good-tempered: he brands and gibbets with a smile, and with a smile he adores and applauds. Intellectually he is in sympathy with character of every sort; he writes as becomes an artist who has recognised that 'the conduct of men depends upon the temperament, not upon a bunch of musty maxims,' and that 'there is a great deal of vice that is really sheer inadvertence.' It is said that the Monmouth of *Conings by* and the Steyne of *Vanity Fair* are painted from one and the same original; and you have but to compare the savage realism of Thackeray's study to the scornful amenity of the other's—as you have but to contrast the

elaborate and extravagant cruelty of Thackeray's Alcide de Mirobolant with the polite and half-respectful irony of Disraeli's treatment of the cooks in *Tancred*—to perceive that in certain ways the advantage is not with 'the greatest novelist of his time,' and that the Monmouth produces an impression which is more moral because more kindly and humane than the impression left by the Steyne, while in its way it is every whit as vivid and as convincing. Yet another excellence, and a great one, is his mastery of apt and forcible dialogue. The talk of Mr. Henry James's personages is charmingly equable and appropriate, but it is also trivial and tame; the talk in Anthony Trollope is surprisingly natural and abundant, but it is also commonplace and immemorable; the talk of Mr. George Meredith is always eloquent and fanciful, but the eloquence is too often dark and the fancy too commonly inhuman. What Disraeli's people have to say is not always original nor profound, but it is crisply and happily phrased and uttered, it reads well, its impression seldom fails of permanency. His *Wit and Wisdom* is a kind of *Talker's Guide* or *Handbook of Conversation*. How should it be otherwise, seeing that it contains the characteristic utterances of a great artist in life renowned for memorable speech?

A Contrast.

Now, if you ask a worshipper of him that was so long his rival, to repeat a saying, a maxim, a sentence, of which his idol is the author, it is odds but he will look like a fool, and visit you with an

evasive answer. What else should he do? His deity is a man of many words and no sayings. He is the prince of agitators, but it would be impossible for him to mint a definition of 'agitation'; he is the world's most eloquent arithmetician, but it is beyond him to epigrammatise the fact that two and two make four. And it seems certain, unless the study of Homer and religious fiction inspire him to some purpose, that his contributions to axiomatic literature will be still restricted to the remark that 'There are three courses open' to something or other: to the House, to the angry cabman, to what and whomsoever you will. In sober truth, he is one who writes for to-day, and takes no thought of either yesterdays or morrows. For him the Future is next session; the Past does not extend beyond his last change of mind. He is a prince of journalists, and his excursions into monthly literature remain to show how great and copious a master of the 'leader' —ornate, imposing, absolutely insignificant—his absorption in politics has cost the English-speaking world.

His Backgrounds.

DISRAELI'S imagination, at once practical and extravagant, is not of the kind that delights in plot and counterplot. His novels abound in action, but the episodes wear a more or less random look: the impression produced is pretty much that of a story of adventure. But if they fail as stories they are unexceptionable as canvases. Our author unrolls them with superb audacity; and rapidly and vigorously he fills them in with places and people, with

faces that are as life and words expressive even as they. Nothing is too lofty or too low for him. He hawks at every sort of game, and rarely does he make a false cast. It is but a step from the wilds of Lancashire to the Arabian Desert, from the cook's first floor to the Home of the Bellamonts ; for he has the Seven-League-Boots of the legend, and more than the genius of adventure of him that wore them. His castles may be of cardboard, his cataracts of tinfoil, the sun of his adjurations the veriest figment ; but he never lets his readers see that he knows it. His irony, sudden and reckless and insidious though it be, yet never extends to his properties. There may be a sneer beneath that mask which, with an egotism baffling as imperturbable, he delights in intruding among his creations ; but you cannot see it. You suspect its presence, because he is a born mocker. But you remember that one of his most obvious idiosyncrasies is an inordinate love of all that is sumptuous, glittering, radiant, magnificent ; and you incline to suspect that he keeps his sneering for the world of men, and admires his scenes and decorations too cordially to visit them with anything so merciless.

His Men Women.

But dashing and brilliant as are his sketches of places and things, they are after all the merest accessories. It was as a student of Men and Women that he loved to excel, and it is as their painter that I praise him now. Himself a worshipper of intellect, it was intellectually that he mastered and developed them. Like Sidonia he moves among

them not to feel with them but to understand and learn from them. Such sympathy as he had was either purely sensuous, as for youth and beauty and all kinds of comeliness; or purely intellectual, as for intelligence, artificiality, servility, meanness. And as his essence was satirical, as he was naturally irreverent and contemptuous, it follows that he is best and strongest in the act of punishment not of reward. His passion for youth was beautiful, but it did not make him strong. His scorn for things contemptible, his hate for things hateful, are at times too bitter even for those who think with him; but in these lay his force—they filled his brain with light, and they touched his lips with fire. The wretched Rigby is far more vigorous and life-like than the amiable Coningsby; Tom Cogit—a sketch, but a sketch of genius—is infinitely more interesting than May Dacre or even the young Duke; Tancred is a good fellow, and very real and true in his goodness, but contrast him with Fakredeen! And after his knaves, his fools, his tricksters, the most striking figures in his gallery are those whom he has considered from a purely intellectual point of view: either kindly, as Sidonia, or coolly, as Lord Monmouth, but always calmly and with no point of passion in his regard: the Eskdales, Villebecques, Ormsbys, Bessos, Marneys, Meltons, and Mirabels, the Bohuns and St. Aldegondes and Grandisons, the Tadpoles and the Tapers, the dominant and the subaltern humanity of the world. All these are drawn with peculiar boldness of line, precision of touch, and clearness of intention. And as with his men so is it with his women: the finest

are not those he likes best but those who interested him most. Male and female, his eccentrics surpass his commonplaces. He had a great regard for girls, and his attitude towards them, or such of them as he elected heroines, was mostly one of adoration —magnificent, yet a little awkward and strained. With women, married women, he had vastly more in common: he could admire, study, divine, without having to feign a warmer feeling; and while his girls are poor albeit splendid young persons, his matrons are usually delightful. Edith Millbank is not a very striking figure in *Coningsby*; but her appearance in *Tancred*—well, you have only to compare it to the resurrection of Laura Bell, as Mrs. Pendennis to see how good it is.

His Style.

Now and then the writing is bad, and the thought is stale. Disraeli had many mannerisms, innate and acquired. His English was frequently loose and inexpressive; he was apt to trip in his grammar, to stumble over 'and which,' and to be careless about the connection between his nominatives and his verbs. Again, he could scarce ever refrain from the use of gorgeous commonplaces of sentiment and diction. His taste was sometimes ornately and barbarically conventional; he wrote as an orator, and his phrases often read as if he had used them for the sake of their associations rather than themselves. His works are a casket of such stage jewels of expression as 'Palladian structure,' 'Tusculan repose,' 'Gothic pile,' 'pellucid brow,' 'mossy cell,' and 'dew-bespangled meads.' He delighted in 'hya-

cinthine curls' and 'lustrous locks,' in 'smiling parterres' and 'stately terraces.' He seldom sat down in print to anything less than a 'banquet'; he was capable of invoking 'the iris pencil of Hope'; he could not think or speak of the beauties of woman except as 'charms.' Which seems to show that to be 'born in a library,' and have Voltaire—that impeccable master of the phrase—for your chief of early heroes and exemplars is not everything.

is ratory.

It is admitted, I believe, that he had many of the qualities of a great public speaker: that he had an admirable voice and an excellent method; that his sequences were logical and natural, his arguments vigorous and persuasive; that he was an artist in style, and in the course of a single speech could be eloquent and vivacious, ornate and familiar, passionate and cynical, deliberately rhetorical and magnificently fantastic in turn; that he was a master of all oratorical modes—of irony and argument, of stately declamation and brilliant and unexpected antithesis, of caricature and statement and rejoinder alike; that he could explain, denounce, retort, retract, advance, defy, dispute, with equal readiness and equal skill; that he was unrivalled in attack and unsurpassed in defence; and that in heated debate and on occasions when he felt himself justified in putting forth all his powers and in striking in with the full weight of his imperious and unique personality he was the most dangerous antagonist of his time. And yet, in spite of his mysterious and commanding influence over his followers—in

spite, too, of the fact that he died assuredly the most romantic and perhaps the most popular figure of his time—it is admitted withal that he was lacking in a certain quality of temperament, that attribute great orators possess in common with great actors: the power, that is, of imposing oneself upon an audience not by argument nor by eloquence, not by the perfect utterance of beautiful and commanding speech nor by the enunciation of eternal principles or sympathetic and stirring appeals, but by an effect of personal magnetism, by the expression through voice and gesture and presence of an individuality, a temperament, call it what you will, that may be and is often utterly commonplace but is always inevitably irresistible. He could slaughter an opponent, or butcher a measure, or crumple up a theory with unrivalled adroitness and despatch; but he could not dominate a crowd to the extent of persuading it to feel with his heart, think with his brain, and accept his utterances as the expression not only of their common reason but of their collective sentiment as well. He was as incapable of such a feat as Mr. Gladstone's Midlothian campaign as Mr. Gladstone is of producing the gaming scene in *The Young Duke* or the 'exhausted volcanoes' paragraph in the Manchester speech.

His Speeches as Literature.

As a rule—a rule to which there are some magnificent exceptions—orators have only to cease from speaking to become uninteresting. What has been heard with enthusiasm is read with indifference or even with astonishment. You miss the noble

voice, the persuasive gesture, the irresistible personality ; and with the emotional faculty at rest and the reason at work you are surprised—and it may be a little indignant—that you should have been impressed so deeply as you were by such cold, bald verbosity as seen in black and white the masterpiece of yesterday appears to be. To some extent this is the case with these speeches of Disraeli's. At the height of debate, amid the clash of personal and party animosities, with the cheers of the orator's supporters to give them wings, they sounded greater than they were. But for all that they are vigorous and profitable yet. Their author's unfailing capacity for saying things worth heeding and remembering is proved in every one of them. It is not easy to open either of Mr. Kebbel's volumes without lighting upon something—a string of epigrams, a polished gibe, a burst of rhetoric, an effective collocation of words—that proclaims the artist. In this connection the perorations are especially instructive, even if you consider them simply as arrangements of sonorous and suggestive words : as oratorical impressions carefully prepared, as effects of what may be called vocalised orchestration touched off as skilfully and with as fine a sense of sound and of the sentiment to correspond as so many passages of instrumentation signed 'Berlioz' might be.

Great FRUITS fail, and love dies, and time ranges ; and only the whippersnapper (that fool of Time) endureth for ever. Molière knew him well, and he

said that Molière was a liar and a thief. And Disraeli knew him too, and he said that in these respects Disraeli and Molière were brothers. That he said so matters as little now as ever it did ; for though the whippersnapper is immortal in kind, he is nothing if not futile and ephemeral in effect, and it was seen long since that in life and death Disraeli, as became his genius and his race, was the Uncommonplace incarnate, the antithesis of Grocerdom, the Satan of that revolt against the yielding habit of Jehovah-Bottles the spirit whereof is fast coming to be our one defence against socialism and the dominion of the Common Fool. He was no sentimentalist: as what great artist in government has ever been? He loved power for power's sake, and recognising to the full the law of the survival of the fittest he preferred his England to the world. He knew that it is the function of the man of genius to show that theory is only theory, and that in the House of Morality there are many mansions. To that end he lived and died ; and it is not until one has comprehended the complete significance of his life and death that one is qualified to speak with understanding of such a life and death as his who passed at Khartoum.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

His Components.

THE life of Dumas is not only a monument of endeavour and success, it is a sort of labyrinth as well. It abounds in pseudonyms and disguises, in sudden and unexpected appearances and retreats as unexpected and sudden, in scandals and in rumours, in mysteries and traps and ambuscades of every kind. It pleased the great man to consider himself of more importance than any and all of the crowd of collaborators whose ideas he developed, whose raw material he wrought up into the achievement we know ; and he was given to take credit to himself not only for the success and value of a particular work but for the whole thing—the work in its quiddity, so to speak, and resolved into its original elements. On the other hand, it pleased such painful creatures as MM. Quérard and 'Eugène de Mirecourt,' as it has since pleased Messrs. Hitchman and Fitzgerald to consider the second- and third-rate literary persons whom Dumas assimilated in such numbers as of greater interest and higher merit than Dumas. To them the jackals were far nobler than the lion, and they worked their hardest in the interest of the pack. It was their mission to decompose and disintegrate the magnificent entity which

M. Blaze de Bury very happily nicknames 'Dumas-Légion,' and in the process not to render his own unto Cæsar but to take from him all that was Cæsar's, and divide it among the mannikins he had absorbed. And their work was in its way well done; for have we not seen M. Brunetière exulting in agreement and talking of Dumas as one less than Eugène Sue and not much bigger than Gaillardet? Of course the ultimate issue of the debate is not doubtful. Dumas remains to the end a prodigy of force and industry, a miracle of cleverness and accomplishment and ease, a type of generous and abundant humanity, a great artist in many varieties of form, a prince of talkers and story-tellers, one of the kings of the stage, a benefactor of his epoch and his kind; while of those who assisted him in the production of his immense achievement the most exist but as fractions of the larger sum, and the others have utterly disappeared. 'Combien,' says his son in that excellent page which serves to preface *le Fils Naturel*—'combien parmi ceux qui devaient rester obscurs se sont éclairés et chauffés à ta forge, et si l'heure des restitutions sonnait, quel gain pour toi, rien qu'à reprendre ce que tu as donné et ce qu'on t'a pris!' That is the true verdict of posterity, and he does well who abides by it.

Himself.

He is one of the heroes of modern art. Envy and scandal have done their worst now. The libeller has said his say; the detectives who make a speciality of literary forgeries have proved their cases one and all; the judges of matter have spoken,

and so have the critics of style ; the distinguished author of *Nana* has taken us into his confidence on the subject ; we have heard from the lamented Granier and others as much as was to be heard on the question of plagiarism in general and the plagiarisms of Dumas in particular ; and Mr. Percy Fitzgerald has done what he is pleased to designate the 'nightman's work' of analysing *Antony* and *Kean*, and of collecting everything that spite has said about their author's life, their author's habits, their author's manners and customs and character : of whose vanity, mendacity, immorality, a score of improper qualities besides, enough has been written to furnish a good-sized library. And the result of it all is that Dumas is recognised for a force in modern art and for one of the greatest inventors and amusers the century has produced. Whole crowds of men were named as the real authors of his books and plays ; but they were only readable when he signed for them. His ideas were traced to a hundred originals ; but they had all seemed worthless till he took them in hand and developed them according to their innate capacity. The French he wrote was popular, and the style at his command was none of the loftiest, as his critics have often been at pains to show ; but he was for all that an artist at once original and exemplary, with an incomparable instinct of selection, a constructive faculty not equalled among the men of this century, an understanding of what is right and what is wrong in art and a mastery of his materials which in their way are not to be paralleled in the work of Sir Walter himself. Like Napoleon, he was 'a natural force

let loose' ; and if he had done no more than achieve universal renown as the prince of *raconteurs* and a commanding position as a novelist wherever novels are read he would still have done much. But he did a vast deal more. A natural force, he wrought in the right direction, as natural forces must and do. He amused the world for forty years and more ; but he also contributed something to the general sum of the world's artistic experience and capacity, and his contribution is of permanent worth and charm. He has left us stories which are models of the enchanting art of narrative ; and, with a definition good and comprehensive enough to include all the best work which has been produced for the theatre from Æschylus down to Augier, from the *Choephoræ* on to *le Gendre de M. Poirier*, he has given us types of the romantic and the domestic drama, which, new when he produced them, are even now not old, and which as regards essentials, have yet to be improved upon. The form and aim of the modern drama, as we know it, have been often enough ascribed to the ingenious author of *une Chaîne* and the *Verre d'Eau* ; but they might with much greater truth be ascribed to the author of *Antony* and *la Tour de Nesle*. Scribe invents and eludes where Dumas invents and dares. The theory of Scribe is one of mere dexterity : his drama is a perpetual *chassé-croisé* at the edge of a precipice, a dance of puppets among swords that might but will not cut and eggs that might but will not break ; to him a situation is a kind of tight-rope to be crossed with ever so much agility and an endless affectation of peril by all his characters in

turn: in fact, as M. Dumas *fils* has said of him, he is 'le Shakespeare des ombres chinoises.' The theory of Dumas is the very antipodes of this. 'All I want,' he said in a memorable comparison between himself and Victor Hugo, 'is four trestles, four boards, two actors, and a passion'; and his good plays are a proof that in this he spoke no more than the truth. Drama to him was so much emotion in action. If he invented a situation he accepted its issues in their entirety, and did his utmost to express from it all the passion it contained. That he fails to reach the highest peaks of emotional effect is no fault of his: to do that something more is needed than a perfect method, something other than a great ambition and an absolute certainty of touch; and Dumas was neither a Shakespeare nor an Æschylus—he was not even an Augier. All the same, he has produced in *la Tour de Nesle* a romantic play which M. Zola himself pronounces the ideal of the *genre* and in *Antony* an achievement in drawing-room tragedy which is out of all questioning the first, and in the opinion of a critic so competent and so keen as the master's son is probably the strongest, thing of its kind in modern literature. On this latter play it were difficult, I think, to bestow too much attention. It is touched, even tainted, with the manner and the affectation of its epoch. But it is admirably imagined and contrived; it is very daring, and it is very new; it deals with the men and women of 1830, and—with due allowance for differences of manners, ideal, and personal genius—it is in its essentials a play in the same sense as *Othello* and

the *Trachiniæ* are plays in theirs. It is the beginning, as I believe, not only of *les Lionnes Pauvres* but of *Thérèse Raquin* and *la Glu* as well: just as *la Tour de Nesle* is the beginning of *Patrie* and *la Haine*.

At Least.

And if these greater and loftier pretensions be still contested; if the theory of the gifted creature who wrote that the works of the master wizard are 'like summer fruits brought forth abundantly in the full blaze of sunshine, which do not keep'—if this preposterous fantasy be generally accepted, there will yet be much in Dumas to venerate and love. If *Antony* were of no more account than an ephemeral burlesque; if *la Reine Margot* and the immortal trilogy of the Musketeers—that 'epic of friendship'—were dead as morality and as literature alike; if it were nothing to have re-cast the novel of adventure, formulated the modern drama, and perfected the drama of incident; if to have sent all France to the theatre to see in three dimensions those stories of Chicot, Edmond Dantès, d'Artagnan, which it knew by heart from books were an achievement within the reach of every scribbler who dabbles in letters; if all this were true, and Dumas were merely a piece of human journalism, produced to-day and gone to-morrow, there would still be enough of him to make his a memorable name. He was a prodigy—of amiability, cleverness, energy, daring, charm, industry—if he was nothing else. Gronow tells that he had sat at table with Dumas and Brougham, and that Brougham, out-

faced and out-talked, was forced to quit the field. 'J'ai conservé,' says M. Maxime du Camp, in his admirable *Souvenirs littéraires*, 'd'Alexandre Dumas un souvenir ineffaçable; malgré un certain laisser-aller qui tenait à l'exubérance de sa nature, c'était un homme *dont tous les sentiments étaient élevés*. On a été injuste pour lui; comme il avait énormément d'esprit, on l'a accusé d'être léger; comme il produisait avec une facilité ineroyable, on l'a accusé de gâcher la besogne, et, comme il était prodigue, on l'a accusé de manquer de tenue. Ces reproches m'ont toujours paru misérables.' This is much; but it is not nearly all. He had, this independent witness goes on to note, 'une générosité naturelle qui ne comptait jamais; il ressemblait à une corne d'abondance qui se vide sans cesse dans les mains tendues; *la moitié, sinon plus, de l'argent gagné par lui a été donnée*.' That is true; and it is also true that he gave at least as largely of himself—his prodigious temperament, his generous gaiety, his big, manly heart, his turn for chivalry, his gallant and delightful genius—as of his money. He was reputed a violent and luxurious debauchee; and he mostly lived in an attic—(the worst room in the house and therefore the only one he could call his own)—with a camp-bed and the deal table at which he wrote. He passed for a loud-mouthed idler; and during many years his daily average of work was fourteen hours for months on end. 'Ivre de puissance,' says George Sand of him, but 'foncièrement bon.' They used to hear him laughing as he wrote, and when he killed Porthos he did no more that day. It would have been worth while to

figure as one of the crowd of friends and parasites who lived at rack and manger in his house, for the mere pleasure of seeing him descend upon them from his toil of moving mountains and sharing in that pleasing half-hour of talk which was his common refreshment. After that he would return to the attic and the deal table, and move more mountains. With intervals of travel, sport, adventure, and what in France is called 'l'amour'—(it is strange, by the way, that he was never a hero of Carlyle's)—he lived in this way more or less for forty years or so; and when he left Paris for the last time he had but two napoleons in his pocket. 'I had only one when I came here first,' quoth he, 'and yet they call me a spendthrift.' That was his way; and while the result is not for Dr. Smiles to chronicle, I for one persist in regarding the spirit in which it was accepted as not less exemplary than delightful.

His Monument.

On M. du Camp's authority there is a charming touch to add to his son's description of him. 'Il me semble,' said the royal old prodigal in his last illness, 'que je suis au sommet d'un monument qui tremble comme si les fondations étaient assises sur le sable.' 'Sois en paix,' replied the author of the *Demi-Monde*: 'le monument est bien bâti, et la base est solide.' He was right, as we know. It is good and fitting that Dumas should have a monument in the Paris he amazed and delighted and amused so long. But he could have done without one. In what language is he not read? and where

that he is read is he not loved. '*Exegi monumentum*,' he might have said: 'and wherever romance is a necessary of life, there shall you look for it, and not in vain.'

GEORGE MEREDITH

His Qualities.

To read Mr. Meredith's novels with insight is to find them full of the rarest qualities in fiction. If their author has a great capacity for unsatisfactory writing he has capacities not less great for writing that is satisfactory in the highest degree. He has the tragic instinct and endowment, and he has the comic as well; he is an ardent student of character and life; he has wit of the swiftest, the most comprehensive, the most luminous, and humour that can be fantastic or ironical or human at his pleasure; he has passion and he has imagination; he has considered sex—the great subject, the leaven of imaginative art—with notable audacity and insight. He is as capable of handling a vice or an emotion as he is of managing an affectation. He can be trivial, or grotesque, or satirical, or splendid; and whether his *milieu* be romantic or actual, whether his personages be heroic or sordid, he goes about his task with the same assurance and intelligence. In his best work he takes rank with the world's novelists. He is a companion for Balzac and Richardson, an intimate for Fielding and Cervantes. His figures fall into their place beside the greatest of their kind; and when you think of Lucy Feverel and Mrs.

Berry, of Evan Harrington's Countess Saldanha and the Lady Charlotte of *Emilia in England*, of the two old men in *Harry Richmond* and the Sir Everard Romfrey of *Beauchamp's Career*, of Renée and Cecilia, of Emilia and Rhoda Fleming, of Rose Jocelyn and Lady Blandish and Ripton Thompson, they have in the mind's-eye a value scarce inferior to that of Clarissa and Lovelace, of Bath and Western and Booth, of Andrew Fairservice and Elspeth Mucklebacket, of Philippe Bridau and Vautrin and Balthasar Claës. In the world of man's creation his people are citizens to match the noblest; they are of the aristocracy of the imagination, the peers in their own right of the society of romance. And for all that, their state is mostly desolate and lonely and forlorn.

His Defects.

For Mr. Meredith is one of the worst and least attractive of great writers as well as one of the best and most fascinating. He is a sun that has broken out into innumerable spots. The better half of his genius is always suffering eclipse from the worse half. He writes with the pen of a great artist in his left hand and the razor of a spiritual suicide in his right. He is the master and the victim of a monstrous cleverness which is neither to hold nor to bind, and will not permit him to do things as an honest, simple person of genius would. As Shakespeare, in Johnson's phrase, lost the world for a quibble and was content to lose it, so does Mr. Meredith discrown himself of the sovereignty of contemporary romance to put on the cap and bells

of the professional wit. He is not content to be plain Jupiter: his lightnings are less to him than his fireworks; and his pages so teem with fine sayings and magniloquent epigrams and gorgeous images and fantastic locutions that the mind would welcome dulness as a bright relief. He is tediously amusing; he is brilliant to the point of being obscure; his helpfulness is so extravagant as to worry and confound. That is the secret of his unpopularity. His stories are not often good stories and are seldom well told; his ingenuity and intelligence are always misleading him into treating mere episodes as solemnly and elaborately as main incidents; he is ever ready to discuss, to ramble, to theorise, to dogmatise, to indulge in a little irony or a little reflection or a little artistic misdemeanour of some sort. But other novelists have done these things before him, and have been none the less popular, and are actually none the less readable. None, however, has pushed the foppery of style and intellect to such a point as Mr. Meredith. Not infrequently he writes page after page of English as ripe and sound and unaffected as heart could wish; and you can but impute to wantonness and recklessness the splendid impertinences that intrude elsewhere. To read him at the rate of two or three chapters a day is to have a sincere and hearty admiration for him and a devout anxiety to forget his defects and make much of his merits. But they are few who can take a novel on such terms as these, and to read your Meredith straight off is to have an indigestion of epigram, and to be incapable of distinguishing good from bad: the author of the parting between

Richard and Lucy Feverel—a high-water mark of novelistic passion and emotion—from the creator of Mr. Raikes and Dr. Shrapnel, which are two of the most flagrant unrealities ever perpetrated in the name of fiction by an artist of genius.

Another Way.

On the whole, I think, he does not often say anything not worth hearing. He is too wise for that; and, besides, he is strenuously in earnest about his work. He has a noble sense of the dignity of art and the responsibilities of the artist; he will set down nothing that is to his mind unworthy to be recorded; his treatment of his material is distinguished by the presence of an intellectual passion (as it were) that makes whatever he does considerable and deserving of attention and respect. But unhappily the will is not seldom unequal to the deed: the achievement is often leagues in rear of the inspiration; the attempt at completeness is too laboured and too manifest—the feat is done but by a painful and ungraceful process. There *is* genius, but there is *not* felicity: that, one is inclined to say, is the distinguishing note of Mr. Meredith's work, in prose and verse alike. There are magnificent exceptions, of course, but they prove the rule and, broken though it be, there is no gainsaying its existence. To be concentrated in form, to be suggestive in material, to say nothing that is not of permanent value, and only to say it in such terms as are charged to the fullest with significance—this would seem to be the aim and end of Mr. Meredith's ambition. Of simplicity in his own person he appears incap-

able. The texture of his expression must be stiff with allusion, or he deems it ill spun; there must be something of antic in his speech, or he cannot believe he is addressing himself to the Immortals; he has praised with perfect understanding the lucidity, the elegance, the ease, of Molière, and yet his aim in art (it would appear) is to be Molière's antipodes, and to vanquish by congestion, clottedness, an anxious and determined dandyism of form and style. There is something *bourgeois* in his intolerance of the commonplace, something fanatical in the intemperance of his regard for artifice. 'Le dandy,' says Baudelaire, 'doit aspirer à être sublime sans interruption. Il doit vivre et dormir devant un miroir.' That, you are tempted to believe, is Mr. Meredith's theory of expression. 'Ce qu'il y a dans le mauvais goût,' is elsewhere the opinion of the same unamiable artist in paradox, 'c'est le plaisir aristocratique de déplaire.' Is that, you ask yourself, the reason why Mr. Meredith is so contemptuous of the general public?—why he will stoop to no sort of concession nor permit himself a mite of patience with the herd whose intellect is content with such poor fodder as Scott and Dickens and Dumas? Be it as it may, the effect is the same. Our author is bent upon being 'uninterruptedly sublime'; and we must take him as he wills and as we find him. He loses of course; and we suffer. But none the less do we cherish his society, and none the less are we interested in his processes, and enchanted (when we are clever enough) by his results. He lacks felicity, I have said; but he has charm as well as power, and, once his rule is accepted, there is

no way to shake him off. The position is that of the antique tyrant in a commonwealth once republican and free. You resent the domination, but you enjoy it too, and with or against your will you admire the author of your slavery.

Rhoda Fleming

Rhoda Fleming is one of the least known of the novels, and in a sense it is one of the most disagreeable. To the general it has always been caviare, and caviare it is likely to remain; for the general is before all things respectable, and no such savage and scathing attack upon the superstitions of respectability as *Rhoda Fleming* has been written. And besides, the emotions developed are too tragic, the personages too elementary in kind and too powerful in degree, the effects too poignant and too sorrowful. In these days people read to be amused. They care for no passion that is not decent in itself and whose expression is not restrained. It irks them to grapple with problems capable of none save a tragic solution. And when Mr. Meredith goes digging in a very bad temper with things in general into the deeper strata, the primitive deposits, of human nature, the public is the reverse of profoundly interested in the outcome of his exploration and the results of his labour. But for them whose eye is for real literature and such literary essentials as character largely seen and largely presented and as passion deeply felt and poignantly expressed there is such a feast in *Rhoda Fleming* as no other English novelist alive has spread. The book, it is true, is full of failures. There is, for instance, the old bank

porter Anthony, who is such a failure as only a great novelist may perpetrate and survive ; who suggests (with some other of Mr. Meredith's creations) a close, deliberate, and completely unsuccessful imitation of Dickens : a writer with whom Mr. Meredith is not averse from entering into competition, and who, so manifest on these occasions is his superiority, may almost be described as the other's evil genius. Again, there is Algernon the fool, of whom his author is so bitterly contemptuous that he is never once permitted to live and move and have any sort of being whatever, and who, though he bears a principal part in the intrigue, like the Blifil of *Tom Jones* is so constantly illuminated by the lightnings of the ironical mode of presentation, as always to seem unreal in himself and seriously to imperil the reality of the story. And, lastly, there are the chivalrous Percy Waring and the inscrutable Mrs. Lovell, two gentle ghosts whose proper place is the shadow-land of the American novel. But when all these are removed (and for the judicious reader their removal is far from difficult) a treasure of reality remains. What an intensity of life it is that hurries and throbs and burns through the veins of the two sisters—Dahlia the victim, Rhoda the executioner! Where else in English fiction is such a 'human oak log' as their father, the Kentish yeoman William Fleming? And where in English fiction is such a problem presented as that in the evolution of which these three—with a following so well selected and achieved as Robert Armstrong and Jonathan Eccles and the evil ruffian Sedgett, a type of the bumpkin gone wrong, and Master

Gammon, that type of the bumpkin old and obstinate, a sort of human saurian—are dashed together, and ground against each other till the weakest and best of the three is broken to pieces? Mr. Meredith may and does fail conspicuously to interest you in Anthony Hackbut and Algernon Blancove and Percy Waring; but he knows every fibre of the rest, and he makes your knowledge as intimate and comprehensive as his own. With these he is never at fault and never out of touch. They have the unity of effect, the vigorous simplicity, of life that belong to great creative art; and at their highest stress of emotion, the culmination of their passion, they appeal to and affect you with a force and a directness that suggest the highest achievement of Webster. Of course this sounds excessive. The expression of human feeling in the coil of a tragic situation is not a characteristic of modern fiction. It is thought to be not consistent with the theory and practice of realism; and the average novelist is afraid of it, the average reader is only affected by it when he goes to look for it in poetry. But the book is there to show that such praise is deserved; and they who doubt it have only to read the chapters called respectively 'When the Night is darkest,' and 'Dahlia's Frenzy,' to be convinced and doubt no longer. It has been objected to the climax of *Rhoda Fleming* that it is unnecessarily inhumane, and that Dahlia dead were better art than Dahlia living and incapable of love and joy. But the book, as I have said, is a merciless impeachment of respectability; and as the spectacle of a ruined and broken life is infinitely more discomforting than that of a

noble death, I take it that Mr. Meredith was right to prefer his present ending to the alternative, inasmuch as the painfulness of that impression he wished to produce and the potency of that moral he chose to draw are immensely heightened and strengthened thereby.

The Tragic Comedians.

OPINIONS differ, and there are those, I believe, to whom Alvan and Clotilde von Rüdiger—'acrobats of the affections' they have been called—are pleasant companions, and the story of those feats in the gymnastics of sentimentalism in which they lived to shine is the prettiest reading imaginable. But others not so fortunate or, to be plain, more honestly obtuse persist in finding that story tedious, and the bewildering appearances it deals with not human beings—not of the stock of Rose Jocelyn and Sir Everard Romfrey, of Dahlia Fleming and Lucy Feverel and Richmond Roy—but creatures of gossamer and rainbow, phantasms of spiritual romance, abstractions of remote, dispiriting points in sexual philosophy.

The Egoist.

JUST as Molière in the figures of Alceste and Tartuffe has summarised and embodied all that we need to know of indignant honesty and the false fervour of sanctimonious animalism, so in the person of Sir Willoughby Patterne has Mr. Meredith succeeded in expressing the qualities of egoism as the egoist appears in his relations with women and in his conception and exercise of the passion of love.

Between the means of the two men there is not, nor can be, any sort of comparison. Molière is brief, exquisite, lucid: classic in his union of ease and strength, of purity and sufficiency, of austerity and charm. In *The Egoist* Mr. Meredith is even more artificial and affected than his wont: he bristles with allusions, he teems with hints and side-hits and false alarms, he glitters with phrases, he riots in intellectual points and philosophical fancies; and though his style does nowhere else become him so well, his cleverness is yet so reckless and indomitable as to be almost as fatiguing here as everywhere. But in their matter the great Frenchman and he have not much to envy each other. Sir Willoughby Patterne is a 'document on humanity' of the highest value; and to him that would know of egoism and the egoist the study of Sir Willoughby is indispensable. There is something in him of us all. He is a compendium of the Personal in man; and if in him the abstract Egoist have not taken on his final shape and become classic and typical, it is not that Mr. Meredith has forgotten anything in his composition but rather that there are certain defects of form, certain structural faults and weaknesses, which prevent you from accepting as conclusive the aspect of the mass of him. But the Molière of the future (if the future be that fortunate) has but to pick and choose with discretion here, to find the stuff of a companion figure to Arnolphe and Alceste and Célimène.

GEORGE MEREDITH

In Metre.

His verse has all the faults and only some of the merits of his prose. Thus he will rhyme you off a ballad, and to break the secret of that ballad you have to take to yourself a dark lantern and a case of jemmies. I like him best in *The Nuptials of Attila*. If he always wrote as here, and were always as here sustained in inspiration, rapid of march, nervous of phrase, apt of metaphor, and moving in effect, he would be delightful to the general, and that without sacrificing on the vile and filthy altar of popularity. Here he is successfully himself, and what more is there to say? You clap for Harlequin, and you kneel to Apollo. Mr. Meredith doubles the parts, and is irresistible in both. Such fire, such vision, such energy on the one hand and on the other such agility and athletic grace are not often found in combination.

The Fashion of Art.

This is the merit and distinction of art: to be more real than reality, to be not nature but nature's essence. It is the artist's function not to copy but to synthesise: to eliminate from that gross confusion of actuality which is his raw material whatever is accidental, idle, irrelevant, and select for perpetuation that only which is appropriate and immortal. Always artistic, Mr. Meredith's work is often great art.

BYRON

Byron and the World.

Two obvious reasons why Byron has long been a prophet more honoured abroad than at home are his life and his work. He is the most romantic figure in the literature of the century, and his romance is of that splendid and daring cast which the people of Britain—'an aristocracy materialised and null, a middle class purblind and hideous, a lower class crude and brutal'—prefers to regard with suspicion and disfavour. He is the type of them that prove in defiance of precept that the safest path is not always midway, and that the golden rule is sometimes unspeakably worthless: who set what seems a horrible example, create an apparently shameful precedent, and yet contrive to approve themselves an honour to their country and the race. To be a good Briton a man must trade profitably, marry respectably, live cleanly, avoid excess, revere the established order, and wear his heart in his breeches pocket or anywhere but on his sleeve. Byron did none of these things, though he was a public character, and ought for the example's sake to have done them all, and done them ostentatiously. He lived hard, and drank hard, and played hard. He was flippant in speech and eccentric in attire. He thought little of the sanctity of the conjugal tie, and

said so ; and he married but to divide from his wife —who was an incarnation of the national virtue of respectability—under circumstances too mysterious not to be discreditable. He was hooted into exile, and so far from reforming he did even worse than he had done before. After bewildering Venice with his wickedness and consorting with atheists like Shelley and conspirators like young Gamba, he went away on a sort of wild-goose chase to Greece, and died there with every circumstance of publicity. Also his work was every whit as abominable in the eyes of his countrymen as his life. It is said that the theory and practice of British art are subject to the influence of the British schoolgirl, and that he is unworthy the name of artist whose achievement is of a kind to call a blush to the cheek of youth. Byron was contemptuous of youth, and did not hesitate to write—in *Beppo* and in *Cain*, in *Manfred* and *Don Juan* and the *Vision*—exactly as he pleased. In three words, he made himself offensively conspicuous, and from being infinitely popular became utterly contemptible. Too long had people listened to the scream of this eagle in wonder and in perturbation, and the moment he disappeared they grew ashamed of their emotion and angry with its cause, and began to hearken to other and more melodious voices—to Shelley and Keats, to Wordsworth and Coleridge and the 'faultless and fervent melodies of Tennyson.' In course of time Byron was forgotten, or only remembered with disdain ; and when Thackeray, the representative Briton, the artist Philistine, the foe of all that is excessive or abnormal or rebellious, took it upon himself to flout

the author of *Don Juan* openly and to lift up his heavy hand against the fops and fanatics who had affected the master's humours, he did so amid general applause. Meanwhile, however, the genius and the personality of Byron had come to be vital influences all the world over, and his voice had been recognised as the most human and the least insular raised on English ground since Shakespeare's. In Russia he had created Pushkin and Lermòntoff; in Germany he had awakened Heine, inspired Schumann, and been saluted as an equal by the poet of *Faust* himself; in Spain he had had a share in moulding the noisy and unequal talent of Espronceda; in Italy he had helped to develop and to shape the melancholy and daring genius of Leopardi; and in France he had been one of the presiding forces of a great æsthetic revolution. To the men of 1830 he was a special and peculiar hero. Hugo turned in his wake to Spain and Italy and the East for inspiration. Musset, as Mr. Swinburne has said—too bitterly and strongly said—became in a fashion a Kaled to his Lara, 'his female page or attendant dwarf.' He was in some sort the grandsire of the Buridan and the Antony of Dumas. Berlioz went to him for the material for his *Harold en Italie*, his *Corsaire* overture, and his *Épisode*. Delacroix painted the *Barque de Don Juan* from him, with the *Massacre de Scio*, the *Marino Faliero*, the *Combat du Giaour et du Pacha*, and many a notable picture more. Is it at all surprising that M. Taine should have found heart to say that alone among modern poets Byron 'atteint à la cime'? or that Mazzini should have reproached us with our

unaccountable neglect of him and with our scandalous forgetfulness of the immense work done by him in giving a 'European *rôle* . . . to English literature' and in awakening all over the Continent so much 'appreciation and sympathy for England'?

Byron and Wordsworth.

He had his share in the work of making Matthew Arnold possible, but he is the antipodes of those men of culture and contemplation—those artists pensive and curious and sedately self-contained—whom Arnold best loved and of whom the nearest to hand is Wordsworth. Byron and Wordsworth are like the Lucifer and the Michael of the *Vision of Judgment*. Byron's was the genius of revolt, as Wordsworth's was the genius of dignified and useful submission; Byron preached the dogma of private revolution, Wordsworth the dogma of private apotheosis; Byron's theory of life was one of liberty and self-sacrifice, Wordsworth's one of self-restraint and self-improvement; Byron's practice was dictated by a vigorous and voluptuous egoism, Wordsworth's by a benign and lofty selfishness; Byron was the 'passionate and dauntless soldier of a forlorn hope,' Wordsworth a kind of inspired clergyman. Both were influences for good, and both are likely to be influences for good for some time to come. Which is the better and stronger is a question that can hardly be determined now. It is certain that Byron's star has waned, and that Wordsworth's has waxed; but it is also certain that there are moments in life when the *Ode to Venice* is almost as refreshing and as precious as the ode on the *Intimations*, and when the epic mockery of *Don*

Juan is to the full as beneficial as the chaste philosophy of *The Excursion* and the *Ode to Duty*. Arnold was of course with Michael heart and soul, and was only interested in our Lucifer. He approached his subject in a spirit of undue deprecation. He thought it necessary to cite Scherer's opinion that Byron is but a coxcomb and a rhetorician: partly, it would appear, for the pleasure of seeming to agree with it in a kind of way and partly to have the satisfaction of distinguishing and of showing it to be a mistake. Then, he could not quote Goethe without apologising for the warmth of that consummate artist's expressions and explaining some of them away. Again, he was pitiful or disdainful, or both, of Scott's estimate; and he did not care to discuss the sentiment which made that great and good man think *Cain* and the *Giaour* fit stuff for family reading on a Sunday after prayers, though as Mr. Ruskin has pointed out, in one of the wisest and subtlest bits of criticism I know, the sentiment is both natural and beautiful, and should assist us not a little in the task of judging Byron and of knowing him for what he was. That Arnold should institute a comparison between Leopardi and Byron was probably inevitable: Leopardi had culture and the philosophic mind, which Byron had not; he is incapable of influencing the general heart, as Byron can; he is a critics' poet, which Byron can never be; he was always an artist, which Byron was not; and—it were Arnoldian to take the comparison seriously. Byron was not interested in words and phrases but in the greater truths of destiny and emotion. His empire is over the

imagination and the passions. His personality was many-sided enough to make his egoism representative. And as mankind is wont to feel first and to think afterwards, a single one of his heart-cries may prove to the world of greater value as a moral agency than all the intellectual reflections that Leopardi contrived to utter. After examining this and that opinion and doubting over and deprecating them all, Arnold touched firm ground at last in a dictum of Mr. Swinburne's, the most pertinent and profound since those of Goethe, to the effect that in Byron there is a 'splendid and imperishable excellence which covers all his offences and outweighs all his defects: the excellence of sincerity and strength.' With this 'noble praise' our critic agreed so vigorously that it became the keynote of the latter part of his summing up, and in the end you found him declaring Byron the equal of Wordsworth, and asserting of this 'glorious pair' that 'when the year 1900 is turned, and the nation comes to recount her poetic glories in the century which has just then ended, the first names with her will be these.' The prophecy is as little like to commend itself to the pious votary of Keats as to the ardent Shelleyite: there are familiars of the Tennysonian Muse, the Sibyl of *Rizpah* and *Vastness* and *Lucretius* and *The Voyage*, to whom it must seem impertinent beyond the prophet's wont; there are —(but *they* scarce count)—who grub (as for truffles) for meanings in Browning. But it was not uttered to please, and in truth it has enough of plausibility to infuriate whatever poet-sects there be. Especially the Wordsworthians.

HUGO

His Critics.

To many Hugo was of the race of Æschylus and Shakespeare, a world-poet in the sense that Dante was, an artist supreme alike in genius and in accomplishment. To others he was but a great master of words and cadences, with a gift of lyric utterance and inspiration rarely surpassed but with a personality so vigorous and excessive as to reduce its literary expression—in epic, drama, fiction, satire and ode and song—to the level of work essentially subjective, in sentiment as in form, in intention as in effect. The debate is one in which the only possible arbiter is Time; and to Time the final judgment may be committed. What is certain is that there is one point on which both dissidents and devout—the heretics who deny with Matthew Arnold and the orthodox who worship with Mr. Swinburne and M. de Banville—are absolutely agreed. Plainly Hugo was the greatest man of letters of his day. It has been given to few or none to live a life so full of effort and achievement, so rich in honour and success and fame. Born almost with the century, he was a writer at fifteen, and at his death he was writing still; so that the record of his career embraces a period of more than sixty

years. There is hardly a department of art to a foremost place in which he did not prove his right. From first to last, from the time of Chateaubriand to the time of Zola, he was a leader of men ; and with his departure from the scene the undivided sovereignty of literature became a thing of the past like Alexander's empire.

In 1826, in a second set of *Odes et Ballades*, he announced his vocation in unmistakeable terms. He was a lyric poet and the captain of a new emprise. His genius was too large and energetic to move at ease in the narrow garment prescribed as the poet's wear by the dullards and the pedants who had followed Boileau. He began to repeat the rhythms of Ronsard and the Pleiad ; to deal in the richest rhymes and in words and verses tricked with new-spangled ore ; to be curious in cadences, careless of stereotyped rules, prodigal of invention and experiment, defiant of much long recognised as good sense, contemptuous of much till then applauded as good taste. In a word, he was the Hugo of the hundred volumes we know : an artist, that is, endowed with a technical imagination of the highest quality, the very genius of style, and a sense of the plastic quality of words unequalled, perhaps, since Milton. The time was ripe for him : within France and without it was big with revolution. In verse there were the examples of André Chénier and Lamartine ; in prose the work of Rousseau and Diderot, of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and Chateaubriand ; in war and politics the tre-

Some Causes a Effects.

mendous tradition of Napoleon. Goethe and Schiller had recreated romance and established the foundations of a new palace of art; their theory and practice had been popularised in the novels of Walter Scott; and in the life and work of Byron the race had such an example of revolt, such an incitement to liberty and change, such a passionate and persuasive argument against authority and convention, as had never before been felt in art. Hugo like all great artists was essentially a child of his age: 'Rebellion lay in his way, and he found it.' In 1827 he published his *Cromwell*, and came forth as a rebel confessed and unashamed. It is an unapproachable production, tedious in the closet, impossible upon the stage; and to compare it to such work as that which at some and twenty Keats had given to the world—*Hyperion*, for instance, or the *Eve of St. Agnes*—is to glory in the name of Briton. But it had its value then, and as an historical document it has its value now. The preface was at once a profession of faith and a proclamation of war. It is crude, it is limited, it is mistaken, in places it is even absurd. But from the moment of it appearance the old order was practically closed. It prepared the way for *Albertus* and for *Antony*, for *Rolla* and the *Tour de Nesle*; and it was also the '*fiat lux*' in deference to which the world has accepted with more or less of resignation the partial eclipse of art and morals effected in *Salammbô* and *l'Education sentimentale* and the Egyptian darkness achieved in work like *la Terre* and *une Vie* and *les Blasphèmes*. In its ringing periods, its plangent antitheses and æsthetic epigrams, it preluded and

vindicated the excesses of whatsoever manifestations of romanticism mankind and the arts have since been called upon to consider and endure: from the humours of Petrus Borel to the experiments of Claude Monet and the 'discoveries' of Richard Wagner.

Environment.

It is too often forgotten that from the first Hugo was associated with men of pretensions and capacities not greatly inferior to his own, and that in no direction was victory the work of his single arm. In painting the initiative had been taken years before the publication of the *Cromwell* manifesto by Géricault with the famous *Radeau de la Méduse*, and by Delacroix with the *Dante et Virgile* (1822) and the *Massacre de Scio* (1823). In music Berlioz, at this time a student in the Conservatoire, was fighting hard against Cherubini and the bewigged ones for liberty of expression and leave to admire and imitate the audacities of Weber and Beethoven, and three years hence, in the year of *Hernani*, was to set his mark upon the art with the *Symphonie fantastique*. On the stage as early as 1824 Frédérick and Firmin had realised in the personages of Macaire and Bertrand the grotesque ideal, the combination of humour and terror, of which the character of Cromwell was put forward as the earliest expression, and had realised it so completely that their work has taken rank with the greater and the more lasting results of the movement. In the literature of drama the old order was ruined and the victory won on all essential points

not in 1830 with *Hernani* but in 1829 with *Henri Trois et sa Cour*, the first of the innumerable successes of Alexandre Dumas, who determined at a single stroke the fundamental qualities of structure and form and material, and left his chief no question to solve save that of diction and style. Musset's earlier poems date from 1828, the year of *les Orientales*, Gautier's from 1830; and these are also the dates of Balzac's *Chouans* and *la Peau de Chagrin*. Moreover, among the intimates of the young leader were men like Sainte-Beuve, who was two years his junior, and the brothers Deschamps; whose influence was doubtless exerted more frequently to encourage than to repress. Towards the end we lost sight of all this, and saw in Victor Hugo not so much the most glorious survival of romanticism as romanticism itself, the movement in flesh and blood, the revolution in general 'summed up and closed' in a single figure. This agreeable view of things was Hugo's own. From the beginning he took himself with perfect seriousness, and his followers, however enthusiastic in admiration, had excellent warrant from above. 'Il *trône* trop,' says Berlioz of him somewhere; and M. Maxime du Camp has given an edifying account of the means he was wont to use to make himself beloved and honoured by the youth who came to him for counsel and encouragement. How perfectly he succeeded in this the political part of his function is matter of history. Gautier's first visit to him was that of a devotee to his divinity; and years afterwards the good poet confessed that not even in pitch darkness and in a cellar fathoms under ground

should he dare to whisper to himself that a verse of the Master's was bad. So far as devotion went there were innumerable Gautiers. Sainte-Beuve was not long a pillar of orthodoxy; Dumas was always conscious of his own pre-eminence in certain qualities, and made light of Hugo's dramas as candidly as he made much of the style in which they are written; and when some creature of unwisdom saluted Delacroix as 'the Hugo of painting,' the artist of the *Marino Faliero* and the *Barque de Don Juan* resented the compliment with bitterness. But these were exceptions. The youth of 1830 were Hugolaters almost to a man.

Equipment and Achievement.

THEIR enthusiasm was not all irrational. Hugo's supremacy was not that he was the greatest artist in essentials, for here Dumas was immeasurably his superior. It was not that he knew best the heart of man, or had apprehended most thoroughly the conditions of life; for Balzac so far surpassed him in these sciences that comparison was impossible. It was not that he sang the truest song or uttered the deepest word, for Musset is the poet of *Rolla* and the *Nuits* in verse and the poet of *Fantasio* and *Lorenzaccio* and *Carmosine* in prose. But the epoch Hugo represented was interested in the manner rather than the substance of things: the revolution at whose front he had been set and whose most shining figure he became was largely a revolution of externals. With an immense amount of enthusiasm there was, as Sainte-Beuve confessed, an incredible amount of ignorance—so that *Crom-*

well was supposed to be historical; and with a passionate delight in form there co-existed a strangely imperfect understanding of material—so that *Hernani* was supposed to be Shakespearean. To this ignorance and to this imperfect understanding Hugo owed a certain part of his authority; the other and greater he got from his unrivalled mastery of style, from his extraordinary skill as an artist in words. To the opposing faction his innovations were horrible: his verse was poison, his example an outrage, his prosody a violation of all laws, his rhymes and tropes and metaphors so many offences against Heaven and the Muse. But to the ardent youngsters who fought beneath his banner it was his to give a something priceless and unique—a something glorious to France and never before exampled in her literature. For the distichs of Boileau—'strong, heavy, useful, like pairs of tongs,'—he found them alexandrines with the leap and sparkle of sea waves and the sound of clashing swords and the colours of sunset and the dawn. They were tired of whitewash and cold distemper; and he gave them hangings of brocade and tapestries of price and tissues stiff with gold and glowing with new dyes. He flung them handfuls of jewels where his rivals scattered handfuls of marbles. And they paid him for his gifts with an intemperance of worship, a fury of belief, a rapture of admiration, such as no other man has known. The substance was striking, was peculiar, was novel and full of charm; but the manner was all this and something besides—was magnificent, was intoxicating, was irresistible; and Victor Hugo by virtue

of it became the foremost man of literary France. The great battle of *Hernani* was merely a battle of style. From Dumas, the artist of *Henry Trois* and *Antony*, the language of Boileau was safe enough; and his triumph, all-important and significant as it was, seemed neither fatal nor abominable. It was another matter with *Hernani*. Its success meant ruin for the Academy and destruction for the idiom of Delille and M. de Jouy; and the classicists mustered in force, and did their utmost to stay the coming wrath and arrest the impending doom. They failed of course; for they fought with a vague yet limited apprehension of the question at issue, they had nothing to give in place of the thing they hated. And Victor Hugo was made captain of the victorious host, while the men who might have been in a certain sort his rivals took service as lieutenants, and accepted his ensign for their own.

ALL his life long he was addicted to attitude; all his life long he was a *poseur* of the purest water. He seems to have considered the affectation of superiority an essential quality in art; for just as the cock in Mrs. Poyser's apothegm believed that the sun got up to hear him crow, so to the poet of the *Légende* and the *Contemplations* it must have seemed as if the human race existed but to consider the use he made of his 'oracular tongue.' How tremendous his utterances sometimes were—informed with what majesty yet with what brilliance—is one of the things that every schoolboy knows. One no more needs to insist upon the merits of his

His Diary

best manner than to emphasise the faults of his worst. At his best as at his worst, however, he was always an artist in his way. His speech was nothing if not artificial—in the good sense of the word sometimes and sometimes in the bad. Simplicity (it seemed) was impossible to him. In the quest of expression, the cult of antithesis, the pursuit of effect, he sacrificed directness and plainness with not less consistency than complacency. In that tissue of 'apocalyptic epigram' which to him was style there was no room for truth and soberness. His Patmos was a place of mirrors, and before them he draped himself in his phrases like Frédérick in the mantle of Ruy Blas. That this grandiosity was unnatural and unreal was proved by the publication of *Choses vues*. When Hugo wrote for himself he wrote almost as simply and straightforwardly as Dumas. The effect is disconcerting. You rub your eyes in amazement. It is evidently Hugo. But Hugo plain, sober, direct? Hugo without rhetoric? Hugo declining antithesis and content to be no gaudier than his neighbours? Hugo expressing himself in the fearless old fashion of pre-romantic ages? A page of commonplace from Mr. Meredith, a book for boarding-schools by M. Zola, were not more startling.

For and Against.

SOME primary qualities of his genius are pretty evenly balanced by some primary faults. Thus, for breadth and brilliance of conception, for energy and sweep of imagination, for the power of dealing as a master with the greater forces of nature, he is

unsurpassed among modern men. But the conception is too often found to be empty as well as spacious ; the imagination is too often tainted with insincerity ; in his dramas of the elements there are too many such falsehoods as abound in his dramas of the emotions. Again, he is sometimes grand and often grandiose ; but he has a trick of affecting the grandiose and the grand which is constant and intolerable. He had the genius of style in such fulness as entitles him to rank with the great artists in words of all time. His sense of verbal colour and verbal music is beyond criticism ; his rhythmical capacity is something prodigious. He so revived and renewed the language of France that in his hands it became an instrument not unworthy to compete with Shakespeare's English and the German of Goethe and Heine ; and in the structure and capacity of all manner of French metrical forms he effected such a change that he may fairly be said to have received the orchestra of Rameau from his predecessors and to have bequeathed his heirs the orchestra of Berlioz. On the other hand, in much of his later work his mannerisms in prose and in verse are discomfortably glaring ; the outcome of his unsurpassable literary faculty is often no more than a parade or triumph of the vocables ; there were times when his brain appears to have become a mere machine for the production of antitheses and sterile conceits. What is perhaps more damning than all, his work is saturate in his own remarkable personality, and is objective only here and there. His dramas are but five-act lyrics, his epics the romance of an egoist. his history is confession, his

criticism the opinions of Victor Hugo. Even his lyrics, the 'fine flower' of his genius, the loveliest expression of the language, have not escaped reproach as a 'Psalter of Subjectivity.' Even his essays in prose romance—a form of art on which he has stamped his image and superscription in a manner all his own, the work by which he is best known to humanity at large—are vitiated by the same defect. For one that believes in Bishop Myriel as Bishop Myriel there are a hundred who see in him only a pose of Victor Hugo; it is the same with Ursel and Javert, with Cimourdain and Lantenac and Josiane; the very *pieuvre* of *les Travailleurs* is a Hugolater at heart. It is a proof of his commanding personality, that in spite of these objections he held in enchantment the hearts and minds of men for over sixty years. He is almost a literature in himself; and if it be true that his work is as wholly lacking in the radiant sanity of Shakespeare's as it is in the exquisite good sense of Voltaire's, it is also true that he left the world far richer than he found it.

What Lives of Him.

To select an anthology from his work were surely the pleasantest of tasks. One richer in grace and passion and sweetness might be chosen out of Musset; one wrought more truly of the finer stuff of humanity as well as more bountifully touched with tact and dignity and temper from the work of Tennyson. But the Hugo selection would combine the rarest technical merits with a set of interests all its own. It would give, for instance,

the *Stella* of the *Châtiments* and the *Pauvres Gens* of the *Légende*. On one page would be found that admirable *Souvenir de la Nuit du Quatre*, which is at once the impeachment and the condemnation of the Coup d'État ; and on another the little epic of *Eviradnus*, with its immortal serenade, a culmination of youth and romance and love :

'Si tu veux, faisons un rêve.
Montons sur deux palefrois.
Tu m'emmènes, je t'enlève.
L'oiseau chante dans les bois.

. . . . .

Allons-nous-en par l'Autriche !
Nous aurons l'aube à nos fronts.
Je serai grand et toi riche,
Puisque nous nous aimerons.

. . . . . .

Tu seras dame et moi comte.
Viens, mon cœur s'épanouit.
Viens, nous conterons ce conte
Aux étoiles de la nuit.'

Here, a summary of all the interests of romanticism, would be the complaint of Gastibelza :

'Un jour d'été, où tout était lumière,
Vie et douceur,
Elle s'en vint jouer dans la rivière
Avec sa sœur.
Je vis le pied de sa jeune compagne
Et son genou . . .—
Le vent qui vient à travers la montagne
Me rendra fou ! '—

here the adorable *Vieille Chanson du Jeune Temps* ;

'Rose, droite sur ses hanches,
Leva son beau bras tremblant
Pour prendre une mûre aux branches :
Je ne vis pas son bras blanc.

Une eau courait, fraîche et creuse,
Sur les mousses de velours ;
Et la nature amoureuse
Dormait dans les grands bois sourds.'—

and here, not unworthy to be remembered with *Proud Maisie*, that wonderful harmony of legend and superstition and the facts and dreams of common life, the death-song of Fantine:

'Nous achèterons de bien belles choses,
En nous promenant le long de faubourgs.

La Vierge-Marie auprès de mon poële
Est venue hier, en manteau brodé,
Et m'a dit : Voici, caché sous mon voile,
Le petit qu'un jour tu m'as demandé.
Courez à la ville ; ayez de la toile,
Achetez du fil, achetez un dé.

Les bluets sont bleus, les roses sont roses,
Les bluets sont bleus, j'aime mes amours.'

And from this masterpiece of simple and direct emotion, which to me has always seemed the high-water mark of Hugo's lyrical achievement as well as the most human of his utterances, one might pass on to masterpieces of another inspiration: to the luxurious and charming graces of *Sara la Baigneuse* ; to the superb crescendo and diminuendo of *les Djinns* ; to 'Si vous n'avez rien à me dire,' that daintiest of songlets ; to the ringing rhymes and gallant spirit of the *Pas d'Armes du Roi Jean*:

'Sus, ma bête,
De façon
Que je fête
Ce grison ! •
Je te baille
Pour ripaille
Plus de paille,
Plus de son,
Qu'un gros frère,
Gai, friand,
Ne peut faire,
Mendiant
Par les places
Où tu passes,
De grimaces
En priant ! '—

to the melodious tenderness of 'Si tu voulais, Madelaine'; to the gay music of the *Stances à Jeanne*:

'Je ne me mets pas en peine
Du clocher ni du beffroi.
Je ne sais rien de la reine,
Et je ne sais rien du roi.'—

to the admirable song of the wind of the sea:

'Quels sont les bruits sourds ?
Écoutez vers l'onde
Cette voix profonde
Qui pleure toujours,
Et qui toujours gronde,

Quoiqu'un son plus claire
Parfois l'interrompe . . .
Le vent de la mer
Souffle dans sa trompe.'—

to the *Romance Mauresque*, to the barbaric fury of *les Reîtres*, to the magnificent rodomontade of the *Romancero du Cid*. 'J'en passe, et des meilleurs,' as Ruy Gomez observes of his ancestors. Here at any rate are jewels enough to furnish forth a casket that should be one of the richest of its kind? The worst is, they are most of them not necessaries but luxuries. It is impossible to conceive of life without Shakespeare and Burns, with-

out *Paradise Lost* and the *Intimations* ode and the immortal pageant of the *Canterbury Tales*; but (the technical question apart) to imagine it wanting Hugo's lyrics is easy enough. The largesse of which he was so prodigal has but an arbitrary and conventional value. Like the magician's money much has changed, almost in the act of distribution, into withered leaves; and such of it as seems minted of good metal is not for general circulation.

HEINE

HEINE had a light hand with the branding-iron, and marked his subjects not more neatly than indelibly. And really he alone were capable of dealing adequate vengeance upon his translators. His verse has only violent lovers or violent foes; indifference is impossible. Once read as it deserves, it becomes one of the loveliest of our spiritual acquisitions. We hate to see it tampered with; we are on thorns as the translator approaches, and we resent his operations as an individual hurt, a personal affront. What business has he to be trampling among our borders and crushing our flowers with his stupid hobnails? Why cannot he carry his zeal for topsy-turvy horticulture elsewhere? He comes and lays a brutal hand on our pet growths, snips off their graces, shapes them anew according to his own ridiculous ideal, paints and varnishes them with a villainous compound of his contrivance, and then bids us admire the effect and thank him for its production! Is any name too hard for such a creature? and could any vengeance be too deadly? If he walked into your garden and amused himself so with your cabbages, you could put him in prison. But into your poets he can

The Villainy Translati

stump his way at will, and upon them he can do his pleasure. And he does it. How many men have brutalised the elegance, the grace, the winning urbanity of Horace! By how many coarse and stupid fingers has Catullus been smudged and fumbled and mauled! To turn *Faust* into English (in the original metres) is a fashionable occupation; there are more perversions of the *Commedia* than one cares to recall; there is scarce a great or even a good work of the human mind but has been thus bedevilled and deformed. *Don Quixote*, *le Père Goriot*, *The Frogs*, the *Decameron*—the trail of the translator is over them all. Messrs. Payne and Lang and Swinburne have turned poor Villon into a citizen of Bedford Park, FitzGerald and Florence Macarthy have Englished Calderon, Messrs. Pope, Gladstone and others have done their worst with Homer. If Rossetti had not succeeded with *la Vita Nuova*, if FitzGerald had not ennobled Omar, if Mr. Lang had not bettered upon Banville and Gérard de Nerval, the word 'translator' would be odious as the word 'occupy.' And 'occupy' on the authority of Mrs. Dorothy Tearsheet is an odious word indeed.

The Proof of It.

THE fact is, the translator too often forgets the difference between his subject and himself; he is too often a common graveyard mason that would play the sculptor. And it is not nearly enough for him to be a decent craftsman. To give an adequate idea of an artist's work a man must be himself an artist of equal force and versatility with his original.

The typical translator makes clever enough verses, but Heine's accomplishment is remote from him as Heine's genius. He perverts his author as rhyme and rhythm will. No charge of verbal inaccuracy need therefore be made, for we do not expect a literal fidelity in our workman. Let him convey the spirit of his original, and that, so far as meaning goes, is enough. But we do expect of him a something that shall recall his author's form, his author's personality, his author's charm of diction and of style; and here it is that such an interpreter as Sir Theodore Martin (say) fails with such assurance and ill-fortune. The movement of Heine's rhythms, simple as they seem, is not spontaneous; it is an effect of art: the poet laboured at his cadences as at his meanings. Artificial he is, but he has the wonderful quality of never seeming artificial. His verses dance and sway like the nixies he loved. Their every motion seems informed with the perfect suavity and spontaneity of pure nature. They tinkle down the air like sunset bells, they float like clouds, they wave like flowers, they twitter like skylarks, they have in them something of the swiftness and the certainty of exquisite physical sensations. In such a transcript as Sir Theodore's all this is lost: Heine becomes a mere prentice-metrist; he sets the teeth on edge as surely as Browning himself; the verse that recalled a dance of naiads suggests a springless cart on a Highland road; Terpsichore is made to prance a hobnailed breakdown. The poem disappears, and in its place you have an indifferent copy of verses. You look at the pages from afar, and your impression is that they are not unlike

Heine; you look into them, and Heine has vanished. The man is gone, and only an awkward, angular, clumsily articulated, entirely preposterous lay-figure remains to show that the translator has been by.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

His Ver

In every page of Arnold the poet there is something to return upon and to admire. There are faults, and these of a kind this present age is ill-disposed to condone. The rhymes are sometimes poor; the movement of the verse is sometimes uncertain and sometimes slow; the rhythms are obviously simple always; now and then the intention and effect are cold even to austerity, are bald to uncomeliness. But then, how many of the rarer qualities of art and inspiration are represented here, and here alone in modern work! There is little of that delight in material for material's sake which is held to be essential to the composition of a great artist; there is none of that rapture of sound and motion and none of that efflorescence of expression which are deemed inseparable from the endowment of the true singer. For any of those excesses is technical accomplishment, those ecstasies in the use of words, those effects of sound which are so rich and strange as to impress the hearer with something of their author's own emotion of creation—for any, indeed, of the characteristic attributes of modern poetry—you shall turn to him in vain. In matters of form this poet is no romantic but a classic to the marrow.

He adores his Shakespeare, but he will none of his Shakespeare's fashions. For him the essentials are dignity of thought and sentiment and distinction of manner and utterance. It is no aim of his to talk for talking's sake, to express what is but half felt and half understood, to embody vague emotions and nebulous fancies in language no amount of richness can redeem from the reproach of being nebulous and vague. In his scheme of art there is no place for excess, however magnificent and Shakespearean—for exuberance, however overpowering and Hugoesque. Human and interesting in themselves, the ideas apparelled in his verse are completely apprehended ; natural in themselves, the experiences he pictures are intimately felt and thoroughly perceived. They have been resolved into their elements by the operation of an almost Sophoclean faculty of selection, and the effect of their presentation is akin to that of a gallery of Greek marbles.

His Failure. OTHER poets say anything—say everything that is in them. Browning lived to realise the myth of the Inexhaustible Bottle ; Mr. William Morris is nothing if not fluent and copious ; Mr. Swinburne has a facility that would seem impossible if it were not a living fact ; even Tennyson is sometimes prodigal of unimportant details, of touches insignificant and superfluous, of words for words' sake, of cadences that have no reason of being save themselves. Matthew Arnold alone says only what is worth saying. In other words, he selects : from his

matter whatever is impertinent is eliminated and only what is vital is permitted to remain. Sometimes he goes a little astray, and his application of the principle on which Sophocles and Homer wrought results in failure. But in these instances it will always be found, I think, that the effect is due not to the principle nor the poet's application of it but to the poet himself, who has exceeded his commission, and attempted more than is in him to accomplish. The case is rare with Arnold, one of whose qualities—and by no means the least Hellenic of them—was a fine consciousness of his limitations. But that he failed, and failed considerably, it were idle to deny. There is *Merope* to bear witness to the fact; and of *Merope* what is there to say? Evidently it is an imitation Greek play: an essay, that is, in a form which ceased long since to have any active life, so that the attempt to revive it—to create a soul under the ribs of very musty death—is a blunder alike in sentiment and in art. As evidently Arnold is no dramatist. Empedocles, the Strayed Reveller, even the Forsaken Merman, all these are expressions of purely personal feeling—are so many metamorphoses of Arnold. In *Merope* there is no such basis of reality. The poet was never on a level with his argument. He knew little or nothing of his characters—of Merope or Æpytus or Polyphontes, of Arcas or Laias or even the Messenger; at every step the ground is seen shifting under his feet; he is comparatively void of matter, and his application of the famous principle is labour lost. He is winnowing the wind; he is washing not gold but water.

His Triumphs.

It is other-guess work with *Empedocles*, the *Dejaneira* fragment, *Sohrab and Rustum*, the *Philomela*, his better work in general, above all with the unique and unapproached *Balder Dead*. To me this last stands alone in modern art for simple majesty of conception, sober directness and potency of expression, sustained dignity of thought and sentiment and style, the complete presentation of whatever is essential, the stern avoidance of whatever is merely decorative: indeed for every Homeric quality save rhythmical vitality and rapidity of movement. Here, for example, is something of that choice yet ample suggestiveness —the only true realism because the only perfect ideal of realisation—for which the similitudes of the 'Ionian father of his race' are pre-eminently distinguished:—

'And as a spray of honeysuckle flowers
Brushes across a tirèd traveller's face
Who shuffles through the deep dew-moistened dust
On a May evening, in the darken'd lanes,
And starts him, that he thinks a ghost went by—
So Hoder brushed by Hermod's side.'

Here is Homer's direct and moving because most human and comprehensive touch in narrative:—

'But from the hill of Lidskialf Odin rose,
The throne, from which his eye surveys the world;
And mounted Sleipner, and in darkness rode
To Asgard. And the stars came out in heaven,
High over Asgard, to light home the king.
But fiercely Odin gallop'd, moved in heart;
And swift to Asgard, to the gate, he came.
And terribly the hoofs of Sleipner rang
Along the flinty floor of Asgard streets,

And the Gods trembled on their golden beds
Hearing the wrathful Father coming home—
For dread, for like a whirlwind Odin came.
And to Valhalla's gate he rode, and left
Sleipner; and Sleipner went to his own stall:
And in Valhalla Odin laid him down.'

And here—to have done with evidence of what is known to every one—here is the Homeric manner, large and majestic and impersonal, of recording speech:—

'Bethink ye, Gods, is there no other way?—
Speak, were not this a way, a way for Gods?
If I, if Odin, clad in radiant arms,
Mounted on Sleipner, with the warrior Thor
Drawn in his car beside me, and my sons,
All the strong brood of Heaven, to swell my train,
Should make irruption into Hela's realm,
And set the fields of gloom ablaze with light,
And bring in triumph Balder back to Heaven?'

One has but to contrast such living work as this with the 'mouldering realm' of *Merope* to feel the difference with a sense of pain;

'For doleful are the ghosts, the troops of dead,
Whom Hela with austere control presides';

while this in its plain, heroic completeness is touched with a stately life that is a presage of immortality. It is evident, indeed, that Arnold wrote *Balder Dead* in his most fortunate hour, and that *Merope* is his one serious mistake in literature. For a genius thus peculiar and introspective drama—the presentation of character through action—is impossible; to a method thus reticent and severe drama—the expression of emotion in action—is improper.

'Not here, O Apollo!' It is written that none shall bind his brows with the twin laurels of epos and drama. Shakespeare did not, nor could Homer; and how should Matthew Arnold?

His Prose.

He has opinions and the courage of them; he has assurance and he has charm; he writes with an engaging clearness. It is very possible to disagree with him; but it is difficult indeed to resist his many graces of manner, and decline to be entertained and even interested by the variety and quality of his matter. He was described as 'the most un-English of Britons,' the most cosmopolitan of islanders; and you feel as you read him that in truth his mind was French. He took pattern by Goethe, and was impressed by Leopardi; he was judiciously classic, but his romanticism was neither hidebound nor inhuman; he apprehended Heine and Marcus Aurelius, Spinoza and Sainte-Beuve, Joubert and Maurice de Guérin, Wordsworth and Pascal, Rachel and Sarah Bernhardt, Burke and Arthur Clough, Eliza Cook and Homer; he was an authority on education, poetry, civilisation, the *Song of Roland*, the love-letters of Keats, the Genius of Bottles, the significance of *eutrapelos* and *eutrapelia*. In fact, we have every reason to be proud of him. For the present is a noisy and affected age; it is given overmuch to clamorous devotion and extravagant repudiation; there is an element of swagger in all its words and ways; it has a distressing and immoral turn for publicity. Matthew Arnold's function was to protest against

its fashions by his own intellectual practice, and now and then to take it to task and to call it to order. He was not particularly original, but he had in an eminent degree the formative capacity, the genius of shaping and developing, which is a chief quality of the French mind and which is not so common among us English as our kindest critics would have us believe. He would take a handful of golden sentences—things wisely thought and finely said by persons having authority—and spin them into an exquisite prelection; so that his work with all the finish of art retains a something of the freshness of those elemental truths on which it was his humour to dilate. He was, that is to say, an artist in ethics as in speech, in culture as in ambition. 'Il est donné,' says Sainte-Beuve, 'de nos jours, à un bien petit nombre, même parmi les plus délicats et ceux qui les apprécient le mieux, de recueillir, d'ordonner sa vie selon ses admirations et selon ses goûts, avec suite, avec noblesse.' That is true enough; but Arnold was one of the few, and might 'se vanter d'être resté fidèle à soi-même, à son premier et à son plus beau passé.' He was always a man of culture in the good sense of the word; he had many interests in life and art, and his interests were sound and liberal; he was a good critic of both morals and measures, both of society and of literature, because he was commonly at the pains of understanding his matter before he began to speak about it. It is therefore not surprising that the part he played was one of considerable importance or that his influence was healthy in the main. He was neither prophet nor pedagogue but a critic pure and simple. Too

well read to be violent, too nice in his discernment to be led astray beyond recovery in any quest after strange gods, he told the age its faults and suggested such remedies as the study of great men's work had suggested to him. If his effect was little that was not his fault. He returned to the charge with imperturbable good temper, and repeated his remarks —which are often exasperating in effect—with a mixture of mischievousness and charm, of superciliousness and sagacity, and a serene dexterity of phrase, unique in modern letters.

HOMER AND THEOCRITUS

I THINK that of all recent books the two that have pleased me best and longest are those delightful renderings into English prose of the Greek of Homer and Theocritus, which we owe, the one to Messrs. Henry Butcher and Andrew Lang and the other to Mr. Lang's unaided genius. To read this *Odyssey* of theirs is to have a breath of the clear, serene airs that blew through the antique Hellas; to catch a glimpse of the large, new morning light that bathes the seas and highlands of the young heroic world. In a space of shining and fragrant clarity you have a vision of marble columns and stately cities, of men august in simple-heartedness and strength and women comely and simple and superb as goddesses; and with a music of leaves and winds and waters, of plunging ships and clanging armours, of girls at song and kindly gods discoursing, the sunny-eyed heroic age is revealed in all its nobleness, in all its majesty, its candour, and its charm. The air is yet plangent with echoes of the leaguer of Troy, and Odysseus the ready-at-need goes forth upon his wanderings: into the cave of Polypheme, into the land of giants, into the very regions of the dead: to hear among the olive trees

The Odyssey.

the voice of Circe, the sweet witch, singing her magic song as she fares to and fro before her golden loom ; to rest and pine in the islet of Calypso, the kind sea-goddess ; to meet with Nausicaa, loveliest of mortal maids ; to reach his Ithaca, and do battle with the Wooers, and age in peace and honour by the side of the wise Penelope. The day is yet afar when, as he sailed out to the sunset and the mysterious west,

> Sol con un legno, e con quella compagna
> Picciola, dalla qual non fue deserto,

the great wind rushed upon him from the new-discovered land, and so ended his journeyings for ever ; and all with him is energy and tact and valour and resource, as becomes the captain of an indomitable human soul. His society is like old d'Artagnan's: it invigorates, renews, inspires. I had rather lack the friendship of the good Alonso Quijada himself than the brave example of these two.

The Idylls. With certain differences it is the same with our Theocritus. From him, too, the mind is borne back to a 'happier age of gold,' when the world was younger than now, and men were not so weary nor so jaded nor so highly civilised as they choose to think themselves. Shepherds still piped, and maidens still listened to their piping. The old gods had not been discrowned and banished ; and to fishers drawing their nets the coasts yet kept a something of the trace of amorous Polypheme, the

rocks were peopled with memories of his plaint to Galatea. Inland, among the dim and thymy woods, bee-haunted and populous with dreams of dryad and oread, there were rumours of Pan ; and dwellers under thatch—the goatherd mending his sandals, the hind carving his new staff, the girls who busked them for the vintaging—were conscious, as the wind went by among the beeches and the pines, and brought with it the sounds of a lonely and mysterious night, that hard by them in the starry darkness the divine Huntress was abroad, and about the base of Ætna she and her forest maids drove the chase with horn and hound. In the cities ladies sang the psalm of Adonis brought back from 'the stream eternal of Acheron.' Under the mystic moon love-lorn damsels did their magic rites, and knit up spells of power to bring home the men they loved. Among the vines and under the grey olives songs were singing of Daphnis all day long. There were junketings and dancings and harvest-homes for ever toward ; the youths went by to the gymnasium, and the girls stood near to watch them as they went ; the cicalas sang, the air was fragrant with apples and musical with the sound of flutes and running water ; while the blue Sicilian sky laughed over all, and the soft Sicilian sea encircled the land and its lovers with a ring of sapphire and silver. To translate Theocritus, wrote Sainte-Beuve, is as if one sought to carry away in one's hand a patch of snow that has lain forgotten through the summer in a cranny of the rocks of Ætna :— 'On a fait trois pas à peine, que cette neige déjà est fondue. On est heureux s'il en reste assez du

moins pour donner le vif sentiment de la fraîcheur.' But Mr. Lang has so rendered into English the graces of the loveliest of Dorian singers that he has earned the thanks of every lover of true literature. Every one should read his book, for it will bring him face to face with a very prince among poets and with a very summer among centuries. That Theocritus was a rare and beautiful master there is even in this English transcript an abundance of evidence. Melancholy apart, he was the Watteau of the old Greek world—an exquisite artist, a rare poet, a true and kindly soul; and it is very good to be with him. We have changed it all of course, and are as fortunate as we can expect. But it is good to be with Theocritus, for he lets you live awhile in the happy age and under the happy heaven that were his. He gives you leave and opportunity to listen to the tuneful strife of Lacon and Comatas; to witness the duel in song between Corydon and Battus; to talk of Galatea pelting with apples the barking dog of her love-lorn Polypheme; under the whispering elms, to lie drinking with Eucritus and Lycidas by the altar of Demeter, 'while she stands smiling by, with sheaves and poppies in her hand.'

Old Lamps and New.

It is relief unspeakable to turn from the dust and din and chatter of modern life, with its growing trade in heroes and its poverty of men, its innumerable regrets and ambitions and desires, to this immense tranquillity, this candid and shining calm. They had no Irish Question then, you can reflect, nor was theology invented. Men were not afraid

of life nor ashamed of death; and you could be heroic without a dread of clever editors, and hospitable without fear of rogues, and dutiful for no hope of illuminated scrolls. Odysseus disguised as Irus is still Odysseus and august. How comes it that Mr. Gladstone in rags and singing ballads would be only fit for a police-station? that Lord Salisbury hawking cocoa-nuts would instantly suggest the purlieus of Petticoat Lane? Is the fault in ourselves? Can it be that we have deteriorated so much as that? Nerves, nerves, nerves! . . . These many centuries the world has had neuralgia; and what has come of it is that Robert Elsmere is an ideal, and the bleat of the sentimentalist might almost be mistaken for the voice of living England.

RABELAIS

His Essence. RABELAIS is not precisely a book for bachelors and maids—at times, indeed, is not a book for grown men. There are passages not to be read without a blush and a sensation of sickness: the young giant which is the Renaissance being filthy and gross as nature herself at her grossest and her most filthy. It is argued that this is all deliberate—is an effect of premeditation: that Rabelais had certain home-truths to deliver to his generation, and delivered them in such terms as kept him from the fagot and the rope by bedaubing him with the renown of a common buffoon. But the argument is none of the soundest in itself, and may fairly be set aside as a piece of desperate special pleading, the work of counsel at their wits' end for matter of defence. For Rabelais clean is not Rabelais at all. His grossness is an essential component in his mental fabric, an element in whose absence he would be not Rabelais but somebody else. It inspires his practice of art to the full as thoroughly as it informs his theory of language. He not only employs it wherever it might be useful: he goes out of his way to find it, he shovels it in on any and every occasion, he bemerds his readers and himself with a gusto that

assuredly is not a common characteristic of defensive operations. In him, indeed, the humour of Old France—the broad, rank, unsavoury *esprit gaulois*—found its heroic expression ; he made use of it because he must ; and we can no more eliminate it from his work than we can remove the quality of imagination from Shakespeare's or those of art and intellect from Ben Jonson's. Other men are as foul or fouler ; but in none is foulness so inbred and so ingrained, from none is it so inseparable. Few have had so much genius, and in none else has genius been so curiously featured.

His Secret.

It is significant enough that with all this against him he should have been from the first a great moral and literary influence and the delight of the wisest and soundest minds the world has seen. Shakespeare read him, and Jonson ; Montaigne, a greater than himself, is in some sort his descendant ; Swift, in Coleridge's enlightening phrase, is 'anima Rabelaesii habitans in sicco' ; to Sterne and Balzac and Molière he was a constant inspiration ; unto this day his work is studied and his meanings are sought with almost religious devoutness ; while his phrases have passed into the constitution of a dozen languages, and the great figures he scrawled across the face of the Renaissance have survived the movement that gave them being, and are ranked with the monuments of literature. Himself has given us the reasons in the prologue to the first book, where he tells of the likeness between Socrates and the boxes called Sileni, and discourses of the mani-

fest resemblance of his own work with Socrates. 'Opening this box,' which is Socrates, says he, 'you would have found within it a heavenly and inestimable drug, a more than human understanding, an admirable virtue, matchless learning, invincible courage, inimitable sobriety, certain contentment of mind, perfect assurance, and an incredible disregard of all that for which men cunningly do so much watch, run, sail, fight, travel, toil, and turmoil themselves.' In such wise must his book be opened, and the 'high conceptions' with which it is stuffed will presently be apparent. Nay, more: you are to do with it even as a dog with a marrow-bone. 'If you have seen him you might have remarked with what devotion and circumspection he watches and wards it; with what care he keeps it; how fervently he holds it; how prudently he gobbets it; with what affection he breaks it; with what diligence he sucks it.' And in the same way you 'by a sedulous lecture and frequent meditation' shall break the bone and suck out the marrow of these books. Since the advice was proffered, generation after generation of mighty wits have taken counsel with the Master, and his wisdom has through them been passed out into the practice of life, the evolution of society, the development of humanity. But the 'prince de toute sapience et de toute comédie' has not yet uttered his last word. He remains in the front of time as when he lived and wrote. The Abbey of Thelema and the education of Gargantua are still unrealised ideals; the Ringing Isle and the Isle of Papimany are in their essentials pretty much as he left them; Panurge, 'the pollarded man, the man

with every faculty except the reason,' has bettered no whit for the three centuries of improvement that have passed since he was flashed into being. We —even we—have much to learn from Master Alcofribas, and until we have learned it well enough to put it into practice his work remains half done and his book still one to study.

SHAKESPEARE

A Parallel. SHAKESPEARE and Rembrandt have in common the faculty of quickening speculation and compelling the minds of men to combat and discussion. About the English poet a literature of contention has been in process of accretion ever since he was discovered to be Shakespeare; and about the Dutch painter and etcher there has gradually accumulated a literature precisely analogous in character and for the most part of equal quality. In such an age as this, when the creative faculty of the world is mainly occupied with commentary and criticism, the reason should not be far to seek. Both were giants; both were original and individual in the highest sense of the words; both were leagues ahead of their contemporaries, not merely as regards the matter of their message but also in respect of the terms of its delivery; each, moreover—and here one comes upon a capital point of contact and resemblance—each was at times prodigiously inferior to himself. Shakespeare often writes so ill that you hesitate to believe he could ever write supremely well; or, if this way of putting it seem indecorous and abominable, he very often writes so well that you are loth to believe he could ever have written thus

extremely ill. There are passages in his work in which he reaches such heights of literary art as since his time no mortal has found accessible; and there are passages which few or none of us can read without a touch of that 'burning sense of shame' experienced in the presence of Mr. Poynter's *Diadumene* by the British Matron of *The Times* newspaper. Now, we have got to be so curious in ideals that we cannot away with the thought of imperfection. Our worship must have for its object something flawless, something utterly without spot or blemish. We can be satisfied with nothing less than an entire and perfect chrysolite; and we cannot taste our Shakespeare at his worst without experiencing not merely the burning sense of shame aforesaid but also a frenzy of longing to father his faults upon somebody else—Marlowe for instance, or Greene, or Fletcher—and a fury of proving that our divinity was absolutely incapable of them. That Shakespeare varied—that the matchless prose and the not particularly lordly verse of *As You Like It* are by the same hand; that the master to whom we owe our Hamlet is also responsible for Gertrude and King Claudius; that he who gave us the agony of Lear and the ruin of Othello did likewise perpetrate the scene of Hector's murder, in manner so poor and in spirit so cynical and vile—is beyond all belief and patience; and we have argued the point to such an extent that we are all of us in Gotham, and a mooncalf like the ascription of whatever is good in Shakespeare to Lord Bacon is no prodigy but a natural birth.

SIDNEY

His Expression of Life.

SIDNEY'S prime faults are affectation and conceit. His verses drip with fine love-honey; but it has been so clarified in metaphysics that much of its flavour and sweetness has escaped. Very often, too, the conceit embodied is preposterously poor. You have as it were a casket of finest gold elaborately wrought and embellished, and the gem within is a mere spangle of paste, a trumpery spikelet of crystal. No doubt there is a man's heart beating underneath; but so thick is the envelope of buckram and broidery and velvet through which it has to make itself audible, that its pulsations are sometimes hard to count, while to follow it throb by throb is impossible. And if this be true of that *Astrophel and Stella* series in which the poet outpours the melodious heyday of his youth—in which he strives to embody a passion as rich and full as ever stirred man's blood—what shall be said of the *Arcadia*? In that 'cold pastoral' he is trying to give breath and substance to as thin and frigid a fashion as has ever afflicted literature; and though he put a great deal of himself into the result, still every one has not the true critical insight, and to most of us, I think, those glimpses of the lofty

nature of the writer which make the thing written a thing of worth in the eyes of the few are merely invisible.

His Fame.

In thinking of Sidney, Ophelia's lament for Hamlet springs to the lips, and the heart reverts to that closing scene at Zutphen with a blessed sadness of admiration and regret. But frankly, is it not a fact that that fine last speech of his has more availed to secure him immortality than all his verse? They call him the English Bayard, and the Frenchman need not be displeasured by the comparison. But when you come to read his poetry you find that our Bayard had in him a strong dash of the pedant and a powerful leaven of the euphuist. Subtle, delicate, refined, with a keen and curious wit, a rare faculty of verse, a singular capacity of expression, an active but not always a true sense of form, he wrote for the few, and (it may be) the few will always love him. But his intellectual life, intense though it were, was lived among shadows and abstractions. He thought deeply, but he neither looked widely nor listened intently, and when all is said he remains no more than a brilliant amorist, too supersubtle for complete sincerity, whose fluency and sweetness have not improved with years.

TOURNEUR

His Style.

TOURNEUR was a fierce and bitter spirit. The words in which he unpacked his heart are vitalised with passion. He felt so keenly that oftentimes his phrase is the offspring of the emotion, so terse and vigorous and apt, so vivid and so potent and eager, it appears. As an instance of this avidity of wrath and scorn finding expression in words the fittest and most forcible, leaving the well-known scenes embalmed in Elia's praise, one might take the three or four single words in which Vindici (*The Revenger's Tragedy*), on as many several occasions, refers to the caresses of Spurio and the wanton Duchess. Each is of such amazing propriety, is so keenly discriminated, is so obviously the product of an imagination burning with rage and hate, that it strikes you like an affront: each is an incest taken in the fact and branded there and then. And this quality of verbal fitness, this power of so charging a phrase with energy and colour as to make it convey the emotion of the writer at the instant of inspiration, is perhaps the master quality of Tourneur's work.

TOURNEUR

THEY that would have it are many; they that achieve their desire are few. For in the minor artist the passionate—the elemental quality—is not often found: he being of his essence the ape or zany of his betters. Tourneur is not a great tragic. *The Atheist's Tragedy* is but grotesquely and extravagantly horrible; its personages are caricatures of passion; its comedy is inexpressibly sordid; its incidents are absurd when they are not simply abominable. But it is written in excellent dramatic verse and in a rich and brilliant diction, and it contains a number of pregnant epithets and ringing lines and violent phrases. And if you halve the blame and double the praise you will do something less than justice to that *Revenger's Tragedy* which is Tourneur's immortality. After all its companion is but a bastard of the loud, malignant, antic muse of Marston; the elegies are cold, elaborate, and very tedious; the *Transformed Metamorphosis* is better verse but harder reading than *Sordello* itself. But the *Revenger's Tragedy* has merit as a piece of art and therewith a rare interest as a window on the artist's mind. The effect is as of a volcanic landscape. An earthquake has passed, and among grisly shapes and blasted aspects here lurks and wanders the genius of ruin.

His Matter.

WALTON

The Compleat Angler.

I AM told that it is generally though silently admitted that, while Charles Cotton came of a school of fishermen renowned for accomplishment even now, his master and friend was not in the modern or Cottonian sense a fisherman at all. There was in him, indeed, a vast deal of the philosopher and the observer of nature and still more, perhaps, of the artist in English ; but there was also not a little of the cockney sportsman. He never rose above the low-lived worm and quill ; his prey was commonly those fish that are the scorn of the true angler, for he knew naught of trout and grayling, yet was deeply interested in such base creatures (and such poor eating) as chub and roach and dace ; and that part of his treatise which has still a certain authority—which may be said, indeed, to have placed the mystery of fly-fishing upon something of a scientific basis—was not his work but that of 'my most honoured friend, Charles Cotton, Esq.' Again, it is a characteristic of your true as opposed to your cockney sportsman that, unless constrained thereto by hunger, he does not eat what he has killed ; and it is a characteristic of Walton—who in this particular at least may stand for the authentic

type of the cockney sportsman as opposed to the true one—that he delighted not much less in dining or supping on his catch than he did in the act of making it: as witness some of the most charming parts in a book that from one end to the other is charm and little besides. Indeed the truth—(with reverence be it spoken)—appears to be that the *Compleat Angler* is an expression in the terms of art of the cit's enjoyment of the country.

Master Piscator.

WHAT Walton saw in angling was not that delight in the consciousness of accomplishment and intelligence which sends the true fisherman to the river and keeps him there, rejoicing in his strength, whether he kill or go empty away. It was rather the pretext—with a worm and perhaps a good supper at one end and a contemplative man at the other—of a day in the fields: where the skylark soared, and the earth smelled sweet, and the water flashed and tinkled as it ran, while hard-by some milkmaid, courteous yet innocent, sang as she plied her nimble fingers, and not very far away the casement of the inn-parlour gleamed comfortable promises of talk and food and rest. That was the Master Piscator who, being an excellent man of letters, went out to 'stretch his legs up Tottenham Hill' in search of fish, and came home with immortal copy; and that was the Izaak Walton who 'ventured to fill a part' of Cotton's 'margin' with remarks not upon his theory of how to angle for trout or grayling in a clear stream but 'by way of paraphrase for your reader's clearer understanding

both of the situation of your fishing house, and the pleasantness of that you dwell in.' He had the purest and the most innocent of minds, he was the master of a style as bright, as sweet, as refreshing and delightful, as fine clean homespun some time in lavender; he called himself an angler, and he believed in the description with a cordial simplicity whose appeal is more persuasive now than ever. But he was nothing if not the citizen afield—the cockney aweary of Bow Bells and rejoicing in 'the sights and sounds of the open landscape.' After all it is only your town-bred poet who knows anything of the country, or is moved to concern himself in anywise for the sensations and experiences it yields. Milton was born in Bread Street, and Herrick in Cheapside. Yet Milton gave us the *Allegro* and the *Penseroso* and the scenery in *Comus* and the epic; while as for Herrick—the *Night-Piece*, the lovely and immortal verses *To Meadows*, the fresh yet sumptuous and noble *To Corinna Going a-Maying*, these and a hundred more are there to answer for *him*. Here Walton is with Herrick and Milton and many 'dear sons of Memory' besides; and that is why he not only loved the country but was moved to make art of it as well.

HERRICK

His Muse.

In Herrick the air is fragrant with new-mown hay; there is a morning light upon all things; long shadows streak the grass, and on the eglantine swinging in the hedge the dew lies white and brilliant. Out of the happy distance comes a shrill and silvery sound of whetting scythes; and from the near brook-side rings the laughter of merry maids in circle to make cowslipballs and babble of their bachelors. As you walk you are conscious of 'the grace that morning meadows wear,' and mayhap you meet Amaryllis going home to the farm with an apronful of flowers. Rounded is she and buxom, cool-cheeked and vigorous and trim, smelling of rosemary and thyme, with an appetite for curds and cream and a tongue of 'cleanly wantonness.' For her singer has an eye in his head, and exquisite as are his fancies he dwells in no land of shadows. The more clearly he sees a thing the better he sings it; and provided that he do see it nothing is beneath the caress of his muse. The bays and rosemary that wreath the hall at Yule, the log itself, the Candlemas box, the hock-cart and the maypole, nay,

> 'See'st thou that cloud as silver clear,
> Plump, soft, and swelling everywhere?
> 'Tis Julia's bed!'—

And not only does he listen to the 'clecking' of his hen and know what it means: he knows too that the egg she has laid is long and white; so that ere he enclose it in his verse, you can see him take it in his hand, and look at it with a sort of boyish wonder and delight. This freshness of spirit, this charming and innocent curiosity, he carries into all he does. He can turn a sugared compliment with the best, but when Amaryllis passes him by he is yet so eager and unsophisticate that he can note that 'winning wave in the tempestuous petticoat' which has rippled to such good purpose through so many graceful speeches since. So that though Julia and Dianeme and Anthea have passed away, though Corinna herself is merely 'a fable, song, a fleeting shade,' he has saved enough of them from the ravin of Time for us to love and be grateful for eternally. Their gracious ghosts abide in a peculiar nook of the Elysium of Poesy. There 'in their habit as they lived' they dance in round, they fill their laps with flowers, they frolic and junket sweetly, they go for ever maying. Soft winds blow round them, and in their clear young voices they sing the verse of the rare artist who called them from the multitude and set them for ever where they are.

His Moral. AND Amaryllis herself will not, mayhap, be found so fair as those younglings of the year she bears with her in 'wicker ark' or 'lawny continent.' Herrick is pre-eminently the poet of flowers. He alone were capable of bringing back

'Le bouquet d'Ophélie
De la rive inconnue où les flots l'ont laissé.'

He knows and loves the dear blossoms all. He considers them with tender and shining eyes, he calls them his sweetest fancies and his fondest metaphors. Their idea is inseparable from that of his girls themselves, and it is by the means of the one set of mistresses that he is able so well to understand the other. The flowers are maids to him, and the maids are flowers. In an ecstasy of tender contemplation he turns from those to these, exampling Julia from the rose and pitying the hapless violets as though they were indeed not blooms insensitive but actually 'poor girls neglected.' His pages breathe their clean and innocent perfumes, and are beautiful with the chaste beauty of their colour, just as they carry with them something of the sweetness and simplicity of maidenhood itself. And from both he extracts the same pathetic little moral: both are lovely and both must die. And so, between his virgins that are for love indeed and those that sit silent and delicious in the 'flowery nunnery,' the old singer finds life so good a thing that he dreads to lose it, and not all his piety can remove the passionate regret with which he sees things hastening to their end.

His Piety.

THAT piety is equally removed from the erotic mysticism of Richard Crashaw and from the adoration, chastened and awful and pure, of Cowper. To find an analogue, you have to cross the borders of English into Spain. In his *Noble Numbers* Herrick shows himself to be a near kinsman of such men as Valdivielso, Ocaña, Lope de Ubeda; and

there are versicles of his that in their homely mixture of the sacred and the profane, in their reverent familiarity with things divine, their pious and simple gallantry, may well be likened to the graceful and charming romances and villancicos of these strangers. Their spirit is less Protestant than Catholic, and is hardly English at all, so that it is scarce to be wondered at if they have remained unpopular. But their sincerity and earnestness are as far beyond doubt as their grace of line and inimitable daintiness of surface.

LOCKER

His Qualities.

Mr. Locker's verse has charmed so wisely and so long that it has travelled the full circle of compliment and exhausted one part of the lexicon of eulogy. As you turn his pages you feel as freshly as ever the sweet, old-world elegance, the courtly amiability, the mannerly restraint, the measured and accomplished ease. True, they are colourless, and in these days we are deboshed with colour; but then they are so luminously limpid and serene, they are so sprightly and graceful and gay! In the gallantry they affect there is a something at once exquisite and paternal. If they pun, 'tis with an air: even thus might Chesterfield have stooped to folly. And then, how clean the English, how light yet vigorous the touch, the manner how elegant and how staid! There is wit in them, and that so genial and unassuming that as like as not it gets leave to beam on unperceived. There is humour too, but humour so polite as to look half-unconscious, so dandified that it leaves you in doubt as to whether you should laugh or only smile. And withal there is a vein of well-bred wisdom never breathed but to the delight no less than to the profit of the student. And for those of them that are

touched with passion, as in *The Unrealized Ideal* and that lovely odelet to Mabel's pearls, why, these are, I think, the best and the least approachable of all.

His Effect. For as English as she is, indeed, his muse is not to be touched off save in French. To think of her is to reflect that she is *délicate*, *spirituelle*, *semillante* —*une fine mouche*, *allez!* The *salon* has disappeared,—'Iran, indeed, is gone, and all his rose'; but she was born with the trick of it. You make your bow to her in her Sheraton chair, a buckle shoe engagingly discovered; and she rallies you with an incomparable ease, a delicate malice, in a dialect itself a distinction; and when she smiles it is behind or above a fan that points while it dissembles, that assists effect as delightfully as it veils intention. At times she is sensitive and tender, but her graver mood has no more of violence or mawkishness than has her gallant roguery (or enchanting archness) of viciousness or spite. Best of all, she is her poet's very own. You may woo her and pursue her as you will; but the end is invariable. 'I follow, follow still, but I shall never see her face.' Even as in her master's finest song.

BANVILLE

His Nature.

THE MUSE of M. de Banville was born not naked but in the most elaborate and sumptuous evening wear that ever muse put on. To him, indeed, there is no nature so natural as that depicted on the boards, no humanity half so human as the actor puts on with his paint. For him the flowers grow plucked and bound into nosegays; passion has no existence outside the Port-Saint-Martin; the universe is a place of rhymes and rhythms, the human heart a supplement to the dictionary. He delights in babbling of green fields, and Homer, and Shakespeare, and the Eumenides, and the '*rire énorme*' of the *Frogs* and the *Lysistrata*. But it is suspected that he loves these things rather as words than as facts, and that in his heart of hearts he is better pleased with Cassandra and Columbine than with Rosalind and Othello, with the studio Hellas of Gautier than with the living Greece of Sophocles. Heroic objects are all very well in their way of course: they suggest superb effects in verse, they are of incomparable merit considered as colours and jewels for well-turned sentences in prose. But their function is purely verbal: they are the raw material of the outward form of poesy, and they

come into being to glorify a climax, to adorn a refrain, to sparkle and sound in odelets and rondels and triolets, to twinkle and tinkle and chime all over the eight-and-twenty members of a fair ballade.

His Art. IT is natural enough that to a theory of art and life that can be thus whimsically described we should be indebted for some of the best writing of modern years. Our poet has very little sympathy with fact, whether heroic or the reverse, whether essential or accidental; but he is a rare artist in words and cadences. He writes of 'Pierrot, l'homme subtil,' and Columbine, and 'le beau Léandre,' and all the marionettes of that pleasant puppet-show which he mistakes for the world, with the rhetorical elegance and distinction, the verbal force and glow, the rhythmic beauty and propriety, of a rare poet; he models a group of flowers in wax as passionately and cunningly, and with as perfect an interest in the process and as lofty and august a faith in the result, as if he were carving the Venus of Milo, or scoring Beethoven's 'Fifth,' or producing *King Lear* or the *Ronde de Nuit*. He is profoundly artificial, but he is simple and even innocent in his artifice; so that he is often interesting and even affecting. He knows so well what should be done and so well how to do it that he not seldom succeeds in doing something that is actually and veritably art: something, that is, in which there is substance as well as form, in which the matter is equal with the manner, in which the imagination is human as well as æsthetic and the invention not merely verbal but

emotional and romantic also. The dramatic and poetic value of such achievements in style as *Florise* and *Diane au Bois* is open to question; but there can be no doubt that *Gringoire* is a play. There is an abundance of 'epical ennui' in *le Sang de la Coupe* and *les Stalactites*; but the 'Nous n'irons plus au bois' and the charming epigram in which the poet paints a processional frieze of Hellenic virgins are high-water marks of verse. But, indeed, if Pierrot and Columbine were all the race, and the footlights might only change places with the sun, then were M. de Banville by way of being a Shakespeare.

DOBSON

Method and Effect.

His style has distinction, elegance, urbanity, precision, an exquisite clarity. Of its kind it is as nearly as possible perfect. You think of Horace as you read ; and you think of those among our own eighteenth century poets to whom Horace was an inspiration and an example. The epithet is usually so just that it seems to have come into being with the noun it qualifies ; the metaphor is mostly so appropriate that it leaves you in doubt as to whether it suggested the poem or the poem suggested it ; the verb is never in excess of the idea it would convey ; the effect of it all is that 'something has here got itself uttered,' and for good. Could anything, for instance, be better, or less laboriously said, than this poet's remonstrance *To an Intrusive Butterfly*? The thing is instinct with delicate observation, so aptly and closely expressed as to seem natural and living as the facts observed.

'I watch you through the garden walks,
I watch you *float* between
The *avenues* of dahlia stalks,
And *flicker* on the green ;
You *hover* round the garden seat,
You *mount*. vou *waver*. . . .

Across the room *in loops of flight*
I watch you wayward go:

* * * *

Before the bust you *flaunt* and *flit*—

* * * *

You *pause*, you *poise*, you *circle up*
Among my old Japan.'

And all the rest of it. The theme is but the vagaries of a wandering insect; but how just and true is the literary instinct, how perfect the literary *savoir-faire*! The words I have italicised are the only words (it seems) in the language that are proper to the occasion; and yet how quietly they are produced, with what apparent unconsciousness they are set to do their work, how just and how sufficient is their effect! In writing of this sort there is a certain artistic good-breeding whose like is not common in these days. We have lost the secret of it: we are too eager to make the most of our little souls in art and too ignorant to do the best by them; too egoistic and 'individual,' too clever and skilful and well informed, to be content with the completeness of simplicity. Even the Laureate was once addicted to glitter for glitter's sake; and with him to keep them in countenance there are a thousand minor poets whose 'little life' is merely a giving way to the necessities of what is after all a condition of intellectual impotence but poorly redeemed by a habit of artistic swagger. The singer of Dorothy and Beau Brocade is of another race. He is 'the co-mate and brother in exile' of Matthew Arnold and the poet of *The Unknown*

Eros. Alone among modern English bards they stand upon that ancient way which is the best: attentive to the pleadings of the Classic Muse, heedful always to give such thoughts as they may breed no more than their due expression.

BERLIOZ

The Critic.

ONE of the very few great musicians who have been able to write their own language with vigour and perspicuity, Berlioz was for many years among the kings of the feuilleton, among the most accomplished journalists of the best epoch of the Parisian press. He had an abundance of wit and humour; his energy and spirit were inexhaustible; within certain limits he was a master of expression and style; in criticism as in music he was an artist to his finger-ends; and if he found writing hard work what he wrote is still uncommonly easy reading. He is one of the few—the very few—journalists the worth of whose achievement has been justified by collection and republication. Louis Veuillot has been weighed in this balance, and found wanting; and so has Janin, prince of critics. With Berlioz it is otherwise. If you are no musician he appeals to you as a student of life; if you are interested in life and music both he is irresistible. The *Mémoires* is one of the two or three essays in artistic biography which may claim equal honours with Benvenuto's story of himself and his own doings; the two volumes of correspondence rank with the most interesting epistolary matter of these

times; in the *Grotesques*, the *A Travers Chants*, the *Soirées de l'Orchestre* there is enough of fun and earnest, of fine criticism and diabolical humour, of wit and fancy and invention, to furnish forth a dozen ordinary critics, and leave a rich remainder when all 's done. These books have been popular for years; they are popular still; and the reason is not far to seek. Berlioz was not only a great musician and a brilliant writer; he was also a very interesting and original human being. His writings are one expression of an abnormal yet very natural individuality; and when he speaks you are sure of something worth hearing and remembering.

A Prototype.

APART from Cellini's ruffianism there are several points of contact between the two men. Berlioz made the roaring goldsmith the hero of an opera, and it is not doubtful that he was in complete sympathy with his subject. In the Frenchman there is a full measure of the waywardness of temper, the impatience of authority, the resolute and daring humour, the passion of worship for what is great in art and of contempt for what is little and bad, which entered so largely into the composition of the Florentine. There is not much to choose between the Berlioz of the *Debats*, the author of the *Grotesques de la Musique* and the *A Travers Chants*, and the Benvenuto who, as Il Lasca writes of him,

> 'Senza alcun ritegno o barbazzale
> Delle cose malfatte dicea male.'

Benvenuto enlarges upon the joys of drawing from the life and expatiates upon the greatness of Michelangelo in much the same spirit and with much the same fury of admiration with which Berlioz descants upon the rapture of conducting an orchestra and dilates upon the beauty of *Divinités du Styx* or the adagio of the so-called *Moonlight Sonata*. It is written of Benvenuto, in connection with Vasari's attack upon that cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore which himself was wont to call 'the marvel of beautiful things,' that if he had lived to see the result,

> 'Certo non capirebbe nelle pelle;
> *E saltando, e correndo, e fulminando,*
> S' andrebbe querelando,
> E per tutto gridando ad alta voce
> *Giorgin d'Arezzo meterebbe in croce,*
> Oggi universalmente
> Odiato della gente
> *Quasi publico ladro e assassino*';

and you are reminded irresistibly of Berlioz betrampling Lachnith and the ingenious Castil-Blaze and defending Beethoven against the destructive pedantry of Fétis. And, just as the *Vita* is invaluable as a personal record of artist-life in the Italy of the Renaissance, so are the *Mémoires* invaluable as a personal record of the works and ways of musicians in the Paris of the Romantic revival. Berlioz is revealed in them for one of the race of the giants. He is the musician of 1830, as Delacroix is the painter; and his work is as typical and as significant as the *Sardanapale* and the *Faust* lithographs.

His Theory of Autobiography.

To read the *Mémoires* is to feel that in writing them the great musician deliberately set himself to win the heart of posterity. He believed in himself, and he believed in his music; he divined that one day or another he would be legendary as well as immortal; and he took an infinite deal of pains to make certain that the ideal which was presently to represent him in men's minds should be an ideal of which he could thoroughly approve. It is fair to note that in this care for the good will and the good word of the future he was not by any means alone. The *romantiques*, indeed, were keen—from Napoleon downwards—to make the very best of themselves. The poet of the *Légende des Siècles*, for example, went early to work to arrange the story of his life and character at least as carefully as he composed the audiences of his *premières*; and he did it with so light a hand, and with such a sense of the importance of secrecy, that it is even now by no means so well and widely known as it should be that *Victor Hugo raconté par un Témoin de sa Vie* is the work of the hero's wife, and was not only inspired but may also have been revised and prepared for publication by the hero himself. Again, the dramatist of *Antony* and the novelist of *Bragelonne* was never so happy as when he was engaged upon the creation of what he hoped would be the historical Dumas; he made volume after volume of delightful reading out of his own impressions and adventures; he turned himself into copy with a frankness, a grace, a gusto, a persistency of egoism, which are merely enchanting. Berlioz, therefore, had good warrant for his work. It is

more to the point, perhaps, that he would have taken it if he had not had it. And I hold that he would have done well; for (in any case) a great man's notion of himself is, *ipso facto*, better and more agreeable and convincing, especially as he presents it, than the idea of his inferiors and admirers, especially as presented by them. Berlioz, it is true, was prodigal in these *Mémoires* of his of wit and fun and devilry, of fine humanity and noble art, of good things said and great things dreamed and done and suffered; but he was prodigal of invention and suppression as well, and the result, while considerably less veracious, is all the more fascinating, therefor. One feels that for one thing he was too complete an artist to be merely literal and exact; that for another he saw and felt things for himself, as Milton did before him—Milton in the mind's-eye of Milton the noblest of created things, and to Mr. Saintsbury almost as unpleasing a spectacle as the gifted but abject Racine; and for a third that from his own point of view he was right, and there is an end of it.

GEORGE ELIOT

The Ideal. It was thought that with George Eliot the Novel-with-a-Purpose had really come to be an adequate instrument for the regeneration of humanity. It was understood that Passion only survived to point a moral or provide the materials of an awful tale, while Duty, Kinship, Faith, were so far paramount as to govern Destiny and mould the world. A vague, decided flavour of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity was felt to pervade the moral universe, a chill but seemly halo of Golden Age was seen to play soberly about things in general. And it was with confidence anticipated that those perfect days were on the march when men and women would propose—(from the austerest motives)—by the aid of scientific terminology.

The Real. To the Sceptic—(an apostate, and an undoubted male)—another view was preferable. He held that George Eliot had carried what he called the 'Death's-Head Style' of art a trifle too far. He read her books in much the same spirit and to much the same purpose that he went to the gymnasium and diverted himself with parallel bars.

He detested her technology ; her sententiousness revolted while it amused him ; and when she put away her puppets and talked of them learnedly and with understanding—instead of letting them explain themselves, as several great novelists have been content to do—he recalled how Wisdom crieth out in the street and no man regardeth her, and perceived that in this case the fault was Wisdom's own. He accepted with the humility of ignorance, and something of the learner's gratitude, her woman generally, from Romola down to Mrs. Pullet. But his sense of sex was strong enough to make him deny the possibility in any stage of being of nearly all the governesses in revolt it pleased her to put forward as men ; for with very few exceptions he knew they were heroes of the divided skirt. To him Deronda was an incarnation of woman's rights ; Tito an 'improper female in breeches' ; Silas Marner a good, perplexed old maid, of the kind of whom it is said they have 'had a disappointment.' And Lydgate alone had aught of the true male principle about him.

Appreciations.

EPIGRAMS are at best half-truths that look like whole ones. Here is a handful about George Eliot. It has been said of her books—('on several occasions')—that 'it is doubtful whether they are novels disguised as treatises, or treatises disguised as novels' ; that, 'while less romantic than Euclid's Elements, they are on the whole a great deal less improving reading' ; and that 'they seem to have been dictated to a plain woman of genius by the

ghost of David Hume.' Herself, too, has been variously described: as 'An Apotheosis of Pupil-Teachery'; as 'George Sand *plus* Science and *minus* Sex'; as 'Pallas with prejudices and a corset'; as 'the fruit of a caprice of Apollo for the Differential Calculus.' The comparison of her admirable talent to 'not the imperial violin but the grand ducal violoncello' seems suggestive and is not unkind.

BORROW

THREE hundred years since Borrow would have been a gentleman adventurer: he would have dropped quietly down the river, and steered for the Spanish Main, bent upon making carbonadoes of your Don. But he came too late for that, and falling upon no sword and buckler age but one that was interested in Randal and Spring, he accepted that he found, and did his best to turn its conditions into literature. As he had that admirable instinct of making the best of things which marks the true adventurer, he was on the whole exceeding happy. There was no more use in sailing for Javan and Gadire; but at home there were highways in abundance, and what is your genuine tramp but a dry-land sailor. The Red Man is exhausted of everything but sordidness; but under that round-shouldered little tent at the bend of the road, beside that fire artistically built beneath that kettle of the comfortable odours, among those horses and colts at graze hard by, are men and women more mysterious and more alluring to the romantic mind than any Mingo or Comanch that ever traded a scalp. While as for your tricks of fence—your immortal *passado*, your *punto reverso*—if that be no longer the right

His Vocation.

use for a gentleman, have not Spring and Langan fought their great battle on Worcester racecourse? and has not Cribb of Gloucestershire—that renowned, heroic, irresistible Thomas—beaten Molyneux the negro artist in the presence of twenty thousand roaring Britons? and shall the practice of an art which has rejoiced in such a master as the illustrious Game Chicken, Hannibal of the Ring, be held degrading by an Englishman of sufficient inches who, albeit a Tory and a High Churchman, is at bottom as thoroughgoing a Republican as ever took the word of command from Colonel Cromwell? And if all this fail, if he get nobody to put on the gloves with him, if the tents of the Romany prove barren of interest, if the king's highway be vacant of adventure as Mayfair, he has still philology to fall back upon, he can still console himself with the study of strange tongues, he can still exult in a peculiar superiority by quoting the great Ab Gwylim where the baser sort of persons is content with Shakespeare. So that what with these and some kindred diversions—a little horse-whispering and ale-drinking, the damnation of Popery, the study of the Bible—he can manage not merely to live but to live so fully and richly as to be the envy of some and the amazement of all. That, as life goes and as the world wags, is given to few. Add to it the credit of having written as good a book about Spain as ever was written in any language, the happiness of having dreamed and partly lived that book ere it was written, the perfect joy of being roundly abused by everybody, and the consciousness of being different from everybody and of giving at

least as good as ever you got at several things the world is silly enough to hold in worship—as the Toryism of Sir Walter, or the niceness of Popery, or the pleasures of Society: and is it not plain that Borrow was a man uncommon fortunate, and that he enjoyed life as greatly as most men not savages who have possessed the fruition of this terrestrial sphere?

Ideals and Achievements.

He prepared his effects as studiously and almost as dexterously as Dumas himself. His instinct of the picturesque was rarely indeed at fault; he marshalled his personages and arranged his scene with something of that passion for effect which entered so largely into the theory of M. le Comte de Monte-Cristo. However closely disguised, himself is always the heroic figure, and he is ever busy in arranging discovery and triumph. To his forebears he is but an eccentric person, an amateur tinker, a slack-baked gipsy, an unlettered hack; to his audience he is his own, strong, indifferent self: presently the rest will recognise him and he will be disdainfully content. And recognise him they do. He throws off his disguise; there is a gape, a stare, a general conviction that Lavengro is the greatest man in the world; and then—as the manner of Lesage commands—the adventure ends, the stars resume their wonted courses, and the self-conscious Tinker-Quixote takes the road once more and passes on to other achievements: a mad preacher to succour, a priest to baffle, some tramp to pound in a jelly of humility, an applewoman to mystify, a

horse-chaunter to swindle, a pugilist to study and help and portray. But whatever it be, Lavengro emerges from the ordeal modestly, unobtrusively, quietly, most consciously magnificent. Circumstantial as Defoe, rich in combinations as Lesage, and with such an instinct of the picturesque, both personal and local, as none of these possessed, this strange wild man holds on his strange wild way, and leads you captive to the end. His dialogue is copious and appropriate: you feel that like Ben Jonson he is dictating rather than reporting, that he is less faithful and exact than imaginative and determined; but you are none the less pleased with it, and suspicious though you be that the voice is Lavengro's and the hands are the hands of some one else, you are glad to surrender to the illusion, and you regret when it is dispelled. Moreover, that all of it should be set down in racy, nervous, idiomatic English, with a kind of eloquence at once primitive and scholarly, precious but homely—the speech of an artist in sods and turfs—if at first it surprise and charm yet ends by seeming so natural and just that you go on to forget all about it and accept the whole thing as the genuine outcome of a man's experience which it purports to be. Add that it is all entirely unsexual; that there is none with so poor an intelligence of the heart as woman moves it; that the book does not exist in which the relations between boy and girl are more miserably misrepresented than in *Lavengro* and *The Romany Rye*; that that picaresque ideal of romance which, finding utterance in Hurtado de Mendoza, was presently to appeal to such artists as Cervantes,

to other conclusions. Acute, coarse, methodical, exhaustive, he has recognised the greatness of one still more exhaustive, methodical, coarse, and acute than himself. English critics fall foul of Balzac's women; but Taine falls foul of English critics, and with the authority of a Parisian by profession declares that the *Parisiennes* of the *Comédie* are everything they ought to be—the true daughters of their 'bon gros libertin de père.' And while Taine, exulting in his Marneffe and his Coralie, does solemnly and brilliantly show that he is right and everybody else is wrong, a later writer—English of course—can find no better parallel of Balzac than Browning, and knows nothing in art so like the Pauline of *la Peau de Chagrin* as the Sistine Madonna. It is curious, this clash of opinions; and it is plain that one or other party must be wrong. Which is it? 'Qui trompe-t-on ici?' Is Taine a better judge than Mr. Leslie Stephen or Mr. Henry James? Or are Messrs. James and Stephen better qualified to speak with authority than Taine. It may be that none but a Frenchman can thoroughly and intimately apprehend in its inmost a thing so essentially French as the *Comédie;* it is a fact that Frenchmen of all sorts and sizes have accepted the *Comédie* in its totality; and that is reason good enough for any commonplace Englishman who is lacking in the vanity of originality to accept it also.

The Fact.

Balzac's ambition was to be omnipotent. He would be Michelangelesque, and that by sheer force

of minuteness. He exaggerated scientifically, and made things gigantic by a microscopic fulness of detail. His Hulot was to remain the Antony of modern romance, losing the world for the love of woman, and content to lose it; his Marneffe, in whom is incarnated the instinct and the science of sexual corruption, is Hulot's Cleopatra, and only dies because 'elle va faire le bon Dieu'—as who should say 'to mash the Old Man'; Frenhœffer, Philippe Bridau, Vautrin, Marsay, Rastignac, Grandet, Balthazar Claës, Béatrix, Sarrazine, Lousteau, Esther, Lucien Chardon—the list is, I believe, some thousands strong! Also the argument is proved in advance: there is the *Comédie* itself—'the new edition fifty volumes long.' Bad or good, foul or fair, impossible or actual, a monstrous debauch of mind or a triumph of realisation, there is the *Comédie*. It is forty years since Balzac squared and laid the last stones of it; and it exists —if a little the worse for wear: the bulk is enormous —if the materials be in some sort worm-eaten and crumbling. Truly, he had 'incomparable power.' He was the least capable and the most self-conscious of artists; his observation was that of an inspired and very careful auctioneer: he was a visionary and a fanatic; he was gross, ignorant, morbid of mind, cruel in heart, vexed with a strain of Sadism that makes him on the whole corrupting and ignoble in effect. But he divined and invented prodigiously if he observed and recorded tediously, and his achievement remains a phantasmagoria of desperate suggestions and strange, affecting situations and potent and inordinate effects. He may be impos-

sible; but there is French literature and French society to show that he passed that way, and had 'incomparable power.' The phrase is Mr. Henry James's, and it is hard to talk of Balzac and refrain from it.

LABICHE

Teniers or Daumier ?

To the maker of Poirier and Fabrice, of Séraphine and Giboyer, of Olympe and the Marquis d'Auberive, there were analogies between the genius of Labiche and the genius of Teniers. 'C'est au premier abord,' says he, 'le même aspect de caricature ; c'est, en y regardant de plus près, la même finesse de tons, la même justesse d'expression, la même vivacité de mouvement.' For myself, I like to think of Labiche as in some sort akin to Honoré Daumier. Earnestness and accomplishment apart, he has much in common with that king of caricaturists. The lusty frankness, the jovial ingenuity, the keen sense of the ridiculous, the insatiable instinct of observation, of the draughtsman are a great part of the equipment of the playwright. Augier notes that truth is everywhere in Labiche's work, and Augier is right. He is before everything a dramatist: an artist, that is, whose function is to tell a story in action and by the mouths of its personages ; and whimsical and absurd as he loves to be, he is never either the one or the other at the expense of nature. He is often careless and futile: he will squander—(as in *Vingt-neuf Degrés à l'Ombre* and *l'Avare en Gants Jaunes*)—an idea that rightly belongs to the domain of pure comedy on

the presentation of a most uproarious farce. But he is never any falser to his vocation than this. Now and then, as in *Moi* and *le Voyage de M. Perrichon*, he is an excellent comic poet, dealing with comedy seriously as comedy should be dealt with, and incarnating a vice or an affectation in a certain character with impeccable justness and assurance. Now and then, as in *les Petits Oiseaux* and *les Vivacités du Capitaine Tic*, he is content to tell a charming story as pleasantly as possible. Sometimes, as in *Célimare le Bien-Aimé* (held by M. Sarcey to be the highwater mark of the modern *vaudeville*), *le Plus Heureux des Trois*, and *le Prix Martin*, he fights again from a humouristic point of view that triangular duel between the wife, the husband, and the lover which fills so large a place in the literature of France; and then he shows the reverse of the medal of adultery—with the husband at his ease, the seducer haunted by the ghosts of old sins, the erring wife the slave of her unsuspecting lord. Or again, he takes to turning the world upside down, and—as in the *Cagnotte*, the *Chapeau de Paille*, and the *Trente Millions*—to producing a scheme of morals and society that seems to have been dictated from an Olympus demoralised by champagne and lobster. But at his wildest he never forgets that men and women are themselves. His dialogue is always right and appropriate, however extravagant it be. His vivid and varied knowledge of life and character supplies him with touches enough of nature and truth to make the fortune of a dozen ordinary dramatists; and withal you feel as you read that he is writing, as Augier says of him,

to amuse himself merely, and that he could an if he would be solemn and didactic with all the impressiveness that a perfect acquaintance with men and things and an admirable dramatic aptitude can bestow. The fact that he is always in a good temper has done him some wrong in that it has led him to be to all appearances amusing only where he might well have posed as a severe and serious artist. But he is none the less true for having elected to be funny, and there is certainly more genuine human nature and human feeling in such drolleries as the *Chapeau de Paille* and *le Plus Heureux des Trois* than in all the serious dramas of Ponsard (say) and Hugo put together.

biche. PERHAPS the most characteristic and individual part of his work is that in which he has given his invention full swing, and allowed his humour to play its maddest pranks at will. *Moi* is an admirable comedy, and De la Porcheraie is almost hideously egoistic ; the *Voyage de M. Perrichon* is delightful reading, and Perrichon is as pompous an ass as I know ; but the *Chapeau de Paille*, the *Cagnotte*, the *Trente Millions*, the *Sensitive*, the *Deux Merles Blancs*, the *Doit-on le Dire*, and their compeers—with them it is other-guess work altogether. In these whimsical phantasmagorias men and women move and speak as at the bidding of destinies drunk with laughing-gas. Time and chance have gone demented, fate has turned comic poet, society has become its own parody, everybody is the irrepressible caricature of himself. You are in a topsy-turvy world, enveloped in an atmosphere instinct

with gaiety and folly, where burlesque is natural and only the extravagant is normal; where your Chimæra has grown frolic, your Nightmare is first Cousin to the Cheshire Cat, and your Sphinxes are all upon the spree; and where you have as little concern for what is real as you have in that hemisphere of the great globe of Molière—that has Scapin and Sganarelle for its breed-bates, and Pourceaugnac for its butt, and Pancrace and Marphurius for its scientific men, and Lélie and Agnès for its incarnations of love and beauty. That the creator of such a world as this should have aspired to the Academy's spare arm-chair—that one above all others but just vacated by the respectable M. de Sacy—was a fact that roused the *Revue des Deux Mondes* even to satire. But if the arm-chair brought honour with it, then no man better deserved the privilege than Eugène Labiche, for he had amused and kept awake the public for nearly forty years—for almost as long, that is, as the *Revue* had been sending it to sleep. There are times and seasons when a good laugh makes more for edification than whole folios of good counsel. 'I regarded him not,' quoth Sir John of one that would have moved him to sapience, 'and yet he talked wisely.' Now Sir John, whatever his opinion of the *Revue*, would never have said all that—the second part of it he might—of anything signed 'Eugène Labiche,' nor—so I love to believe—would his august creator either. For is not his work so full of quick, fiery, and delectable shapes as to be perpetual sherris? And when time and season fit, what more can the heart of man desire?

CHAMPFLEURY

The Man. CHAMPFLEURY—novelist, dramatist, archæologist, humourist, and literary historian—belonged to a later generation than that of Petrus Borel and Philothée O'Neddy; but he could remember the production of *les Burgraves*, and was able of his own personal knowledge to laugh at the melancholy speech of poor Célestin Nanteuil—the famous 'Il n'y a plus de jeunesse' of a man grown old and incredulous and apathetic before his time: the lament over a yesterday already a hundred years behind. He had lived in the Latin quarter; he had dined with Flicoteaux, and listened to the orchestras of Habeneck and Musard; he had heard the chimes at midnight with Baudelaire and Murger, hissed the tragedies of Ponsard, applauded Deburau and Rouvière, and seen the rise and fall of Courbet and Dupont. If he was not of the giants he was of their immediate successors, and he had seen them actually at work. He had hacked for Balzac, and read romantic prose at Victor Hugo's; he had lived so near the red waistcoat of Théophile Gautier as to dare to go up and down in Paris (under the inspiration of the artist of *la Femme qui taille la Soupe*) in 'un habit en bouracan

vert avec col à la Marat, un gilet de couleur bachique, et une culotte en drap d'un jaune assez malséant,' together with 'une triomphante cravate de soie jaune'—a vice of Baudelaire's inventing—and 'un feutre ras dans le goût de la coiffure de Camille Desmoulins.' And having seen for himself, he could judge for himself as well. From first to last he showed himself to be out of sympathy with the ambitions and effects of romanticism. He was born a humourist and an observer, and he became a 'realist' as soon as he began to write.

The Writer.

His work is an antipodes not only of *Hernani* and *Notre Dame* but of *Sarrazine* and *la Cousine Bette* and *Béatrix* as well. For the commonplace types and incidents, the everyday passions and fortunes, of the *Aventures de Mariette* and the *Mascarade de la Vie Parisienne* represent a reaction not alone against the sublimities and the extravagance of Hugo but against the heroic aggrandisement of things trivial of Balzac as well. True, they deal with kindred subjects, and they purport to be a record of life as it is and not of life as it ought to be. But the pupil's point of view is poles apart from the master's; his intention, his ambition, his inspiration, belong to another order of ideas. He contents himself with observing and noting and reflecting; with making prose prosaic and adding sobriety and plainness to a plain and sober story; with being merely curious and intelligent; with using experience not as an intoxicant but as a staple of diet; with considering fact not as the raw material of

inspiration but as inspiration itself. Between an artist of this sort—pedestrian, good-tempered, touched with malice, a little cynical—and the noble desperadoes of 1830 there could be little sympathy; and there seems no reason why the one should be the others' historian, and none why, if their historian he should be, his history should be other than partial and narrow—than at best an achievement in special pleading. But Champfleury's was a personality apart. His master quality was curiosity; he was interested in everything, and he was above all things interested in men and women; he had a liberal mind and no prejudices; he had the scientific spirit and the scientific intelligence, if he sometimes spoke with the voice of the humourist and in the terms of the artist in words; and his studies in romanticism are far better literature than his experiments in fiction.

LONGFELLOW

Sea Poets.

THE ocean as confidant, a Laertes that can neither avoid his Hamlets nor bid them hold their peace, is a modern invention. Byron and Shelley discovered it; Heine took it into his confidence, and told it the story of his loves; Wordsworth made it a moral influence; Browning loved it in his way, but his way was not often the poet's; to Matthew Arnold it was the voice of destiny, and its message was a message of despair; Hugo conferred with it as with an humble friend, and uttered such lofty things over it as are rarely heard upon the lips of man. And so with living lyrists each after his kind. Lord Tennyson listens and looks until it strikes him out an undying note of passion, or yearning, or regret—

> 'Sunset and evening star,
> And one clear call for me';

Mr. Swinburne maddens with the wind and the sounds and the scents of it, until there passes into his verse a something of its vastness and its vehemency, the rapture of its inspiration, the palpitating, many-twinkling miracle of its light; Mr. William Morris has been taken with the manner of its melancholy; while to Whitman it has been 'the

great Camerado' indeed, for it gave him that song of the brown bird bereft of his mate in whose absence the half of him had not been told to us.

Longfellow.

BUT to Longfellow alone was it given to see that stately galley which Count Arnaldos saw; his only to hear the steersman singing that wild and wondrous song which none that hears it can resist, and none that has heard it may forget. Then did he learn the old monster's secret—the word of his charm, the core of his mystery, the human note in his music, the quality of his influence upon the heart and the mind of man; and then did he win himself a place apart among sea poets. With the most of them it is a case of *Ego et rex meus*: It is I and the sea, and my egoism is as valiant and as vocal as the other's. But Longfellow is the spokesman of a confraternity; what thrills him to utterance is the spirit of that strange and beautiful freemasonry established as long ago as when the first sailor steered the first keel out into the unknown, irresistible water-world, and so established the foundations of the eternal brotherhood of man with ocean. To him the sea is a place of mariners and ships. In his verse the rigging creaks, the white sail fills and crackles, there are blown smells of pine and hemp and tar; you catch the home wind on your cheeks; and old shipmen, their eye-balls white in their bronzed faces, with silver rings and gaudy handkerchiefs, come in and tell you moving stories of the immemorial, incommunicable deep. He abides in a port; he goes down to the docks, and

loiters among the galiots and brigantines ; he hears the melancholy song of the chanty-men ; he sees the chips flying under the shipwright's adze ; he smells the pitch that smokes and bubbles in the caldron. And straightway he falls to singing his variations on the ballad of Count Arnaldos ; and the world listens, for its heart beats in his song.

TENNYSON

St. Agnes' Eve.

In Keats's *St. Agnes' Eve* nothing is white but the heroine. It is winter, and 'bitter chill'; the hare 'limps trembling through the frozen grass'; the owl is a-cold for all his feathers; the beadsman's fingers are numb, his breath is frosted; and at an instant of special and peculiar romance

> 'The frost-wind blows
> Like Love's alarum, pattering the sharp sleet
> Against the window-panes.'

But there is no snow. The picture is pure colour: it blushes with blood of queens and kings; it glows with 'splendid dyes,' like the 'tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings'—with 'rose bloom,' and 'warm gules,' and 'soft amethyst'; it is loud with music and luxurious with 'spiced dainties,' with 'lucent syrops tinct with cinnamon,' with 'manna and dates,' the fruitage of Fez and 'cedared Lebanon' and 'silken Samarcand.' Now, the Laureate's *St. Agnes' Eve* is an ecstasy of colourless perfection. The snows sparkle on the convent roof; the 'first snowdrop' vies with St. Agnes' virgin bosom; the moon shines an 'argent round' in the 'frosty skies'; and in a transport of purity the lady prays:

'Break up thy heavens, O Lord! and far,
Through all the starlight keen,
Draw me thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.'

It is all coldly, miraculously stainless: as somebody has said, 'la vraie *Symphonie en Blanc Majeur*.'

Indian Summer.

AND at four-score the poet of *St. Agnes' Eve* is still our greatest since the Wordsworth of certain sonnets and the two immortal odes: is still the one Englishman of whom it can be stated and believed that Elisha is not less than Elijah. His verse is far less smooth and less lustrous than in the well-filed times of *In Memoriam* and the Arthurian idylls. But it is also far more plangent and affecting; it shows a larger and more liberal mastery of form and therewith a finer, stronger, saner sentiment of material; in its display of breadth and freedom in union with particularity, of suggestiveness with precision, of swiftness of handling with completeness of effect, it reminds you of the later magic of Rembrandt and the looser and richer, the less artful-seeming but more ample and sumptuous, of the styles of Shakespeare. And the matter is worthy of the manner. Everywhere are greatness and a high imagination moving at ease in the gold armour of an heroic style. There are passages in *Demeter and Persephone* that will vie with the best in *Lucretius*; *Miriam* is worth a wilderness of *Aylmer's Fields*; *Owd Roä* is one of the best of the studies in dialect; in *Happy* there are stanzas that recall the passion of *Rizpah*; nothing in modern

English so thrills and vibrates with the prophetic inspiration, the fury of the seer, as *Vastness*; the verses *To Mary Boyle*—(in the same stanza as Musset's *Le mie Prigioni*)—are marked by such a natural grace of form and such a winning 'affectionateness' to coin a word of intention and accomplishment as Lord Tennyson has never surpassed nor very often equalled. In *Vastness* the insight into essentials, the command of primordial matter, the capacity of vital suggestion, are gloriously in evidence from the first line to the last. Here is no touch of ingenuity, no trace of 'originality,' no single sign of cleverness; the rhymes are merely inevitable—there is no visible transformation of metaphor in deference to their suggestions; nothing is antic, peculiar, superfluous; but here in epic unity and completeness, here is a sublimation of experience expressed by means of a sublimation of style. It is unique in English, and for all that one can see it is like to remain unique this good while yet. The impression you take is one of singular loftiness of purpose and a rare nobility of mind. Looking upon life and time and the spirit of man from the heights of his eighty years, it has been given to the Master Poet to behold much that is hid to them in the plain or on the slopes beneath him, and beholding it to frame and utter a message so lofty in style and in significance so potent that it sounds as of this world indeed but from the confines of experience, the farthest kingdoms of mortality.

His Mastership

It is to note, too, that the Laureate of to-day deals with language in a way that to the Tennyson of the beginning was—unhappily—impossible. In those early years he neither would nor could have been responsible for the magnificent and convincing rhythms of *Vastness*, the austere yet passionate shapeliness of *Happy*, the effects of vigour and variety realised in *Parnassus*. For in those early years he was rather Benvenuto than Michelangelo, he was more of a jeweller than a sculptor, the phrase was too much to him, the inspiration of the incorrect too little. All that is changed, and for the best. Most interesting is it to the artist to remark how impatient—(as the Milton of the *Agonistes* was)—of rhyme and how confident in rhythm is the whilome poet of *Oriana* and *The Lotus-Eaters* and *The Vision of Sin*; and how this impatience and this confidence are revealed not merely in a piece of mysticism naked yet unashamed as *The Gleam*—(whose movement with its constancy in double endings and avoidance of triplets is perhaps a little tame)—but also in what should have been a popular piece: the ode, to wit, *On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria*. In eld, indeed, the craftsman inclines to play with his material: he is conscious of mastery; he is in the full enjoyment of his own; he indulges in experiments which to him are as a crown of glory and to them that come after him—to the noodles that would walk in his ways without first preparing themselves by prayer and study and a life of abnegation—are only the devil in disguise. The Rembrandt of *The Syndics*, the Shakespeare of *The Tempest* and *Lear*—what are these but pits for the

feet of the Young Ass? and what else will be the Tennyson of *Vastness* and *The Gleam*? 'Lord,' quoth Dickens years ago in respect of the *Idylls* or of *Maud*, 'what a pleasure it is to come across a man that can *write*!' He also was an artist in words; and what he said then he would say now with greater emphasis and more assurance. From the first Lord Tennyson has been an exemplar; and now in these new utterances, his supremacy is completely revealed. There is no fear now that 'All will grow the flower, For all have got the seed'; for then it was a mannerism that people took and imitated, and now—! Now it is art; it is the greater Shakespeare, the consummate Rembrandt, the unique Velasquez; and they may rise to it that can.

GORDON HAKE

Aim and Equipment.

DR. HAKE is one of the most earnest and original of poets. He has taken nothing from his contemporaries, but has imagined a message for himself, and has chosen to deliver it in terms that are wholly his own. For him the accidents and trivialities of individualism, the transitory and changing facts that make up the external aspect of an age or a character, can hardly be said to exist. He only concerns himself with absolutes—the eternal elements of human life and the immutable tides of human destiny. It is of these that the stuff of his message is compacted; it is from these that its essence is distilled. His talk is not of Arthur and Guinevere, nor Chastelard and Atalanta, nor Paracelsus and Luria and Abt Vogler; of 'the drawing-room and the deanery' he has nothing to say; nothing of the tendencies of Strauss and Renan, nothing of the New Renaissance, nothing of Botticelli, nor the ballet, nor the text of Shakespeare, nor the joys of the book-hunter, nor the quaintness of Queen Anne, nor the morals of Helen of Troy. To these he prefers the mystery of death, the significance of life, the quality of human and divine love; the hopes and fears and the joys and sorrows that are the

perdurable stuff of existence, the inexhaustible and unchanging principles of activity in man. Now it is only to the few that reduced to their simplest expression the 'eternal verities' are engaging and impressive. To touch the many they must be conveyed in human terms ; they must be presented not as impersonal abstractions, not as matter for the higher intelligence and the higher emotions, but as living, breathing, individual facts, vivid with the circumstance of terrene life, quick with the thoughts and ambitions of the hour, full charged with familiar and neighbourly associations. All this with Dr. Hake is by no means inevitable. He loves to symbolise ; he does not always care that the symbol shall be appropriate and plain. He prefers to work in allegory and emblem ; but he does not always see that, however representative to himself, his emblems and his allegories may not be altogether representative to the world. His imagination is at once quaint and far-reaching—at once peculiar and ambitious ; and it is often guilty of what is recondite and remote. In his best work—in *Old Souls*, for instance, and *Old Morality*—the quaintness is merely decorative: the essentials are sound and human enough to be of lasting interest and to have a capacity of common application. Elsewhere his imagery is apt to become strange and unaffecting, his fancy to work in curious and desolate ways, his message to sound abstruse and strange ; and these effects too are deepened by the qualities and the merits of his style. It is peculiarly his own, but it is not always felicitous. There are times when it has the true epic touch—or at least as much of it as

is possible in an age of detail and elaboration ; there are times when it has a touch of the pathetic—when in homeliness of phrase and triviality of rhythm it is hardly to be surpassed ; and there are times, as in *The Snake Charmer* when, as in certain pages in the work of Richard Wagner, it is so studiously laboured and so heavily charged with ornament and colour as to be almost pedantic in infelicity, almost repellent by sheer force of superfluous and elaborate suggestiveness. Last of all, in an epoch trained upon the passionate and subtle cadences of the Laureate and the large-moulded, ample, irresistible melodies of Mr. Swinburne, Dr. Hake chooses to deal in rhythms of the utmost naïveté and in metrical forms that are simplicity itself.

LANDOR

Anti-Landor.

To the many, Landor has always been more or less unapproachable, and has always seemed more or less shadowy and unreal. To begin with, he wrote for himself and a few others, and principally for himself. Then, he wrote waywardly and unequally as well as selfishly ; he published pretty much at random ; the bulk of his work is large ; and the majority has passed him by for writers more accessible and work less freakish and more comprehensible. It is probable too that even among those who, inspired by natural temerity or the intemperate curiosity of the general reader, have essayed his conquest and set out upon what has been described as 'the Adventure of the Seven Volumes which are Seven Valleys of Dry Bones,' but few have returned victorious. Of course the Seven Volumes are a world. But (it is objected) the world is peculiar in pattern, abounding in 'antres vast and deserts idle,' in gaps and precipices and 'manifest solutions of continuity,' and enveloped in an atmosphere which ordinary lungs find now too rare and now too dense and too anodyne. Moreover, it is peopled chiefly with abstractions: bearing noble and suggestive names but all surprisingly alike in stature and

feature, all more or less incapable of sustained emotion and even of logical argument, all inordinately addicted to superb generalities and a kind of monumental skittishness, all expressing themselves in a style whose principal characteristic is a magnificent monotony, and all apparently the outcome of a theory that to be wayward is to be creative, that human interest is a matter of apophthegms and oracular sentences, and that axiomatic and dramatic are identical qualities and convertible terms. This is the opinion of those adventurers in whom defeat has generated a sense of injury and an instinct of antagonism. Others less fortunate still have found Landor a continent of dulness and futility—have come to consider the Seven Volumes as so many aggregations of tedium. Such experiences are one-sided and partial no doubt; and considered from a certain point of view they seem worthless enough. But they exist, and they are in some sort justified. Landor, when all is said, remains a writer's writer; and for my part I find it impossible not to feel a certain sympathy with them that hesitate to accept him for anything else.

His Drama.

AGAIN, to some of us Landor's imagination is not only inferior in kind but poverty-stricken in degree; his creative faculty is limited by the reflection that its one achievement is Landor; his claim to consideration as a dramatic writer is negatived by the fact that, poignant as are the situations with which he loved to deal, he was apparently incapable of perceiving their capacities: inasmuch as he has

failed completely and logically to develop a single one of them ; inasmuch, too, as he has never once succeeded in conceiving, much less in picturing, such a train of conflicting emotions as any one of the complications from which he starts might be supposed to generate. To many there is nothing Greek about his dramatic work except the absence of stage directions ; and to these that quality of 'Landorian abruptness' which seems to Mr. Sidney Colvin to excuse so many of its shortcomings is identical with a certain sort of what in men of lesser mould is called stupidity.

HOOD

How Much of Him ?

Hood wrote much for bread, and he wrote much under pressure of all manner of difficulties—want of health and want of money, the hardship of exile and the bitterness of comparative failure ; and not a little of what he produced is the merest journalism, here to-day and gone to-morrow. At his highest he is very high, but it was not given to him to enjoy the conditions under which great work is produced : he had neither peace of body nor health of mind, his life from first to last was a struggle with sickness and misfortune. How is it possible to maintain an interest in all he wrote, when two-thirds of it was produced with duns at the door and a nurse in the other room and the printer's devil waiting in the hall? Of his admirable courage, his fine temper, his unfailing goodness of heart, his incorruptible honesty, it were hard to speak too highly ; for one has but to read the story of his life to wonder that he should have written anything at all. At his happiest he had the gift of laughter ; at his deepest and truest the more precious gift of tears. But for him there were innumerable hours when the best he could affect was the hireling's motley ; when his fun and his pathos alike ran strained and thin ; when the unique poet and wit became a mere comic

rhymester. Is it just to his memory that it should be burdened with such a mass of what is already antiquated? But one answer is possible. The immortal part of Hood might be expressed into a single tiny volume.

Death's Jest-Book.

THACKERAY preferred Hood's passion to his fun; and Thackeray knew. Hood had an abundance of a certain sort of wit, the wit of odd analogies, of remote yet familiar resemblances, of quaint conceits and humourous and unexpected quirks. He made not epigrams but jokes, sometimes purely intellectual but nearly always with the verbal quality as well. The wonderful jingle called *Miss Kilmansegg*—hard and cold and glittering as the gold that gleams in it—abounds in capital types of both. But for an example of both here is a stanza taken at random from the *Ode to the Great Unknown*:—

'Thou *Scottish Barmecide*, feeding the hunger
Of curiosity with airy gammon;
Thou mystery-monger,
Dealing it out like middle cut of salmon
That people buy and can't make head or tail of it,'

and so forth, and so forth: the first a specimen of oddness of analogy—the joke intellectual; the second a jest in which the intellectual quality is complicated with the verbal. Of rarer merit are that conceit of the door which was shut with such a slam 'it sounded like a wooden d—n,' and that mad description of the demented mariner,—

'His *head was turned*, and so *he chewed*
His pigtail till he died,'—

which is a pun as unexpected and imaginative as any that exists, not excepting even Lamb's renowned achievement, the immortal 'I say, Porter, is that your own Hare or a Wig?' But as a punster Hood is merely unsurpassable. The simplest and the most complex, the wildest and the most obvious, the straightest and the most perverse, all puns came alike to him. The form was his natural method of expression. His prose extravaganzas—even to the delightful *Friend in Need*—are pretty well forgotten; his one novel is very hard to read; there is far less in *Up the Rhine* than in *Humphrey Clinker* after all; we have been spoiled for *Lycus the Centaur* and *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies* by the rich and passionate verse of the Laureate, the distinction, and the measure of Arnold, the sumptuous diction and the varied and enchanting music of *Atalanta* and *Hesperia* and *Erechtheus*. We care little for the old-fashioned whimsicality of the *Odes*, and little for such an inimitable farrago of vulgarisms, such a *reductio ad absurdum* of sentiment and style, as *The Lost Child*. But the best of Hood's puns are amusing after forty years. They are the classics of verbal extravagance, and they are a thousand times better known than *The Last Man*, though that is a work of genius, and almost as popular as the *Song of the Shirt*, the *Bridge of Sighs*, the *Dream of Eugene Aram* themselves. By an odd chance, too, the rhymes in which they are set have all a tragic theme. 'Tout ce qui touche à la mort,' says Champfleury, 'est d'une gaieté folle.' Hood found out that much for himself before Champfleury had begun to

write. His most riotous ballads are ballads of death and the grave. Tim Turpin does murder and is hanged

> 'On Horsham drop, and none can say
> He took a drop too much';

Ben Battle entwines a rope about his melancholy neck, and for the second time in life *enlists him in the line*; Young Ben expires of grief for the falsehood of Sally Brown: Lieutenant Luff drinks himself into his grave: John Day the amorous coachman,

> 'With back too broad to be conceived
> By any narrow mind,'

pines to nothingness, and is found heels uppermost in his cruel mistress's water-butt. To Hood, with his grim imagination and his strange fantastic humour, death was meat and drink. It is as though he saw so much of the 'execrable Shape' that at last the pair grew friends, and grinned whenever they forgathered even in thought.

His Immortal Part.

Was Thackeray right, then, in resenting the waste of Hood's genius upon mere comicalities? I think he was; but only to a certain point. Hood was a true poet; but it was not until after years of proof and endeavour that he discovered the use to which his powers could best be put and the material on which they could best be employed. He worked hard and with but partial success at poetry all his life long. He passed his life in punning and making comic assaults on the Queen's English;

but he was author all the while of *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*, the *Ode to Melancholy*, *Hero and Leander*, *Lycus the Centaur*, and a score and more of lovable and moving ballads ; and he had won himself a name with two such capital examples of melodrama as *The Last Man* (1826) and *The Dream of Eugene Aram* (1829). But as a poet he profited little. The public preferred him as a buffoon'; and not until his last years (and then anonymously) was he able to utter his highest word. All was made ready against his coming—the age, the subject, the public mind, the public capacity of emotion ; and in *The Song of the Shirt* he approved himself a great singer. In the days of *Lycus the Centaur* and the *Midsummer Fairies* he could no more have written it than the public could have heeded had he written. But times were changed—Dickens had come, and the humanitarian epoch—and the great song went like fire. So, a year or two after, did *The Bridge of Sighs*. That, says Thackeray, 'was his Corunna, his Heights of Abraham—sickly, weak, wounded, he fell in the full blaze and fame of that great victory.' Could he have repeated it had he lived. Who knows? In both these irresistible appeals to the heart of man the material is of equal value and importance with the form ; and in poetry such material is rare. A brace of such songs is possible to a poet ; ten couples are not. It is Hood's immortality that he sang these two. Almost in the uttering they went the round of the world ; and it is not too much to say of them that they will only pass with the language.

LEVER

How He Lived.

THE story of Lever's life and adventures only wants telling to be as irresistibly attractive as Lorrequer's or O'Malley's own. Born in Dublin, of an English father and an Irish mother, he lived to be essentially cosmopolitan and a *viveur* of the first magnitude. At eight he was master of his schoolmaster—a gentleman given to flogging but not learned in Greek, and therefore a proper subject for a certain sort of blackmailing. He was not an industrious boy ; but he was apt and ready with his tongue, he was an expert in fencing and the dance, he was good at improvising and telling stories, it is on record that he pleaded and won the cause of himself and certain of his schoolmates accused before a magistrate of riot and outrage. At college he found work for his high spirits in wild fun and the perpetration of practical jokes. He and his chum Ottiwell, the original of Frank Webber, behaved to their governors, teachers, and companions very much as Charles O'Malley and the redoubtable Frank behave to theirs. Lever was excellent at a street-ballad, and made and sang them in the rags of Rhoudlim, just as Frank Webber does ; and he personated Cusack the surgeon to Cusack's class,

just as Frank Webber personates the dean to *his* class. On the whole, indeed, he must have been as gamesome and volatile a nuisance as even Dublin has endured. On leaving college he took charge of an emigrant ship bound for Quebec. Arrived in Canada, he plunged into the backwoods, was affiliated to a tribe of Indians, and had to escape like Bagenal Daly at the risk of his life. Then he went to Germany, became a student at Göttingen under Blumenbach, was heart and soul a Bursch, and had the honour of seeing Goethe at Weimar. His diploma gained, he went to Clare to do battle with the cholera and gather materials for *Harry Lorrequer*. After this he was for some time dispensary doctor at Portstewart, where he met Prebendary Maxwell, the wild parson who wrote *Captain Blake*: so that here and now it is natural to find him leaping turf-carts and running away from his creditors. At Brussels, where he physicked the British Embassy and the British tourist, he knew all sorts of people—among them Commissioner Meade, the original of Major Monsoon, and Cardinal Pecci, the original of Leo XIII.—and saw all sorts of life, and ran into all sorts of extravagance: until of a sudden, he is back again in the capital, editing the *Dublin University Magazine*. Of course he was the maddest editor ever seen. For him cards, horses, and high living were not luxuries but necessaries of life; yet all the while he believed devoutly in medicine, and with his family indulged with freedom in the use of calomel and such agents. Presently he abandoned Ireland for the Continent. He took his horses with him, and astonished Europe

with a four-in-hand of his own. Carlsruhe knew him well, as Belgium and the Rhine had known him. He only left the Reider Schloss at Bregenz to conquer Italy; and at Florence, Spezzia, and finally Trieste, he shone like himself.

What He Was.

He was a born *poseur*. His vanity made him one of the worst—the most excessive—of talkers; go where he would and do what he might, he was unhappy if the first place were another's. In all he did he was greedy to excel, and to excel incontestably. Like his own Bagenal Daly he would have taken the big jump with the reins in his mouth and his hands tied, 'just to show the English Lord-Lieutenant how an Irish gentleman rides.' He was all his life long confounding an English Lord-Lieutenant of some sort; for without display he would have pined away and died. At Templeogue he lived at the rate of £3000 a year on an income of £1200; at Brussels he kept open house on little or nothing for all the wandering grandees of Europe; at Florence they used to liken the cavalcade from his house to a procession from Franconi's; he found living in a castle and spending £10 a day on his horses the finest fun in the world. He existed but to bewilder and dazzle, and had he not been a brilliant and distinguished novelist he would have been a brilliant and distinguished something else. As he kept open house everywhere, as he was fond of every sort of luxury, as he loved not less to lend money to his intimates than to lose it to them at cards, and as he got but poor

prices for his novels and was not well paid for his consular services, it is not easy to see how he managed to make ends meet.

How He Wrote.

Nor is it easy to see how he contrived to produce his novels. He was too passionately addicted to society and the enjoyment of life to spare an instant from them if he could help it; and the wonder is not that he should have written so well but that he should have written at all. Fortunately or the other thing, his books cost him no effort. He wrote or dictated at a gallop and, his copy once produced, had finished his work. He abhorred revision, and while keenly sensitive to blame and greedy of praise he ceased to care for his books as soon as they had left his desk. That he was not in scarce any sense an artist is but too clear. He never worked on a definite plan nor was at any pains to contrive a plot; he depended on the morning's impressions for the evening's task, and wrote *Con Cregan* under the immediate influence of a travelled Austrian, who used to talk to him every night ere he sat down to his story. But he was a wonderful improvisatore. He had imagination—(even romantic imagination: as the episode of Menelaus Crick in *Con Cregan* will show)—a keen, sure eye for character, incomparable facility in composition, an inexhaustible fund of shrewdness, whimsicality, high spirits, an admirable knack of dialogue; and as consul at Spezzia and at Trieste, as a fashionable practitioner at Brussels, as dispensary doctor on the wild Ulster coast, he was excellently placed for the

kind of literature it was in him to produce. Writing at random and always under the spur of necessity, he managed to inform his work with extraordinary vitality and charm. His books were only made to sell, but it is like enough that they will also live, for they are yet well nigh as readable as at first, and Nina and Kate O'Donoghue—(for instance)—seem destined to go down to posterity as typical and representative. Had their author taken art seriously, and devoted all his energy to its practice, he could scarce have done more than this. Perhaps, indeed, he would not have done so much. It could never have been Lorrequer's to 'build the lofty rhyme.' It was an honest as well as a brilliant creature ; and I believe we should all have suffered if some avenging chance had borne it in upon him that to be really lofty your rhyme must of necessity be not blown upwards like a bubble but built in air like a cathedral. He would, I take it, have experimentalised in repentance to the extent of elaborating his creations and chastising his style ; and, it may be, he would have contrived but to beggar his work of interest and correct himself of charm. A respectable ambition, no doubt ; but how much better to be the rough-and-ready artist of Darby the Blast and Mickey Free, the humane and charming rattlepate to whom we owe Paul Goslett and the excellent and pleasing Potts!

JEFFERIES

His Virtue.

I LOVE to think of Jefferies as a kind of literary Leatherstocking. His style, his mental qualities, the field he worked in, the chase he followed, were peculiar to himself, and as he was without a rival, so was he without a second. Reduced to its simplest expression, his was a mind compact of observation and of memory. He writes as one who watches always, who sees everything, who forgets nothing. As his lot was cast in country places, among wood and pasturage and corn, by coverts teeming with game and quick with insect life, and as withal he had the hunter's patience and quick-sightedness, his faculty of looking and listening and of noting and remembering, his readiness of deduction and insistence of pursuit—there entered gradually into his mind a greater quantity of natural England, her leaves and flowers, her winds and skies, her wild things and tame, her beauties and humours and discomforts, than was ever, perhaps, the possession of writing Briton. This property he conveyed to his countrymen in a series of books of singular freshness and interest. The style is too formal and sober, the English seldom other than homely and sufficient; there is overmuch of the reporter

and nothing like enough of the artist, the note of imagination, the right creative faculty. But they are remarkable books. It is not safe to try and be beforehand with posterity, but in the case of such works as the *Gamekeeper* and *Wild Life* and with such a precedent as that established by the *Natural History of Selborne* such anticipation seems more tempting and less hazardous than usual. One has only to think of some mediæval Jefferies attached to the staff of Robin Hood, and writing about Needwood and Charnwood as his descendant wrote about the South Downs, to imagine an historical document of priceless value and inexhaustible interest. And in years to be, when the whole island is one vast congeries of streets, and the fox has gone down to the bustard and the dodo, and outside museums of comparative anatomy the weasel is not and the badger has ceased from the face of the earth, it is not doubtful that the *Gamekeeper* and *Wild Life* and the *Poacher*—epitomising, as they will, the rural England of certain centuries before—will be serving as material and authority for historical descriptions, historical novels, historical epics, historical pictures, and will be honoured as the most useful stuff of their kind in being.

His Limitation.

In those first books of his Jefferies compels attention by sheer freshness of matter; he is brimful of new facts and original and pertinent observation, and that every one is vaguely familiar with and interested in the objects he is handling and explaining serves but to heighten his attractiveness. There

are so many who but know of hares disguised as soup, of ants as a people on whose houses it is not good to sit down, of partridges as a motive of bread sauce! And Jefferies, retailing in plain, useful English the thousand and one curious facts that make up life for these creatures and their kind—Jefferies walking the wood, or tracking the brook, or mapping out the big tree—is some one to be heeded with gratitude. He is the Scandalous Chronicler of the warren and the rookery, the newsmonger and intelligencer of creeping things, and things that fly, and things that run ; and his confidences, unique in quality and type, have the novelty and force of personal revelations. In dealing with men and women, he surrendered most of his advantage and lost the best part of his charm. The theme is old, the matter well worn, the subject common to us all ; and most of us care nothing for a few facts more or less unless they be romantically conveyed. Reality is but the beginning, the raw material, of art ; and it is by the artist's aid and countenance that we are used to make acquaintance with our fellows, be they generals in cocked hats or mechanics in fustian. Now Jefferies was not an artist, and so beside his stoats and hares, his pike, his rabbits, and his moles, his men and women are of little moment. You seem to have heard of them and to far better purpose from others ; you have had their author's facts presented elsewhere, and that in picturesque conjunction with the great eternal interests of passion and emotion. To be aware of such a difference is to resent it ; and accordingly to read is to know that Jefferies would

have done well to leave Hodge and Hodge's masters alone and keep to his beasts and birds and fishes.

The General.

Is it not plain as the nose on your face that his admirers admire him injudiciously? It is true, for instance, that he is in a sense, 'too full' (the phrase is Mr. Besant's) for the generality of readers. But it is also true that he is not nearly full enough: that they look for conclusions while he is bent upon giving them only details; that they clamour for a breath of inspiration while he is bent upon emptying his notebook in decent English; that they persist in demanding a motive, a leading idea, a justification, while he with knowledge crammed is fixed in his resolve to tell them no more than that there are milestones on the Dover Road, or that there are so many nails of so many shapes and so many colours in the pig-sty at the back of Coate Farm. They prefer 'their geraniums in the conservatory.' They refuse, in any case, to call a 'picture' that which is only a long-drawn sequence of statements. They are naturally inartistic, but they have the tradition of a long and speaking series of artistic results, and instinctively they decline to recognise as art the work of one who was plainly the reverse of an artist. The artist is he who knows how to select and to inspire the results of his selection. Jefferies could do neither. He was a reporter of genius; and he never got beyond reporting. To the average reader he is wanting in the great essentials of excitement: he is prodigal of

facts, and he contrives to set none down so as to make one believe in it for longer than the instant of perusal. From his work the passionate human quality is not less absent than the capacity of selection and the gift of inspiration, and all the enthusiasm of all the enthusiasts of an enthusiastic age will not make him and his work acceptable to the aforesaid average reader. In letters he is as the ideal British water-colourist in paint: the care of both is not art but facts, and again facts, and facts ever. You consider their work; you cannot see the wood for the trees; and you are fain to conclude that themselves were so much interested in the trees they did not even know the wood was there.

Last Words.

To come to an end with the man:—his range was very limited, and within that range his activity was excessive; yet the consequences of his enormous effort were—and are—a trifle disappointing. He thought, poor fellow! that he had the world in his hand and the public at his feet; whereas, the truth to tell, he had only the empire of a kind of back garden and the lordship of (as Mr. Besant has told us) some forty thousand out of a hundred millions of readers. You know that he suffered greatly; you know too that to the last he worked and battled on as became an honest, much-enduring, self-admiring man, as you know that in death he snatched a kind of victory, and departed this life with dignity as one 'good at many things,' who had at last 'attained to be at rest.' You know, in a word, that he took his part in the general struggle

for existence, and manfully did his best; and it is with something like a pang that you find his biographer insisting on the merits of the feat, and quoting approvingly the sentimentalists who gathered about his death-bed. To make eloquence about heroism is not the way to breed heroes; and it may be that Jefferies, had his last environment been less fluent and sonorous, would now seem something more heroic than he does.

GAY

GAY the fabulist is only interesting in a certain sense and to a small extent. The morality of the *Fables* is commonplace; their workmanship is only facile and agreeable; as literature—as achievements in a certain order of art—they have a poor enough kind of existence. In comparison to the work of La Fontaine they are the merest journalism. The simplicity, the wit, the wisdom, the humanity, the dramatic imagination, the capacity of dramatic expression, the exquisite union of sense and manner, the faultless balance of matter and style, are qualities for which in the Englishman you look in vain. You read, and you read not only without enthusiasm but without interest. The verse is merely brisk and fluent; the invention is common; the wit is not very witty; the humour is artificial; the wisdom, the morality, the knowledge of life, the science of character—if they exist at all it is but as anatomical preparations or plants in a *hortus siccus*. Worse than anything, the *Fables* are monotonous. The manner is consistently uniform; the invention has the level sameness of a Lincolnshire landscape; the narrative moves with the equal pace of boats on a Dutch canal. The effect is that of a host of

The Fabulist.

flower-pots, the columns in a ledger, a tragedy by the Rev. Mr. Home ; and it is heightened by the matchless triteness of the fabulist's reflections and the uncommon tameness of his drama. It is hard to believe that this is indeed the Gay of *Polly* and *The Beggars' Opera*. True, the dialects of his Peachum and his Lockit are in some sort one ; his gentlemen of the road and his ladies of the kennel rejoice in a common flippancy of expression ; there is little to choose between the speech of Polly and the speech of Lucy. But in respect of the essentials of drama the dialogue of *The Beggars' Opera* is on the whole sufficient. The personages are puppets ; but they are individual, and they are fairly consistent in their individuality. Miss Lockit does not think and feel like Miss Diver ; Macheath is distinguishable from Peachum ; none is exactly alive, but of stage life all have their share. The reverse of this is the case with the personages of the *Fables*. They think the thoughts and speak the speech of Mr. Gay. The elephant has the voice of the sparrow ; the monkey is one with the organ on which he sits ; there is but a difference of name between the eagle and the hog ; the talk of Death has exactly the manner and weight and cadence of the Woodman's ; a change of label would enable the lion to change places with the spaniel, would suffice to cage the wolf as a bird and set free the parrot as a beast of prey. All are equally pert, brisk, and dapper in expression ; all are equally sententious and smart in aim ; all are absolutely identical in function and effect. The whole gathering is stuffed with the same straw, prepared with the same dress-

ing, ticketed in the same handwriting, and painted with the same colours. Any one who remembers the infinite variety of La Fontaine will feel that Gay the fabulist is a writer whose work the world has let die very willingly indeed.

The Moralist.

And Gay is not a whit less inefficient as a moralist. He is a kindly soul, and in his easy-going way he has learnt something of the tricks of the world and something of the hearts of men. He writes as an unsuccessful courtier; and in that capacity he has remarks to offer which are not always valueless, and in which there is sometimes a certain shrewdness. But the unsuccessful courtier is on the whole a creature of the past. Such interest as he has is rather historical than actual; and neither in the nursery nor in the schoolroom is he likely to create any excitement or be received with any enthusiasm. To the world he can only recommend himself as one anxious to make it known on the smallest provocation and on any occasion or none that Queen Anne is dead. Open him where you will, and you find him full of this important news and determined on imparting it. Thus, in *The Scold and the Parrot*:

> 'One slander must ten thousand get,
> The world with int'rest pays the debt';

that is to say, Queen Anne is dead. Thus, too, in *The Persian, the Sun, and the Cloud*:

> 'The gale arose; the vapour tost
> (The sport of winds) in air was lost;
> The glorious orb the day refines.
> Thus envy breaks, thus merit shines';

in *The Goat without a Beard*:

> 'Coxcombs distinguished from the rest
> To all but coxcombs are a jest';

in *The Shepherd's Dog and the Wolf*:

> 'An open foe may prove a curse,
> But a pretended friend is worse';

and so to the end of the chapter. The theme is not absorbing, and the variations are proper to the theme.

After All. How long is it that the wise and good have ceased to say (striking their pensive bosoms), '*Here* lies Gay'? It is—how long? But for all that Gay is yet a figure in English letters. As a song-writer he has still a claim on us, and is still able to touch the heart and charm the ear. The lyrics in *Acis and Galatea* are not unworthy their association with Handel's immortal melodies, the songs in *The Beggars' Opera* have a part in the life and fame of the sweet old tunes from which they can never be divided. I like to believe that in the operas and the *Trivia* and *The Shepherd's Week* is buried the material of a pleasant little book.

ESSAYS AND ESSAYISTS

The Good of Them.

It is our misfortune that of good essayists there should be but few. Men there have been who have done the essayist's part so well as to have earned an immortality in the doing; but we have had not many of them, and they make but a poor figure on our shelves. It is a pity that things should be thus with us, for a good essayist is the pleasantest companion imaginable. There are folk in plenty who have never read Montaigne at all; but there are few indeed who have read but a page of him, and that page but once. And the same may be said of Addison and Fielding, of Lamb and Hazlitt, of Sterne and Bacon and Ben Jonson, and all the members of their goodly fellowship. To sit down with any one of them is to sit down in the company of one of the 'mighty wits, our elders and our betters,' who have done much to make literature a good thing, having written books that are eternally readable. If of all them that have tried to write essays and succeeded after a fashion a twentieth part so much could be said, the world would have a conversational literature of inexhaustible interest. But indeed there is nothing of the sort. Beside the 'rare and radiant masters' of the art there are the apprentices, and these are many and dull.

eneralities. ESSAYISTS like poets, are born and not made, and for one wort[h] remembering the world is confronted with a hundr[ed] not worth reading. Your true essayist is in a lit[erary] sense the friend of everybody. As one of the brotherhood has phrased it, it is his function 'to speak with ease and opportunity to all men.' He must be personal, or his hearers can feel no manner of interest in him. He must be candid and sincere, or his readers presently see through him. He must have learned to think for himself and to consider his surroundings with an eye that is both kindly and observant, or they straightway find his company unprofitable. He should have fancy, or his starveling propositions will perish for lack of metaphor and the tropes and figures needed to vitalise a truism. He does well to have humour, for humour makes men brothers, and is perhaps more influential in an essay than in most places else. He will find a little wit both serviceable to himself and comfortable to his readers. For wisdom, it is not absolutely necessary that he have it, but in its way it is as good a property as any: used with judgment, indeed, it does more to keep an essay sweet and fresh than almost any other quality. And in default of wisdom—which, to be sure, it is not given to every man, much less to every essayist, to entertain—he need have no scruples about using whatever common sense is his; for common sense is a highly respectable commodity, and never fails of a wide and eager circle of buyers. A knowledge of men and of books is also to be desired; for it is a writer's best reason of being, and without it he does well to hold his tongue. Blessed with these

attributes he is an essayist to some purpose. Give him leisure and occasion, and his discourse may well become as popular as Montaigne's own.

In Particular.

For the British essayists, they are more talked about than known. It is to be suspected that from the first their reputation has greatly exceeded their popularity; and of late years, in spite of the declamation of Macaulay and the very literary enthusiasm of the artist of *Esmond* and *The Virginians*, they have fallen further into the background, and are less than ever studied with regard. In theory the age of Anne is still the Augustan age to us; but in theory only, and only to a certain extent. What attracts us is its outside. We are in love with its houses and its china and its costumes. We are not enamoured of it as it was but as it seems to Mr. Caldecott and Mr. Dobson and Miss Kate Greenaway. We care little for its comedy and nothing at all for its tragedy. Its verse is all that our own is not, and the same may be said of its prose and ours—of the prose of Mr. Swinburne and Mr. George Meredith and the prose of Addison and Swift. Mr. Gladstone is not a bit like Bolingbroke, and between *The Times* and *The Tatler*, between *The Spectator* (Mr. Addison's), and *The Fortnightly Review*, there is a difference of close upon two centuries and of a dozen revolutions—political, social, scientific, and æsthetic. We may babble as we please about the 'sweetness' of Steele and the 'humour' of Sir Roger de Coverley, but in our hearts we care for them a great deal less than we

ought, and in fact Mr. Mudie's subscribers do not hesitate to prefer the 'sweetness' of Mr. Black and the 'humour' of Mr. James Payn. Our love is not for the essentials of the time but only its accidents and oddities; and we express it in pictures and poems and fantasies in architecture, and the canonisation (in figures) of Chippendale and Sheraton. But it is questionable if we might not with advantage increase our interest, and carry imitation a little deeper. The Essayists, for instance, are often dull, but they write like scholars and gentlemen. They refrain from personalities; they let scandal alone, nor ever condescend to eavesdropping; they never go out of their way in search of affectation or prurience or melancholy, but are content to be merely wise and cheerful and humane. Above all, they do their work as well as they can. They seem to write not for bread nor for a place in society but for the pleasure of writing, and of writing well. In these hysterical times life is so full, so much is asked and so much has to be given, that tranquil writing and careful workmanship are impossible. A certain poet has bewailed the change in a charming rondeau:—

> 'More swiftly now the hours take flight!
> What 's read at morn is dead at night;
> Scant space have we for art's delays,
> Whose breathless thought so briefly stays,
> We may not work—ah! would we might,
> With slower pen!'

It must be owned that his melancholy is anything but groundless. The trick of amenity and good breeding is lost; the graces of an excellence that is

unobtrusive are graces no more. We write as men paint for the exhibitions: with the consciousness that we must pass without notice if we do not exceed in colour and subject and tone. The need exists, and the world bows to it. Mr. Austin Dobson's little sheaf of *Eighteenth Century Essays* might be regarded as a protest against the necessity and the submission. It proves that 'tis possible to be eloquent without adjectives and elegant without affectation; that to be brilliant you need not necessarily be extravagant and conceited; that without being maudlin and sentimental it is not beyond mortal capacity to be pathetic; and that once upon a time a writer could prove himself a humourist without feeling it incumbent upon him to be also a jack-pudding.

BOSWELL

His Destiny.

It has been Boswell's fate to be universally read and almost as universally despised. What he suffered at the hands of Croker and Macaulay is typical of his fortune. In character, in politics, in attainments, in capacity, the two were poles apart; but they were agreed in this: that Boswell must be castigated and contemned, and that they were the men to do it. Croker's achievement, consider it how you will, remains the most preposterous in literary history. He could see nothing in the *Life* but a highly entertaining compilation greatly in need of annotation and correction. Accordingly he took up Boswell's text and interlarded it with scraps of his own and other people's; he pegged into it a sophisticated version of the *Tour*; and he overwhelmed his amazing compound with notes and commentaries in which he took occasion to snub, scold, 'improve,' and insult his author at every turn. What came of it one knows. Macaulay, in the combined interests of Whiggism and good literature, made Boswell's quarrel his own, and the expiation was as bitter as the offence was wanton and scandalous.

But Macaulay, if he did Jeddart justice on Croker, took care not to forget that Johnson was a Tory hero, and that Boswell was Johnson's biographer. He was too fond of good reading not to esteem the *Life* for one of the best books. But he was also a master of the art of brilliant and picturesque misrepresentation; and he did not neglect to prove that the *Life* is only admirable because Boswell was contemptible. It was, he argued, only by virtue of being at once daft and drunken, selfish and silly, an eavesdropper and a talebearer, a kind of inspired Faddle, a combination of butt and lackey and snob, that Boswell contrived to achieve his wretched immortality. And in the same way Boswell's hero was after all but a sort of Grub Street Cyclops, respectable enough by his intelligence—(but even so ridiculous in comparison to gifted Whigs)—yet more or less despicable in his manners, his English, and his politics. Now, Macaulay was the genius of special pleading. Admirable man of letters as he was, he was politician first and man of letters afterwards: his judgments are no more final than his antitheses are dull, and his method for all its brilliance is the reverse of sound. When you begin to inquire how much he really knew about Boswell, and how far you may accept his own estimate of his own pretensions, he becomes amusing in spite of himself: much as, according to him, Boswell was an artist. In his review of Croker he is keen enough about dates and facts and solecisms; on questions of this sort he bestows his fiercest energies; for such lapses he visits his Tory opposite with his most savage and splendid insolence, his

His Critic.

heartiest contempt, his most scathing rhetoric. But on the great question of all—the corruption of Boswell's text—he is not nearly so implacable, and concerning the foisting on the *Life* of the whole bulk of the *Tour* he is not more than lukewarm. 'We greatly doubt,' he says, 'whether *even* the *Tour to the Hebrides* should have been inserted in the midst of the *Life*. There is one marked distinction between the two works. Most of the *Tour* was seen by Johnson in manuscript. It does not appear that he ever saw any part of the *Life*.' This is to say that Croker's action is reprehensible not because it is an offence against art but because Johnson on private and personal grounds might not have been disposed to accept the *Life* as representative and just, and might have refused to sanction its appearance on an equal footing with the *Tour*, which on private and personal grounds he *had* accepted. In the face of such an argument who can help suspecting Macaulay's artistic faculty? 'The *Life of Johnson*,' he says, 'is assuredly a great, a very great, book. Homer is not more decidedly the first of heroic poets, Shakespeare is not more decidedly the first of dramatists, Demosthenes is not more decidedly the first of orators, than Boswell is the first of biographers . . . Eclipse is first, and the rest nowhere.' That is hearty and exact enough. But, as I have hinted, Macaulay, furious with Croker's carelessness, is almost tolerant of Croker's impudence. For Croker as a scholar and an historian he is merely pitiless ; to Croker ruining the *Life* by the insertion of the *Tour*—a feat which would scarce be surpassed by the interpolation of

the Falstaff scenes of the *Merry Wives* in one or other of the parts of *Henry IV.*—he is lenient enough, and lenient on grounds which are not artistic but purely moral. Did he recognise to the full the fact of Boswell's pre-eminence as an artist? Was he really conscious that the *Life* is an admirable work of art as well as the most readable and companionable of books? As, not content with committing himself thus far, he goes on to prove that Boswell was great because he was little, that he wrote a great book because he was an ass, and that if he had not been an ass his book would probably have been at least a small one, incredulity on these points becomes respectable.

Himself.

Boswell knew better. A true Scotsman and a true artist, he could play the fool on occasion, and he could profit by his folly. In his dedication to the first and greatest President the Royal Academy has had he anticipates a good many of Macaulay's objections to his character and deportment, and proves conclusively that if he chose to seem ridiculous he did so not unwittingly but with a complete apprehension of the effect he designed and the means he adopted. In the *Tour*, says he, from his 'eagerness to display the wonderful fertility and readiness of Johnson's wit,' he 'freely showed to the world its dexterity, even when I was myself the object of it.' He was under the impression that he would be 'liberally understood,' as 'knowing very well what I was about.' But, he adds, 'it seems I judged too well of the world'; and he

points his moral with a story of 'the great Dr. Clarke,' who, 'unbending himself with a few friends in the most playful and frolicsome manner,' saw Beau Nash in the distance, and was instantly sobered. 'My boys,' quoth he, 'let us be grave—here comes a fool.' Macaulay was not exactly Beau Nash, nor was Boswell 'the great Dr. Clarke'; but, as Macaulay, working on Wolcot's lines, was presently to show, Boswell did right to describe the world as 'a great fool,' and to regret in respect of his own silliness that in the *Tour* he had been 'arrogant enough to suppose that the tenour of the rest of the book would sufficiently guard against such a strange imputation.' In the same way he showed himself fully alive to the enduring merits of his achievement. 'I will venture to say,' he writes, 'that he (Johnson) will be seen in this work more completely than any man who has ever lived.' He had his own idea of biography; he had demonstrated its value triumphantly in the *Tour* which, though organically complete, is plainly not a record of travel but a biographical essay. In the *Tour*, that is, he had approved himself an original master of selection, composition, and design; of the art of working a large number of essential details into a uniform and living whole: and of that most difficult and telling of accomplishments, the reproduction of talk. In the *Life* he repeated the proof on a larger scale and with a finer mastery of construction and effect; and in what his best editor describes as 'the task of correcting, amending, and adding to his darling work' he spent his few remaining years. That he drifted into greatness, produced his two

masterpieces unconsciously, and developed a genius for biography as one develops a disease, is 'a ridiculous conception,' as Mr. Napier rightly says. In proof of it we have Boswell's own words, and we have the books themselves. Such testimony is not to be overborne by any number of paradoxes, however ingenious, nor by any superflux of rhetoric, however plausible and persuasive. That Boswell was a gossip, a busybody, and something of a sot, and that many did and still do call him fool, is certain ; but that is no reason why he should not have been an artist, and none why he should be credited with the fame of having devoted the best part of his life to the production of a couple of masterpieces —as M. Jourdain talked prose—without knowing what he was doing. Turner chose to go a-masquerading as 'Puggy Booth' ; but as yet nobody has put forward the assertion that Turner was unconscious of the romance and splendour of his *Ulysses and Polyphemus*, or that he painted his *Rain, Speed, and Steam* in absolute ignorance of the impression it would produce and the idea it should convey. Goldsmith reminded Miss Reynolds of 'a low mechanic, particularly . . . a journeyman tailor' ; but that he was unconsciously the most elegant and natural writer of his age is a position which has not yet been advanced. And surely it is high time that Boswell should take that place in art which is his by right of conquest, and that Macaulay's paradox—which is only the opinion brilliantly put of an ignorant and unthinking world —('Il avait mieux que personne l'esprit de tout le monde')—should go the way of all its kind.

CONGREVE

His Biographers and Critics.

An American literary journal once assured its readers that Congreve has a 'niche in the Valhalla of Ben Jonson.' The remark is injudicious, of course, even for a literary American, and there is no apparent reason why it should ever have got itself uttered. It is probably the unluckiest thing that ever was said of Congreve, who—with some unimportant exceptions—has been singularly fortunate in his critics and biographers. Dryden wrote of him with enthusiasm, and in doing so he may be said to have set a fashion of admiration which is vigorous and captivating even yet. Swift, Voltaire, Lamb, Hunt, Hazlitt, Thackeray, Macaulay, to name but these, have dealt with him in their several ways; of late he has been praised by such masters of the art of writing as Mr. Swinburne and Mr. George Meredith; while Mr. Gosse, the last on the list, surpasses most of his predecessors in admiration and nearly all, I think, in knowledge.

The Real Congreve.

It is no fault of Mr. Gosse's that with all his diligence he should fail to give a complete and striking portrait of his man, or to make more of what he

describes as his 'smiling, faultless rotundity.' As he puts it: 'There were no salient points about Congreve's character,' so that 'no vagaries, no escapades place him in a ludicrous or in a human light,' and 'he passes through the literary life of his time as if in felt slippers, noiseless, unupbraiding, without personal adventures.' That, I take it, is absolutely true. It is known that Congreve was cheerful, serviceable, and witty; that he was a man of many friends; that Pope dedicated his *Iliad* to him; that Dryden loved and admired him; that Collier attacked his work, and that his rejoinder was equally spiritless and ill-bred; that he was attached to Mrs. Bracegirdle, and left all his money to the Duchess of Marlborough; that he was a creditable Government official; and that at thirty, having written a certain number of plays, he suddenly lost his interest in life and art, and wrote no more. But that is about all. Thackeray's picture of him may be, and probably is, as unveracious as his Fielding or his Dick Steele; but there is little or nothing to show how far we can depend upon it. The character of the man escapes us, and we have either to refrain from trying to see him or to content ourselves with mere hypothesis. So abnormal is the mystery in which he is enshrouded that what in the case of others would be notorious remains in his case dubious and obscure: so that we cannot tell whether he was Bracegirdle's lover or only her friend, and the secret of his relations with the Duchess of Marlborough has yet to be discovered. Mr. Gosse succeeded no better than they that went before in plucking out the heart of Congreve's

mystery. He was, and he remains, impersonal. At his most substantial he is (as some one said of him) no more than 'vagueness personified': at his most luminous only an appearance like the *Scinlaeca*, the shining shadow adapted in a moment of peculiar inspiration by the late Lord Lytton.

The Dramatist.

But we have the plays, and who runs may read and admire. I say advisedly who runs may read, and not who will may see. Congreve's plays are, one can imagine, as dull in action as they are entertaining in print. They have dropped out of the *répertoire*, and the truth is they merit no better fate. They are only plays to the critic of style; to the actor and the average spectator they are merely so much spoken weariness. To begin with, they are marked by such a deliberate and immitigable baseness of morality as makes them impossible to man. Wycherley has done more vilely; Vanbrugh soars to loftier altitudes of filthiness. But neither Wycherley nor Vanbrugh has any strain of the admirable intellectual quality of Congreve. Villainy comes natural to the one, and beastliness drops from the other as easily as honey from the comb; but in neither is there evident that admirable effort of the intelligence which is a distinguishing characteristic of Congreve, and with neither is the result at once so consummate and so tame. For both Wycherley and Vanbrugh are playwrights, and Congreve is not. Congreve is only an artist in style writing for himself and half a dozen in the pit, while Wycherley and Vanbrugh—and for that

matter Etherege and Farquhar—are playwrights producing for the whole theatre. In fact Congreve's plays were only successful in proportion as they were less literary and 'Congrevean.' His first comedy was the talk of the town: his last, *The Way of the World*, that monument of characterisation (of a kind) and fine English, was only a 'success of esteem.' The reason is not far to seek. Congreve's plays were too sordid in conception and too unamusing in effect for even the audiences to which they were produced; they were excellent literature, but they were bad drama, and they were innately detestable to boot. Audiences are the same in all strata of time; and it is easy to see that Wycherley's Horner and Vanbrugh's Sir John and Lady Brute were amusing, when Lady Wishfort and Sir Sampson Legend and the illustrious and impossible Maskwell were found 'old, cold, withered, and of intolerable entrails.' An audience, whatever its epoch, wants action; and still action, and again and for the last time action; also it wants a point of departure that shall be something tinctured with humanity, a touch of the human in the term of everything, and at least a 'sort of a kind of a strain' of humanity in the progress of events from the one point to the other. This it gets in Wycherley, brute as he is; with a far larger and more vigorous comic sense it gets the same in Vanbrugh; it gets it with a difference in the light-hearted indecencies of Farquhar. From the magnificent prose of Congreve it is absent. His it was to sublimate all that was most artificial in an artificial state of society: he was the consummate artist of a phase that was

merely transient, the laureate of a generation that was only alive for half an hour in the course of all the twenty-four. He is saved from oblivion by sheer strength of style. It is a bad dramatic style, as we know; it leaves the Witwoulds and the Plyants as admirable as the Mirabels and Millamants and Angelicas; it makes no distinction between the Mrs. Foresights and the Sir Sampson Legends; it presents an exemplar in Lady Wishfort and an exemplar in Petulant; it is uneasy, self-conscious, intrusive, even offensive, the very reverse of dramatic; and in Congreve's hands it is irresistible, for, thanks to Congreve, it has been forced from the stage, and lives as literature alone.

The Writer.

CONGREVE was essentially a man of letters; his style is that of a pupil not of Molière but of the full, the rich, the excessive, the pedantic Jonson; his Legends, his Wishforts, his Foresights are the lawful heirs—refined and sublimated but still of direct descent—of the Tuccas and the Bobadils and the Epicure Mammons of the great Elizabethan; they are (that is) more literary than theatrical—they are excellent reading, but they have long since fled the stage and vanished into the night of mere scholarship. To compare an author of this type and descent to Shakespeare is a trifle unfair: to compare him to Molière is to misapprehend the differences between pure literature and literature that is also drama. Congreve, as I have said, has disappeared from the boards, and is only tolerable or even intelligible to the true reader; while Shakespeare worked

on so imperfect a convention that, though he keeps the stage and is known indeed for the poet of the most popular play ever written—(for that, I take it, *Hamlet* is)—he is yet the prey of every twopenny actor, or actor-manager, or actor-manager-editor, who is driven to deal with him. Now, Molière wrote as one that was first of all a great actor ; who dealt not so much with what is transient in human life as witn what is eternal in human nature ; who addressed himself much more to an audience—(Fénelon who found fault with his style is witness to the fact)—than to a circle of readers. And the result is that Molière not only remains better reading than Congreve, but is played at this time in the Rue de Richelieu line for line and word for word as he was played at the Palais-Bourbon over two hundred years ago.

'ARABIAN NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENTS'

Its Romance.

He that has the book of the *Thousand Nights and a Night* has Hachisch-made-words for life. Gallant, subtle, refined, intense, humourous, obscene, here is the Arab intelligence drunk with conception. It is a vast extravaganza of passion in action and picarooning farce and material splendour run mad. The amorous instinct and the instinct of enjoyment, not tempered but heightened greatly by the strict ordinances of dogma, have leave to riot uncontrolled. It is the old immortal story of Youth and Beauty and their coming together, but it is coloured with the hard and brilliant hues of an imagination as sensuous in type and as gorgeous in ambition as humanity has known. The lovers must suffer, for suffering intensifies the joy of fruition ; so they are subjected to all such modes of travail and estrangement as a fancy careless of pain and indifferent to life can devise. But it is known that happy they are to be ; and if by the annihilation of time and space then are space and time annihilated. Adventures are to the adventurous all the world over ; but they are so with a difference in the East. It is only Sindbad that confesses himself devoured with the

lust of travel. The grip of a humourous and fantastic fate is tight on all the other heroes of this epic-in-bits. They do not go questing for accidents: their hour comes, and the finger of God urges them forth, and thrusts them on in the way of destiny. The air is horrible with the gross and passionate figments of Islamite mythology. Afrits watch over or molest them; they are made captive of malignant Ghouls; the Jinns take bodily form and woo them to their embraces. The sea-horse ramps at them from the ocean floor; the great roc darkens earth about them with the shadow of his wings; wise and goodly apes come forth and minister unto them; enchanted camels bear them over evil deserts with the swiftness of the wind, or the magic horse outspreads his sail-broad vannes, and soars with them; or they are borne aloft by some servant of the Spell till the earth is as a bowl beneath them, and they hear the angels quiring at the foot of the Throne. So they fare to strange and dismal places: through cities of brass whose millions have perished by divine decree; cities guilty of the cult of the Fire and the Light wherein all life has been stricken to stone; or on to the magnetic mountain by whose horrible attraction the bolts are drawn from the ship, and they alone survive the inevitable wreck. And the end comes. Comes the Castle of Burnished Copper, and its gates fly open before them: the forty damsels, each one fairer than the rest, troop out at their approach; they are bathed in odours, clothed in glittering apparel, fed with enchanted meats, plunged fathoms deep in the delights of the flesh. There is contrived for them

a private paradise of luxury and splendour, a practical Infinite of gold and silver stuffs and jewels and all things gorgeous and rare and costly ; and therein do they abide for evermore. You would say of their poets that they contract immensity to the limits of desire ; they exhaust the inexhaustible in their enormous effort ; they stoop the universe to the slavery of a talisman, and bind the visible and invisible worlds within the compass of a ring.

Its Comedy.

But there is another side to their imaginings. When the Magian has done beating his copper drum—(how its mysterious murmur still haunts the echoes of memory!)—when Queen Lab has finished her tremendous conjurations, wonder gives place to laughter, the apotheosis of the flesh to the spirit of comedy. The enchanter turns harlequin ; and what the lovers ask is not the annihilation of time and space but only that the father be at his prayers, or the husband gone on a fool's errand, while they have leave to kiss each other's mouths, 'as a pigeon feedeth her young,' to touch the lute, strip language naked, and 'repeat the following verses' to a ring of laughing girls and amid all such comfits and delicates as a hungry audience may rejoice to hear enumerated. And the intrigue begins, and therewith the presentment of character, the portraiture of manners. Merry ladies make love to their gallants with flowers, or scorn them with the huckle-bones of shame ; the Mother Coles of Araby pursue the unwary stranger for their mistress' pleasure ; damsels resembling the full

moon carouse with genial merchants or inquiring calendars. The beast of burden, even the porter, has his hour: he goes the round at the heels of a veiled but beautiful lady, and lays her in the materials of as liberal and sumptuous a carouse as is recorded in history. Happy lady, and O thrice-fortunate porter! enviable even to the term of time! It is a voluptuous farce, a masque and anti-masque of wantonness and stratagem, of wine-cups and jewels and fine raiment, of gaudy nights and amorous days, of careless husbands and adventurous wives, of innocent fathers and rebel daughters and lovers happy or befooled. And high over all, his heart contracted with the spleen of the East, the tedium of supremacy, towers the great Caliph Haroun, the buxom and bloody tyrant, a Muslim Lord of Misrule. With Giafar, the finest gentleman and goodliest gallant of Eastern story, and Mesrour, the well-beloved, the immortal Eunuch, he goes forth upon his round in the enchanted streets of Baghdàd, like François Premier in the maze of old-time Paris. The night is musical with happy laughter and the sound of lutes and voices; it is seductive with the clink of goblets and the odour of perfumes: not a shadow but has its secret, or jovial or amorous or terrible: here falls a head, and there you may note the contrapuntal effect of the bastinado. But the blood is quickly hidden with flowers, the bruises are tired over with cloth-of-gold, and the jolly pageant sweeps on. Truly the comic essence is imperishable. What was fun to them in Baghdàd is fun to us in London after a thousand years.

Sacer Vates. THE prose of Mr. Payne's translation is always readable and often elegant; Sir Richard Burton's notes and 'terminal essays' are a mine of curious and diverting information; but for me the real author of *The Arabian Nights* is called not Burton nor Payne but Antoine Galland. He it was, in truth, who gave the world as much exactly as it needed of his preposterous original: who eliminated its tediousness, purged it of its barbarous and sickening immorality, wiped it clean of cruelty and unnaturalness, selected its essentials of comedy and romance, and set them clear and sharp against a light that western eyes can bear and in an atmosphere that western lungs can breathe. Of course the new translations are interesting—especially to ethnologists and the critic with a theory that translated verse is inevitably abominable. But they are not for the general nor the artist. They include too many pages revolting by reason of unutterable brutality of incident and point of view—as also for the vileness of those lewd and dreadful puritans whose excesses against humanity and whose devotion to Islam they record—to be acceptable as literature or tolerable as reading. Now, in Galland I get the best of them. He gave me whatever is worth remembering of Bedreddin and Camaralzaman and that enchanting Fairy Peri-Banou; he is the true poet alike of Abou Hassan and the Young King of the Black Islands, of Ali Baba and the Barber of the Brothers; to him I owe that memory —of Zobeide alone in the accursed city whose monstrous silence is broken by the voice of the one man spared by the wrath of God as he repeats his

solitary prayer—which ranks with Crusoe's discovery of the footprint in the thrilling moments of my life ; it was he who, by refraining from the use of pepper in his cream tarts, contrived to kitchen those confections with the very essence of romance ; it was he that clove asunder the Sultan's kitchen-wall for me, and took me to the pan, and bade me ask a certain question of the fish that fried therein, and made them answer me in terms mysterious and tremendous yet. Nay, that animating and delectable feeling I cherish ever for such enchanted commodities as gold-dust and sandal-wood and sesame and cloth of gold and black slaves with scimitars—to whom do I owe it but this rare and delightful artist? 'O mes chers *Mille et une Nuits*!' says Fantasio, and he speaks in the name of all them that have lived the life that Galland alone made possible. The damsels of the new style may 'laugh till they fall backwards,' etc., through forty volumes instead of ten, and I shall still go back to my Galland. I shall go back to him because his masterpiece is—not a book of reference, nor a curiosity of literature, nor an achievement in pedantry, nor even a demonstration of the absolute failure of Islamism as an influence that makes for righteousness, but—an excellent piece of art.

RICHARDSON

His Fortune.

IT is many years since Richardson fell into desuetude; it is many years since he became the novelist not of the world at large but of that inconsiderable section of the world which is interested in literature. His methods are those of a bygone epoch; his ideals, with one or two exceptions, are old-fashioned enough to seem fantastic; his sentiment belongs to ancient history; to a generation bred upon Ouida's romances and the plays of Mr. W. S. Gilbert his morality appears not merely questionable but coarse and improper and repulsive. While he lived he was adored: he moved and spoke and dwelt in an eternal mist of 'good, thick, strong, stupefying incense smoke'; he was the idol of female England, a master of virtue, a king of art, the wisest and best of mankind. Johnson revered him—Johnson and Colley Cibber; Diderot ranked him with Moses and Homer; to Balzac and Musset and George Sand he was the greatest novelist of all time; Rousseau imitated him; Macaulay wrote and talked of him with an enthusiasm that would have sat becomingly on Lady Bradshaigh herself. But all that is over. Not even the emasculation to which the late Mr. Dallas was pleased to subject

Clarissa Harlowe could make *Clarissa Harlowe* popular ; not all the allusions of all the leader-writers of a leader-writing age have been able to persuade the public to renew its interest in the works and ways of Grandison the august and the lovely and high-souled Harriet Byron. Richardson has to be not skimmed but studied ; not sucked like an orange, nor swallowed like a lollipop, but attacked *secundum artem* like a dinner of many courses and wines. Once inside the vast and solid labyrinth of his intrigue, you must hold fast to the clue which you have caught up on entering, or the adventure proves impossible, and you emerge from his precincts defeated and disgraced. And by us children of Mudie, to whom a novel must be either a solemn brandy-and-soda or as it were a garrulous and vapid afternoon tea, adventures of that moment are not often attempted.

Again, when all is said in Richardson's favour, it has to be admitted against him that in *Pamela* he produced an essay in vulgarity—of sentiment and morality alike—which has never been surpassed. In these days it is hardly less difficult to understand the popularity of this masterpiece of specious immodesty than to speak or think of it with patience. That it was once thought moral is as wonderful as that it was once found readable. What is more easily apprehended is the contempt of Henry Fielding—is the justice of that ridicule he was moved to visit it withal. To him, a scholar and a gentleman and a man of the world, *Pamela* was a

Pamela.

new-fangled blend of sentimental priggishness and prurient unreality. To him the pretensions to virtue and consideration of the vulgar little hussy whom Richardson selected for his heroine were certainly not less preposterous than the titles to life and actuality of the wooden libertine whom Richardson put forth as his hero. He was artist enough to know that the book was ignoble as literature and absolutely false as fact; he was moralist enough to see that its teachings were the reverse of elevating and improving; and he uttered his conclusions *more suo* in one of the best and healthiest books in English literature. This, indeed, is the only merit of which the history of Miss Andrews can well be accused: that it set Fielding thinking and provoked him to the composition of the first of his three great novels. Pamela is only remembered nowadays as Joseph's sister: the egregious Mr. B—— has hardly any existence save as Lady Booby's brother. 'Tis an ill wind that blows good to nobody. There are few more tedious or more unpleasant experiences than *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded.* But you have but to remember that without it the race might never have heard of Fanny and Joseph, of the fair Slipslop and the ingenuous Didapper, of Parson Trulliber and immortal Abraham Adams, to be reconciled to its existence and the fact of its old-world fame. Nay, more, to remember its ingenious author with something of gratitude and esteem.

Grandison. NOR is this the only charge that can be made and sustained against our poet. It is also to be noted

in his disparagement that he is the author of *Sir Charles Grandison*, and that *Sir Charles Grandison*, epic of the polite virtues, is deadly dull. 'My dear,' says somebody in one of Mr. Thackeray's books, 'your eternal blue velvet quite tires me.' That is the worst of *Sir Charles Grandison*: his eternal blue velvet—his virtue, that is, his honour, his propriety, his good fortune, his absurd command over the affections of the other sex, his swordsmanship, his manliness, his patriotic sentiment, his noble piety—quite tires you. He is an ideal, but so very, very tame that it is hard to justify his existence. He is too perfect to be of the slightest moral use to anybody. He has everything he wants, so that he has no temptation to be wicked; he is incapable of immorality, so that he is easily quit of all inducements to be vicious; he has no passions, so that he is superior to every sort of spiritual contest; he is monstrous clever, so that he has made up his mind about everything knowable and unknowable; he is excessively virtuous, so that he has made it up in the right direction. He is, as Mr. Leslie Stephen remarks, a tedious commentary on the truth of Mrs. Rawdon Crawley's acute reflection upon the moral effect of five thousand a year. He is only a pattern creature, because he has neither need nor opportunity, neither longing nor capacity, to be anything else. In real life such faultless monsters are impossible: one does not like to think what would happen if they were not. In fiction they are possible enough, and—what is more to the purpose—they are of necessity extravagantly dull. This is what is the matter with Sir Charles.

He is dull, and he effuses dulness. By dint of being uninteresting himself he makes his surroundings uninteresting. In the record of his adventures and experiences there is enough of wit and character and invention to make the fortune of a score or more of such novels as the public of these degenerate days would hail with enthusiasm. But his function is to vitiate them all. He is a bore of the first magnitude, and of his eminence in that capacity his history is at once the monument and the proof.

Clarissa. But if *Grandison* be dull and *Pamela* contemptible *Clarissa* remains; and *Clarissa* is what Musset called it, 'le premier roman du monde.' Of course *Clarissa* has its faults. Miss Harlowe, for instance, is not always herself—is not always the complete creation she affects to be: there are touches of moral pedantry—anticipations of George Eliot—in her; the scenes in which she is brought to shame are scarcely real, living, moving, all the rest of it. But on the other hand is there anything better than Lovelace in the whole range of fiction? Take Lovelace in all or any of his moods—suppliant, intriguing, repentant, triumphant, above all triumphant—and find his parallel if you can. Where, you ask, did the little printer of Salisbury Court—who suggests to Mr. Stephen 'a plump white mouse in a wig'—where did Richardson discover so much gallantry and humanity, so much romance and so much fact, such an abundance of the heroic qualities and the baser veracities of mortal nature?

Lovelace is, if you except Don Quixote, the completest hero in fiction. He has wit, humour, grace, brilliance, charm; he is a scoundrel and a ruffian, and he is a gentleman and a man; of his kind and in his degree he has the right Shakespearean quality. Almost as perfect in her way is the enchanting Miss Howe—an incarnation of womanliness and wit and fun, after Lovelace the most brilliant of Richardson's creations. Or take the Harlowe family: the severe and stupid father, the angry and selfish uncles, the cub James, the vixen Arabella, a very fiend of envy and hatred and malice—what a gallery of portraits is here! And Solmes and Tomlinson, Belford and Brand and Hickman; and the infinite complexity of the intrigue; the wit, the pathos, the invention; the knowledge of human nature; the faculty of dialogue—where save in *Clarissa* shall we find all these? As for Miss Harlowe herself, all incomplete as she is she remains the Eve of fiction, the prototype of the modern heroine, the common mother of all the self-contained, self-suffering, self-satisfied young persons whose delicacies and repugnances, whose independence of mind and body, whose airs and ideas and imaginings, are the stuff of the modern novel. With her begins a new ideal of womanhood; from her proceeds a type unknown in fact and fiction until she came. When after outrage she declines to marry her destroyer, and prefers death to the condonation of her dishonour, she strikes a note and assumes a position till then not merely unrecognised but absolutely undiscovered. It has been said of her half in jest and half in earnest that she is 'the aboriginal Woman's

Rights person' ; and it is a fact that she and Helena and Desdemona and Ophelia are practically a thousand years apart. And this is perhaps her finest virtue as it is certainly her greatest charm: that until she set the example woman in literature as a self-suffering individuality, as an existence endowed with equal rights to independence—of choice, volition, action—with man, had not begun to be. That of itself would suffice to make *Clarissa* memorable ; and that is the least of its merits. Consider it from which point you will, the book remains a masterpiece, unique of its kind. It has been imitated but it has never been equalled. It is Richardson's only title to fame ; but it is enough. Not the Great Pyramid itself is more solidly built nor more incapable of ruin.

TOLSTOÏ

THERE are two men in Tolstoï. He is a mystic and he is also a realist. He is addicted to the practice of a pietism that for all its sincerity is nothing if not vague and sentimental; and he is the most acute and dispassionate of observers, the most profound and earnest student of character and emotion. These antitheses are both represented in his novels. He has thought out the scheme of things for himself; his interpretation, while deeply tinctured with religion, is also largely and liberally human; he is one to the just and the unjust alike, and he is no more angry with the wicked than he is partial to the good. He asks but one thing of his men and women—that they shall be natural; yet he handles his humbugs and impostors with as cold a kindness and a magnanimity as equable as he displays in his treatment of their opposites. Indeed his interest in humanity is inexhaustible, and his understanding of it is wellnigh formidable in its union of breadth with delicacy. Himself an aristocrat and an official, he is able to sympathise with the Russian peasant as completely and to express his sentiments as perfectly as he is able to present the characters and give utterance to the ambitions and the idiosyn-

The Man and the Artist.

might be assumed to have studied best. It is to be noted, moreover, that he looks for his material at one or other pole of society. He is equally at home with officers and privates, with diplomats and carpenters, with princes and ploughmen ; but with the intermediary strata he is out of touch, and he is careful to leave the task of presenting them to others. It is arguable that only in the highest and lowest expressions of society is unsophisticated nature to be found ; and that Tolstoï, interested less in manners than in men, and studious above all of the elemental qualities of character, has done right to avoid the middle-class and attach himself to the consideration and the representation of the highest and the lowest. Certain it is that here have been his successes. The Prince Andry of *War and Peace*—cultured, intelligent, earnest, true lover and true gentleman—is as noble a hero as modern fiction has achieved ; but he is no more interesting as a human being and no more successful as art than the Marianna of *les Cosaques*, who is a savage pure and simple, or the Efim of *les Deux Vieillards*, who would seem to the haughty Radical no better than a common idiot. It is to be noted of all three—the prince, the savage, and the peasant—that none in himself is sophisticate nor vile but that each is rich in the common, simple, elemental qualities of humanity. It is to these and the manifestations of these that Tolstoï turns for inspiration first of all. If he chose he could be as keen a satirist and as indefatigable a student of the meannesses and the minor miseries of existence, the toothaches and the

pimples of experience, as Thackeray. But he does not choose. The epic note sounds in his work. The eternal issues of life, the fundamental interests of character and conduct and emotion, are his material. Love, valour, self-sacrifice, charity, the responsibilities of being, these and their like are the only vital facts to him; they constitute the really important part of the scheme of things as he sees and comprehends it. In their analysis the artist and the mystic meet and take hands; sometimes to each other's profit, more often to each other's hurt. It is not without significance that no other novelist has looked so closely and penetrated so far into the secret of death: that none has divined so much of it, nor presented his results with so complete and intimate a mastery and so persuasive and inspiring a belief. Plainly Tolstoï has learned 'la vraie signification de la vie'; his faith in its capacities is immense, his acceptance of its consequences is unhesitating. He is the great optimist, and his work is wholesome and encouraging in direct ratio to the vastness of his talent and the perfection of his method.

Ivan Iliitch.

Who does not know that extraordinary *Death of Ivan Iliitch*? It is an achievement in realism: not the realism of externals and trivial details—though of this there is enough for art if not for the common Zolaphyte—but the higher and better sort, the realism which deals with mental and spiritual conditions, the realism of *Othello* and *Hamlet*. There are many deaths in literature, but there is none, I

think, in which the gradual processes of dissolution are analysed and presented with such knowledge, such force, such terrible directness, as here. The result is appalling, but the final impression is one of encouragement and consolation. Here, as everywhere, Tolstoï appeals to the primitive nature of man, and the issue is what he wishes it to be. Not for him is the barren pessimism of the latter-day French rhapsodist in fiction, and the last word of his study, inexorable till then, is a word of hope and faith.

War and Peace.

INCOMPARABLY his greatest book, however, is *War and Peace*. It is the true Russian epic; alike in the vastness of its scope and in the completeness of its execution. It tells the story of the great conflict between Koutouzoff and Russia and Napoleon and France, it begins some years before Austerlitz, and it ends when Borodino and Moscow are already ancient history. The canvas is immense: the crowd of figures and the world of incidents almost bewildering. It is not a complete success. In many places the mystic has got the better of the artist: he is responsible for theories of the art of war which, advanced with the greatest confidence, are disproved by the simple narrative of events; and he has made a study of Napoleon in which, for the first and only time in all his work, he appears as an intemperate advocate. But when all is said in blame so much remains to praise that one scarce knows where to begin. Tolstoï's theory of war is mystical and untenable, no doubt; but his pictures

of warfare are incomparably good. None has felt and reproduced as he has done what may be called the intimacy of battle—the feeling of the individual soldier, the passion and excitement, the terror and the fury, that taken collectively make up the influence which represents the advance or the retreat of an army in combat. But also, in a far greater degree, none has dealt so wonderfully with the vaster incidents, the more tremendous issues. His Austerlitz is magnificent ; his Borodino is (there is no other word for it) epic ; his studies of the Retreat are almost worthy of what has gone before. For the first time what has been called 'tne peering modern touch' is here applied to great events, with the result that here is a book unique in literature. Of the characters—Natasha, Peter, Mary, Dennissoff, the Rostoffs, Helen, Dologhoff, Bagration, Bolkonsky, and the others ; above all Koutouzoff and Prince Andry—Prince Andry the heroic gentleman, Koutouzoff the genius of Russia and the war —to meet them once is to take on a set of friends and enemies for life.

FIELDING

Illusions.

FIELDING is one of the most striking figures in our literary history, and he is one of the most popular as well. But it is questionable if many people know very much about him after all, or if the Fielding of legend—the potwalloper of genius at whom we have smiled so often—has many things in common with the Fielding of fact, the indefatigable student, the vigorous magistrate, the great and serious artist. You hear but little of him from himself; for with that mixture of intellectual egoism and moral unselfishness which is a characteristic of his large and liberal nature he was as careless of Henry Fielding's sayings and doings and as indifferent to the fact of Henry Fielding's life and personality as he was garrulous in respect of the good qualities of Henry Fielding's friends and truculently talkative about the vices of Henry Fielding's enemies. And what is exactly known people have somehow or other contrived to misapprehend and misapply. They have preferred the evidence of Horace Walpole to that of their own senses. They have suffered the brilliant antithesis of Lady Mary to obscure and blur the man as they might have found him in his work. Booth and

Jones have been taken for definite and complete reflections of the author of their being: the parts for the whole, that is—a light-minded captain of foot and a hot-headed and soft-hearted young man about town for adequate presentments of the artist of a new departure and the writer of three or four books of singular solidity and finish. Whichever way you turn, you are confronted with appearances each more distorted and more dubious than the other. Some have chosen to believe the foolish fancies of Murphy, and have pictured themselves a Fielding begrimed with snuff, heady with champagne, and smoking so ferociously that out of the wrappings of his tobacco he could keep himself in paper for the manuscripts of his plays. For others the rancour of Smollett calls up a Fielding who divides his time and energy between blowing a trumpet on a Smithfield show and playing Captain Bilkum to a flesh-and-blood Stormandra at the establishment of a living, breathing, working Mother Punchbowl. With Dr. Rimbault and Professor Henry Morley others yet evolve from their inner consciousness a Fielding with a booth in Smithfield, buffooning for the coppers of a Bartlemy Fair audience. The accomplished lawyer has had as little place in men's thoughts as the tender father, the admirable artist as little as the devoted husband and the steadfast friend. Fielding has been so often painted a hard drinker that few have thought of him as a hard reader; he has been suspected of conjugal infidelity, so it has seemed impossible that he should be other than a violent Bohemian. In certain chapters of *Jonathan Wild the Great* there

is enough of sustained intellectual effort to furnish forth a hundred modern novels ; but you only think of Fielding reeling home from the Rose, and refuse to consider him except as sitting down with his head in a wet towel to scribble immodest and ruffianly trash for the players! A consequence of all these exercises in sentiment and imagination has been that, while many have been ready to deal with Fielding as the text for a sermon or the subject of an essay, as the point of a moral or the adornment of a tale, few have cared to think of him as worthy to dispute the palm with Cervantes and Sir Walter as the heroic man of letters.

Facts. He is before all things else a writer to be studied. He wrote for the world at large and to the end that he might be read eternally. His matter, his manner, the terms of his philosophy, the quality of his ideals, the nature of his achievement, proclaim him universal. Like Scott, like Cervantes, like Shakespeare, he claims not merely our acquaintance but an intimate and abiding familiarity. He has no special public, and to be only on nodding terms with him is to be practically dead to his attraction and unworthy his society. He worked not for the boys and girls of an age but for the men and women of all time ; and both as artist and as thinker he commands unending attention and lifelong friendship. He is a great inventor, an unrivalled craftsman, a perfect master of his material. His achievement is the result of a lifetime of varied experience, of searching and sustained observation of unweary-

ing intellectual endeavour. The sound and lusty types he created have an intellectual flavour peculiar to themselves. His novels teem with ripe wisdom and generous conclusions and beneficent examples. As Mr. Stephen tells you, 'he has the undeniable merit of representing certain aspects of contemporary society with a force and accuracy not even rivalled by any other writer'; and it is a fact that not to have studied him 'is to be without a knowledge of the most important documents of contemporary history.' More: to contrast those fair, large parchments in which he has stated his results with those tattered and filthy papers which the latter-day literary rag-picker exists but to grope out from kennel and sewer is to know the difference between the artist in health and the artist possessed by an idiosyncrasy as by a devil.

The Worst of It.

But the present is an age of sentiment: its ideals and ambitions are mainly emotional; what it chiefly loves is romance or the affectation of romance, passion, self-conscious solemnity, and a certain straining after picturesque effects. In Fielding's time there was doubtless a good deal of sentimentalism, for his generation delighted not only in Western and Trunnion and Mrs. Slipslop but in Pamela and Clarissa and the pathetic Le Fevre. But for all that it was—at all events in so far as it was interesting to Fielding and in so far as Fielding has pictured it—a generation that knew nothing of romance but was keenly interested in common sense, and took a vast deal of honest pleasure in

humour and wit and a rather truculent and full-blooded type of satire. It is plain that such possibilities of sympathy and understanding as exist between a past of this sort and such a present as our own must of necessity be few and small. Their importance, too, is greatly diminished when you reflect on the nature and tendency of certain essential elements in Fielding's art and mind. The most vigorous and the most individual of these is probably his irony; the next is that abundant vein of purely intellectual comedy by whose presence his work is exalted to a place not greatly inferior to that of the *Misanthrope* and the *École des Femmes*. These rare and shining qualities are distinguishing features in the best and soundest part of Fielding. Of irony he is probably the greatest English master; of pure comedy—the intellectual manipulation and transmutation into art of what is spiritually ridiculous in manners and society—he is both in narrative and in dialogue the greatest between Shakespeare and Mr. George Meredith. And with both our sympathy is imperfect. We have learned to be sentimental and self-sufficient with Rousseau, to be romantic and chivalrous with Scott, to be emotional with Dickens, to take ourselves seriously with Balzac and George Eliot; there are touches of feeling in our laughter, even though the feeling be but spite; we have acquired a habit of politeness—a tradition of universal consideration and respect; and our theory of satire is rounded by the pleasing generalities of Mr. Du Maurier on the one hand and the malevolent respectability of Mr. W. S. Gilbert on the other. It is an age of

easy writing and still easier reading; our authors produce for us much in the manner of the silkworm —only their term of life is longer; we accept their results in something of the spirit of them that are interested, and not commercially, in the processes of silkworms. And M. Guy de Maupassant can write but hath a devil, and we take him not because of his writing but because of his devil; and Blank and Dash and So-and-So and the rest could no more than so many sheep develop a single symptom of possession among them, and we take them because a devil and they are incompatibles. And art is short and time is long; and we care nothing for art and almost as much for time; and there is little if any to choose between Mudie's latest 'catch' and last year's 'sensation' at Burlington House. And to one of us it is 'poor Fielding'; and to another Fielding is merely gross, immoral, and dull; and to most the story of that last journey to Lisbon is unknown, and Thackeray's dream of Fielding—a novelist's presentiment of a purely fictitious character—is the Fielding who designed and built and finished for eternity. Which is to be pitied? The artist of *Amelia* and *Jonathan Wild*, the creator of the Westerns and Parson Adams and Colonel Bath? or we the whipper-snappers of sentiment—the critics who can neither read nor understand?

ART

TO

ROBERT, LORD WINDSOR

THESE ESSAYS

IN THE APPRECIATION

OF AN ART HE PRACTISES

AND LOVES

W. E. H.

WORTHING, *January* 1902.

PREFATORY

To hold opinions and state conclusions about an art whose technical processes are strange, and whose practice is impossible: this, it has ever seemed to me, is to take oneself more seriously than he may do that would sit well with posterity. And yet, *humanum est errare*: to hold views, and to publish them, is human; and in this bookling I confess myself as naturally given as the rest. Indeed, I have taken not a little pleasure in the work of recovering and presenting its materials from the several volumes in which they were dissembled; for, to be plain, I have seen little to change, and more than once, as in the case of the living Rodin and the dead Charles Keene, I have found myself revising stuff which has so much the trick of to-day, as to seem commonplace and old. Yet was it written near a dozen years ago, and, at the time of writing, sounded alike violent and new and singular. In the same way I see no reason for mitigating what I wrote of Corot and Courbet, of Meissonier and Delacroix, of Rousseau and Vollon, of Monticelli and Rossetti, Reynolds and Gainsborough, Constable and Millet and the brothers

Maris. It is not all the truth I know; but I believe that it is mostly by way of being true, and I pass it on for what it is worth. Frankly, I think it is worth something: whether little or much is not for me to say. If I mistake, and it be naught (like the Knight's pancakes), at least I may claim to have read few books into my pictures, to have done my best to keep my painting more or less unlettered, to have proffered my conclusions, such as they are, fairly well purged of sentiment. So did not Hazlitt, nor did Ruskin; and if it must be that I fail with these, I doubt not (such is the vanity of Man) that I shall take a sour pleasure in reflecting that, be things as they may, my failure is not on all-fours with theirs.

It remains to add that what is hereafter set forth is selected from (1) the *Catalogue* (1888) of that Loan Collection of French and Dutch Pictures (the first of its kind done in these Islands) which, thanks to my dear dead friend, Robert Hamilton-Bruce, makes memorable the Edinburgh International Exhibition of 1886; (2) the *Century of Artists* (1889), prepared by Messrs. MacLehose as a Memorial of the Glasgow Exhibition in 1888; (3) the little *Catalogue of a Loan Collection of Pictures by the Great French and Dutch Romanticists of this Century*, prepared for the Messrs. Dowdeswell in 1889; and (4) the *Sir Henry Raeburn*, published by the Royal Association for the

Promotion of the Fine Arts in Scotland in 1890. The 'Keene' and the 'Rodin' date from the same year, in the May and June of which they were contributed to *The National Observer*; while the last number of all was written for *The Pall Mall Magazine* as late as the July of 1900. Here and there I have rewritten; here and there I have added notes; here and there I have done what I could to mend the style. But I have modernized nothing; and on the whole I am well enough pleased to leave the older stuff much as I left it years ago.

W. E. H.

A NOTE ON ROMANTICISM

EIGHTEEN-THIRTY has been called the Ninety-Three of the arts; and the description has a certain justness. In that year, indeed, was fought and won the battle of *Hernani*, and what had seemed a revolt was recognised and proclaimed a revolution. Too much has been made of the affair, no doubt: the interest was mainly one of style, the hero was a representative man of letters, the memory is one that literary men have united to exalt and cherish. But the work of reform was already as good as done. Balzac had published *les Chouans*, Dumas had created the type of the modern historical play in *Henri Trois et sa cour*, Constable had appeared and conquered, Delacroix had exhibited the *Massacre de Scio* and the *Mort de Sardanapale*, Huet and Isabey had broken new ground in landscape, Rude and Barye were violating as they would the academical ideal of sculpture, Macready and Miss Smithson had been seen and heard in Shakespeare's own *Othello*, Frédérick was renowned both as the Macaire of *l'Auberge des Adrets* and the Georges de Germany of *Trente ans*, the *Méditations* of Lamartine was almost an old book, Habeneck had founded the Conservatoire concerts, Berlioz was

Hernani.

hard at work on the *Symphonie fantastique*, Sainte-Beuve had produced the famous *Tableau historique et critique*, while Hugo himself had renewed and re-inspired the lyric faculty of France; so that in the matter of essentials not much remained to accomplish or essay. But when all is said, the occasion was momentous. The poet's claim amounted to nothing less than the prescriptive right of every artist to be as lawless as Shakespeare seemed; his opponents urged that salvation there was none without the mint and anise and cummin exacted by Racine and Boileau; and for five-and-forty nights the question was debated before and by the audiences of the Théâtre-Français. The work of a magnificent and entirely histrionic vulgarian, *Hernani* is rather an intermittent five-act lyric than a drama. But it took its place beside *le Cid*; and there was demonstrated with every circumstance of publicity—what is equally true of Sophocles and Hugo, of the *Iliad* and *la Reine Margot*—that in the composition of a work of art the individual genius of the artist counts for at least as much as the principles on which he has wrought.

I

'Les vaillants de Mil-huit-cent-trente.'

WHAT is called Romanticism—the change, that is, in the material, the treatment, and the technical methods and ideals of art which was made in the France of Charles x. and Louis-Philippe—was the outcome of a generation rich in strenuous and potent individualities. The great emotions of the

Republic and the Empire had induced such an efflorescence of temperament and genius as the world has not often seen. The suggestion is one that might easily be ridden to death; but I will note that the inspiration of the time was wholly Napoleon's, and it might be argued with some show of reason that Romanticism was as much a part of his legacy as the *Code* itself, or the memories of Austerlitz and Montmirail. It is at any rate certain that the period of his ascendency was a time of intense and peculiar suffering, that it was also a time of enormous enterprise and achievement, and that it was under the pressure of these conditions that the men and women of the Romantic revival—'cette grande génération de Mille-huit-cent-trente,' says Gautier, with honourable pride, 'qui marquera dans l'avenir, et dont on parlera comme d'une des époques climatériques de l'esprit humain'—were engendered and conceived.

Of Nativities.

It is only the few who date from earlier days. Mme. de Staël, the Eve of Romanticism, was born in 1766, five years before Walter Scott; Chateaubriand, the archetype of the movement in splendour of style and insincerity of sentiment, in 1768; Sénancour, whose *Obermann* (1804) had so deep and lasting an influence on Sainte-Beuve and George Sand, in 1770. Béranger, Ingres, and Charles Nodier followed in 1780; Habeneck in 1781: Lamennais and Rude in 1782 and 1783; Mlle. Georges, the original Lucrèce Borgia and Marguerite de Bourgogne, in 1786; David

d'Angers in 17 9—a year after Byron ; Géricault, Scribe, and Lamartine—with Meyerbeer, whose share in Romanticism is large enough almost to make a Frenchman of him—in 1791 ; Charlet in 1792 ; and Lablache in 1793. All these, however, were the elders of the movement, whose more active and more characteristic forces began to be in one or other of the twenty years between the beginning of 1795—which saw the birth of the historian Thierry and the sculptor Barye—and the end of 1814—which gave Prince Bismarck to Germany, and to France the painter of the *Glaneuses* and the *Berger au parc*. Corot came in 1796 ; Thiers and Pierre Leroux, in 1797 ; Michelet and Méry in 1798 ; Balzac, Halévy, Henri Monnier, Alfred de Vigny, and Eugène Delacroix in 1799. Frédérick Lemaître, the hero of half a hundred memorable dramas, was, like Heine, 'one of the first men of the century' ; his rival, Bocage, and his 'female,' Marie Dorval—the Dorval of *Antony*, *Chatterton*, *Angelo*, *Marion Delorme*—were, like *Atala*, the offspring of 1801, as were Ernest Littré, the satirist Gavarni, and the admirable comedian Lafont. Next year was the year of the *Génie du Christianisme*, and among its births were those of Victor Hugo, Lacordaire, Froment-Meurice, Eugène Isabey, Camille Flers, and Alexandre Dumas ; those of Berlioz, Mérimée, Quinet, Decamps, and Tony Johannot were registered in 1803 : those of Delphine Gay and Aurore Dudevant, of Nestor Roqueplan, Raffet, Paul Huet, Sainte-Beuve, the musician Hippolyte Monpou—and at Stockholm Marie Taglioni—are credited to 1804. In 1805,

connate with our own Disraeli, a *romantique* of the first magnitude in his way and day, were the poets Auguste Barbier and Gérard de Nerval, the painter Eugène Devéria—for a year or two 'le Véronèse de la France'—and the novelist Charles de Bernard. In 1806 were born the tenor Duprez and Louis Boulanger, artist in lithography of a once famous *Ronde du sabbat*, and in colour of a once famous *Mazeppa*; in 1808, Maria Malibran, the painter Diaz, and the actor-sculptor Mélingue, the original d'Artagnan, the original Chicot, the original Henri de Lagardère; in 1810, Hégésippe Moreau, Montalembert, Constant Troyon, Alfred de Musset, and the incomparable draughtsman, the tremendous caricaturist Honoré Daumier; in 1811, the year of Thackeray and Liszt, Théophile Gautier and Jules Dupré; in 1812, Théodore Rousseau in Paris and Charles Dickens at Portsmouth; and in 1813, with Richard Wagner—in whose work the Romantic ambition was to find its most extravagant expression—at Leipzig, the dramatist Félicien Mallefille and Louis Veuillot the polemist and journalist. The list, which might be made longer, is already long enough; but its variety is even more remarkable than its length. In the intellectual history of the world it would, I apprehend, be difficult, if not impossible, to name an epoch in which so many men attained to such eminence in so many of the arts at once. We think of the Age of Pericles as the Age of Sculpture, of the Age of Elizabeth as the Age of the Poetic Drama. Romanticism brings into action the full orchestra of the arts. Good work was done in poetry and drama, history and fiction,

painting, sculpture, and journalism, singing and acting, symphony and opera and song ; and though much of it has perished, much has lived to be ranked with the best of its kind.

eon. It is, perhaps, a paradox that the great First Cause of Romanticism was Napoleon. It is a truth that, if he were, he was wholly unconscious of his effect. Being an Italian, he was also in his way an artist. That he liked good acting, and was deeply interested in the theatre, is shown by his patronage of Talma and Georges and Mars, and, above all, by his famous 'Décret de Moscou' ; that he was capable of having an opinion of his own in music, by his squabbles with Cherubini and his patronage of Spontini and Lesueur. He could give David a start in painting ; he may be said to have created Gros ; his first proceeding after the conquest of Italy was to make a clean sweep of all the pictures and statues in the Peninsula that were worth stealing. He had a vigorous literary instinct and a notable sense of style ; or he could not have written the series of bulletins and proclamations which Sainte-Beuve, if I remember aright, regarded as the nearest thing to a great national epic in the literature of France. But the despot in him had precedence of the artist ; and as a despot he had no love for new ideas and no tolerance for intellectual independence. He cared nothing for Chateaubriand ; Benjamin Constant he dismissed and disgraced ; he snubbed and exiled Mme. de Staël. That, as he boasted, he would have made Corneille a senator is possible ;

that he would first of all have muzz'ed him is certain. He could turn out generals and administrators by the dozen ; but it was a different matter when he came to deal with art and artists. His reign was not altogether barren of masterpieces, it is true : for him Gros painted the series of heroic pictures which includes the *Pestiférés de Jaffa*, the *Aboukir*, and the decorations in the cupola of the Panthéon ; under his auspices, and at his Académie de Musique, Spontini produced the *Vestale* and the *Fernand Cortez*, and Lesueur his *Bardes* ; it was to a public of his subjects that Chateaubriand addressed his *Atala* and his *Génie du Christianisme*, and Mme. de Staël her *Corinne* and her memorable *De l'Allemagne*. None of these things was old-fashioned : on the contrary, their tendencies were boldly experimental ; they were fresh in sentiment and startling in effect. But, for all that, so far as art is concerned, the France which was handed over to the Bourbons after Waterloo had the look of so much dead land.

The Classi

As exemplified in the practice of the great artists of the past—in the tragedies of Corneille and Racine, the comedies of Molière and Regnard, the prose of Sévigné and La Bruyère, the familiar verse of Voltaire and La Fontaine, the discourses of Bossuet and Fénelon, the novels of Lesage, the noble canvases of Claude and the Poussins, the music of Gluck, the histrionics of Lecouvreur and Baron and Lekain—the classic convention is in the highest degree admirable. Plainly its essentials are

dignity of style, lucidity in expression, reticence and elevation of sentiment; plainly it necessitates the cult of elegance and the attainment of sobriety; plainly it is incompatible with the mannerisms which are offensive because they are merely personal. The reverse of the medal is less pleasing. The classic convention is as easily abused as it is hard to handle with an approach to perfection. Selection, its distinguishing principle, can only be exercised with profit upon material at once abundant and of sterling excellence. Given a man of genius who is also a great artist, and we get such results as *Cinna*, and *Armide*, and the *Arcadia*; given a man of talent who is also an accomplished craftsman, and we have to be content with the canvases of Girodet and the alexandrines of the Abbé Delille. In the early Restoration Girodet was reckoned a master, while the memory of the Abbé Delille was cherished by all true children of the Muse. Classicism, in fact, lay on the arts like, not a bloom but, a blight. It was the official faith. It was enthroned at the Académie, it governed the Théâtre-Français, it possessed the Salon, it inspired the Press, and through the Press shaped the course of public opinion. There are hints of it in Hugo's earlier *Odes*, in Lamartine's *Méditations*, in Géricault's strange and daring masterpiece itself.

First Causes of Romanticism.

THE reforming inspiration was, not developed but, transmitted. The time had been when, as an integral part of French influence, the classic formula was paramount all over Europe. Now it was fallen

into the last stage of senile decrepitude even in France, while in Germany and England it had been swept utterly away. The first to rise against it was Germany, where the modern tendency had achieved what is so far its most heroic expression in the instrumental music of Beethoven, and where the quest of other perfections than are recognised in Boileau and La Harpe had resulted, in the hands of such men as Goethe and Schiller, Bürger and Lessing and Tieck, Uhland and the Schlegels, in the creation of a national literature. In England, where the activity of Shakespeare and Milton had never been altogether suspended,[1] its triumph, thanks largely to the teaching of the Wartons, the example of Gray, and the admirable work of Bishop Percy,[2] was easy and rapid. Goethe had owed his awakening to the example of Shakespeare; and it was the first-fruits of this conjunction—the *Goetz von Berlichingen* of 1771-3—that, with Iffland's plays and the ballads of Bürger, determined the destiny of Walter Scott, and so called into action the fiery and awakening genius of Byron. With these two at work, the act of change was soon accom-

[1] Mr. Walter Raleigh has shown us of late (1900) that to the misunderstanding of Milton's aims and the misuse of Milton's methods we are indebted for all the poetic diction and most of the intolerable didactic verse which is the gift of the Eighteenth Century to English-speaking men. [1901.]

[2] And Horace Walpole—I suppose he also did his part: though the *Castle of Otranto* is a piddling piece of supernature, and *The Mysterious Mother* is—but how to qualify *The Mysterious Mother*? Yet without Horace Walpole we should probably have had a different Mrs. Radcliff; and Mrs. Radcliff (it is well known and established) was useful to Byron—even if she did not inspire his works. So that Horace Walpole, against his will or not, is, he also—he the Universal Faddle!—a precursor. [1901.]

plished. Of course they did not stand alone. Beside them were Crabbe, Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley in poetry: with Hazlitt and Lamb in criticism, Coleridge in criticism and poetry, Siddons and Kean in histrionics, and Turner, Constable, and Lawrence in painting. But I think it may be said, that the master forces of the Romantic revival in England, and, after England, the most of Europe, were Scott and Byron. They were the vulgarisers (as it were) of its most human and popular tendencies; and it is scarce possible to exaggerate the importance of the part they bore in its evolution. In their faults and in their virtues, each was representative of one or other of the two main tendencies of his time. With his passion for what is honourably immortal in the past, his immense and vivid instinct of the picturesque, his inexhaustible humanity, his magnificent moral health, his abounding and infallible sense of the eternal realities of life, Scott was an incarnation of chivalrous and manly duty; while Byron, with his lofty yet engaging cynicism, his passionate regard for passion, his abnormal capacity for defiance, and that overbearing and triumphant individuality which made him one of the greatest elemental forces ever felt in literature —Byron was the lovely and tremendous and transcending genius of revolt. Each in his way became an European influence, and between them they made Romanticism in France. The men of 1830, it is true, were neither deaf to the voices, nor blind to the examples, of certain among their own ancestors: Ronsard, for instance, and the poets of the Pleiad, Rousseau and Saint-Simon, André

Chénier and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Villon and Montaigne and Rabelais. But it is a principal characteristic of them, that they were anxiously cosmopolitan. They quoted more languages than they knew. They were on intimate terms with all the names in the æsthetic history of the world. They boxed the compass for inspiration, and drank it in at every point upon the card: from Goethe, Schiller, Hoffmann, Heine, Iffland, Beethoven, Weber in Germany; from Dante, Titian, Rossini, Piranesi, Gozzi, Benvenuto in Italy; from Constable, Turner, Maturin, Lawrence, Shakespeare, Thomas Moore in England; from Calderon, Goya, Cervantes, the poets of the *Romancero*, in Spain. But all these were later in time than Byron and Scott, or were found less potent and less moving when they came. Thus, the *Faust* of Goethe was not translated until 1823; the *Eroica* of Beethoven, whose work was long pronounced incomprehensible and impossible of execution, was only heard in 1828, the real *Freischütz* some thirteen years after; while Macready's revelation of Shakespeare, till then (Voltaire and Ducis and the Abbé Prévost notwithstanding) not much except a monstrous and mysterious name, was contemporaneous with Habeneck's of Beethoven. Scott and Byron, on the other hand, had but to be known to be felt, and they were known almost at once. I have said that the effect of Romanticism was a revolution in the technique, the material, and the treatment of the several arts. I do not think I affirm too much in adding that, but for Scott and Byron, the revolution would have come later than it did, and would, as

regards the last two, have taken a different course when it came.

Sir Walter. As in England, the first in the field was Scott. When he attended the Congress of Paris in 1815 the fame of his verse had preceded him, and his novels were freely imitated during the early Restoration: he was speedily accessible (1816-36) in translations—by Martin, Pichot, and Defauconpret—of which some fourteen hundred thousand volumes were sold in his very lifetime. And his generous and abounding influence was felt with equal force by the average reader and the pensive poet. To say nothing of *Cromwell*, which may well be referable in some sort to *les Puritains d'Écosse* (which is, being interpreted, *Old Mortality*), one of Hugo's first attempts in drama was an *Amy Robsart* written in collaboration with Paul Foucher; Op. 1. of Berlioz is a *Waverley* overture; subjects from *Ivanhoe* and *Quentin Durward* occur with pleasing frequency in the catalogue of Delacroix; the origin of such notable departures in romantic prose as *Notre-Dame*, the *Chronique de Charles IX.*, and *Isabelle de Bavière*, and of such achievements in romantic verse as the *Pas d'armes du Roi Jean*, is patent. Scott, indeed, was responsible for the historical element in Romanticism. He taught his pupils to be interested in the past, to admire and understand the picturesque in character and life, to look for romance in reality, and turn old facts to new and brilliant uses. He was, no doubt, the Great First Cause of 'le jeune homme moyen-

âge,' and through him of a dismal phantasmagoria of castellans and high-born damozels, of rapiers and donjon keeps and long-toed shoes; but he must also be credited with the inspiration of not a little of what is best and most enduring among the results of the Romantic revolution.

The wicked Lord B——.

Nor may it be forgotten—in truth, it cannot be too constantly recalled—that Romanticism was above all an effect of youth. A characteristic of the movement—which has been called 'an æsthetic barring-out'—was the extraordinary precocity of its heroes. The *Dante et Virgile* and the *Radeau de la Méduse*, the *Odes et ballades* and *Hernani*, *Antony* and *Henri Trois et sa cour*, *Rolla* and the *Nuits*, the *Symphonie fantastique* and the *Comédie de la mort*, are master-stuff of their kind, and are all the work of men not thirty years old. Now, Byron is pre-eminently a young men's poet; and upon the heroic boys of 1830—greedy of emotion, intolerant of restraint, contemptuous of reticence and sobriety, sick with hatred of the platitudes of the official convention, and prepared to welcome as a return to truth and nature inventions the most extravagant and imaginings the most fantastic and far-fetched—his effect was little short of maddening. He was fully translated as early as 1819-20; and the modern element in Romanticism—that absurd and curious combination of vulgarity and terror, cynicism and passion, truculence and indecency, extreme bad-heartedness and preposterous self-sacrifice—is mainly his work. You find him in

Dumas's plays, in Musset's verse, in the music of Berlioz, the pictures of Delacroix, the novels of George Sand. He is the origin of *Antony* and *Rolla*, of *Indiana* and the *Massacre de Scio*, of Berlioz's *Lélio* and Frédérick's *Macaire*: as Scott is that of *Bragelonne*, and the *Croisés à Constantinople*, and Michelet's delightful history.

Style. As regards these elements, then, Romanticism was largely an importation. As regards technique—the element of style—it was not. Of this the inspiration was native: the revolution was wrought from within. The men of 1830 were craftsmen born: they had the genius of their material. The faculty of words, sounds, colours, situations was innate in them: their use of it is always original and sound, and is very often of exemplary excellence. It is hard to forgive—it is impossible to overlook—the vanity, the intemperance, the mixture of underbred effrontery and sentimental affectation, by which a great deal of their achievement is spoiled. Such qualities are 'most incident' to youth; and in a generation drunk with the divinity of Byron they were inevitable. Bad manners, however, are offensive at any age, and the convinced *Romantique*, as he was all-too prone to make a virtue of loose morals, was all-too apt to make a serious merit of unmannerliness. But good breeding and moral perfectness are not what one expects of the convinced *Romantique*: what we ask of him—what we get of him without asking—is craftsmanship, and craftsmanship of the rare, immortal

type. Hugo has written a whole shelf of nonsense ; but in verse, at least, his technical imagination was Shakespearian. The moral tone of *Antony* is ridiculous ; but it remains the most complete and masterly expression of some essentials of drama which the century has seen. The melodic inspiration of (say) *Harold en Italie* and the *Messe des Morts* may, or may not, be strained and thin ; but if only his orchestration be considered, the boast of their author, ' J'ai pris la musique instrumentale où Beethoven l'a laissée,' is found to be neither impudent nor vain. In a sense, then, it is fitting enough that the year of *Hernani* should be accepted as a marking date in the story. If it have nothing else, assuredly *Hernani* has style ; and the eternising influence of style is such that, if all save their technical achievement were forgotten, the men of 1830 would still be remembered as great artists.

Et puis, voilà !

THE revolution triumphed, and with reason ; but its triumph was very far from being absolute. It proved the greater *Romantiques* to be men of singular strength and genius ; it cleared the air of a poisonous mist of prejudice and affectation ; on every hand it opened up new paths, and discovered new horizons ; above all, it discovered a dazzling world of novel and appropriate material. But it did not demonstrate the inherent and intrinsic superiority of the new convention to the old. At this point the argument for Romanticism breaks down. For instance, it did not completely conquer the public esteem. In 1831 the receipts of the

Théâtre-Français ran down one night to something over seventy francs; in 1837, when Bocage and Frédérick were at the height of their fame, they ran up again to close on two hundred sterling a night: with Rachel on the stage the classic repertory—Corneille, Racine, even Voltaire—was found as great and moving as ever. This was in the heyday of the movement, and I give the fact for what it is worth. But apart from the popular esteem, something may be said for the view that perhaps the most perfect of all the results of Romanticism is the art of Corot, in which the style is that of a pupil of Claude, while the matter is that of an inheritor of Constable; and the cult of Corot is a matter of to-day. It remains to note—though this is rather interesting than significant—that the Romanticism of 1830 was never an official success. The rancour and the infamy, with which its beginnings were received, are in strange contrast with the good temper and (on the whole) the fairness which marked the course of the anti-classical movement in England, where Byron was the spoiled child of Gifford, and there was none much readier than Hazlitt the arch-radical to do justice upon the arch-tory Scott. They may be said to have pursued it until the end. Dumas was never of the Académie, nor were Gautier and Balzac, while Barye had to wait for the distinction till he was close on seventy years old. Berlioz was rejected more than once, and so was Eugène Delacroix: only because they knew the weight and the value of official recognition with the world, did they stoop to insist upon having their way. Quite late in life the one was selling his

pictures for a few pounds apiece, while the other, after a career of obloquy and glory, was at last obliged to burke his ideas as they came, lest they should grow into symphonies, which it would have made him bankrupt to produce. In fact, the development of some brilliant and profiting notorieties notwithstanding, Romanticism was no more a popular than an official success.

II

Gros.

Not many men have exercised so potent and so profound an influence in art as Louis David. His effect upon the painter of the *Pestiférés de Jaffa* is typical of his authority in life. In 1823, David being then in exile at Brussels, Gros was at the very top of his fame. He was a Baron, a Knight of the Order of St. Michael, and a member of the Institute ; he was high in favour with the King, as he had been with the Emperor ; he was Professor of Painting at the École des Beaux-Arts ; he had taken over David's School, and was known for the kindest and the most competent of teachers. Yet it is told of him that, when he conveyed to David the gold medal struck in honour of the master by his former pupils, he no sooner caught sight of the house in which the old despot had taken up his quarters than he was seized with a passion of terror and respect, and had to sit down in the street, and collect his spirits, ere he could bring himself to knock at the door. Nor was this the worst. Gros was the earliest of the *Romantiques* : he had formu-

lated a convention, developed a style, demonstrated the possibilities of a vast amount of new material, and shown the way to regions unknown or inaccessible before; his greater works had taken rank with the masterpieces of the French school; yet when David wrote to him, that he was to give over the painting of buttons and cocked hats, look up his Plutarch, and enrich the world with a real historical picture, he obeyed his instructions to the letter, and returned in all simplicity and good faith to the practice of the Heroic Nude. He was reviled as a renegade, and denounced as a reactionary; the revolution he had initiated was triumphing all along the line; he ceased to be able to sell his pictures. But, though David was dead, he went on conning his Plutarch, and painting exactly as he would have done had David been at his elbow. In the June of 1835, after a last colossal failure at the Salon, he drowned himself in the Seine. That, however, was only the end of the man. The artist had committed suicide some fourteen years before, and had done it by David's orders.

David. WITH Classicism as the official cult, and a disciplinarian of the stamp of David in authority, the chance of heresy, it might be thought, was insignificant. But in truth the beginnings of Romanticism were easy, in all the arts. At the inception of the movement the expression of heterodox views was the reverse of unwelcome. In literature the success of *Atala* was instant and complete; in music the experiments of Spontini and Lesueur

were considered with enthusiasm ; it was not otherwise in painting, though here the iron will of David, his intense and rigid personality, his fine craftsmanship, and his immense authority, were felt as vigorous immediate influences. He had started as an imitator of Boucher ; had studied the antique in Rome (1775-80) under Vien ; had returned to Paris an incarnation of that interest in the work of the Greeks and Romans among whose first fruits is the *Laocoon* of Lessing ; had painted the *Bélisaire*, the *Serment des Horaces*, the *Mort de Socrate* ; and had so completely stayed the movement of French art that his pupils (it is said) made studies on the back of stray canvases and drawings signed by Antoine Watteau. That solemn mockery of things antique, which was a characteristic of the Revolution, appeared to him in the light of a living, dominating reality. He carried it from painting into politics, and back again from politics into painting ; he believed in it as the outward and visible sign of civic and artistic virtue ; much of its vogue with the general may be attributed to his personal influence and example. The suppression of the Académie de Peinture was largely his work, as were a number of changes and reforms besides ; he began, but never finished, an enormous picture of the Session of the Tennis Court,—'famed *Séance du Jeu de Paume*,' as Carlyle calls the business ; he was responsible, among other abominations in pasteboard or in plaster, for the hideous and colossal allegory which—'imposante par son caractère de force et de simplicité'—should represent, to the admiration of all good patriots, 'l'image du

peuple Français' defying the world from a pedestal composed of 'les effigies des rois et les débris de leurs vils attributs'; he was master of the revels to the Republic and gentleman-usher to the newly-elected Supreme Being; in a style and temper which may be said to have made him a *Romantique* before the fact, he painted the posthumous portraits of Lepelletier Saint-Fargeau and Marat; he idolised Robespierre, with whom he offered (publicly) to share the Socratic hemlock. After the 9th Thermidor he was violently denounced in the Convention; stigmatised as a 'vile usurper' and a 'despot of the arts'; suspended from his service on the Committees; arrested more than once, and kept in durance for months at a time; and saw his *Marat expirant* and his *Lepelletier* removed in infamy from their place in the Panthéon. But at last he regained his liberty, and in no great while he had regained his credit. He painted his *Enlèvement des Sabines*; he was made a member of the Institute; his studio—from which, at one time or another, he sent out such disciples as Gros, Ingres, Drouais, Gérard, the elder Isabey, Schnetz, Granet, Girodet, Rude, Gudin, David d'Angers, and Léopold Robert—was thronged with pupils. His rivals were also his imitators; his ascendency was so real, and his dictatorship so absolute that Prud'hon, as late as 1810, was obliged to change his style, and paint an heroic allegory for the Salon: 'pour obtenir,' says Delescluze, 'la faveur d'être placé au nombre de ce qu'on appelle les peintres d'histoire.'

A Gascon Gascon et demi.

But if David was strong, Napoleon was stronger. It was a feature in his campaign against the future that his work should receive an adequate pictorial expression; and David, whom he met and subjugated at the outset of his career, was among the means he used to his end. He began by sitting to the painter for two portraits: one the magnificent sketch (unfinished) of the General of the Army of Italy; the other that one of the First Consul on horseback which is known as *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*. Afterwards he appointed David his painter in ordinary; obliged him to remember that he was the artist of the *Marat expirant* and the *Serment du Jeu de paume* as well as of the *Sabines* and the *Bélisaire*; ordered him out of the world of sculpture-in-paint he lived to represent, and made him put aside his *Léonidas*, and set to work on the *Couronnement de Napoléon* and the *Distribution des Aigles*. David was a born tyrant, but hero-worship was a necessary of his life. He adored Napoleon, as he had adored Marat and Robespierre. He could refuse his idol nothing. He appears to have uttered not so much as a murmur against the popularity of those pictures of buttons and cocked hats with which, during year after year of the Empire the Salon was crowded. It was not until his idol and himself were banished men, and the splendid pageant of Napoleonism had vanished like a dream, that he took up his testimony against them, and reminded his old pupil that the way to salvation lay through Plutarch.

De Forti Dulcedo.

DAVID'S concessions were, however, as those of one royalty to another and greater. It was far otherwise with Gros. Without the Napoleonic inspiration he might never have deviated into originality at all. A favourite with his master and with Mme. Vigée-Lebrun, he had escaped, with David's help, from the Paris of the Terror, and betaken himself to the Italy of the First Campaign ; and at Milan he had fallen in with Joséphine. It was the beginning of fame and fortune. Joséphine was too generous and impulsive to do good by halves. She took up the young painter with enthusiasm ; introduced him to her husband ; got him commissions—the *Bonaparte à la bataille d'Arcole* among them ; and ended by making him one of the Committee of Selection appointed to furnish Paris with the treasures of Florence and Rome. One consequence of this function was that Gros became a worshipper of Michelangelo ; another that he served under Masséna in the Defence of Genoa, and saw war face to face. Returning to Paris (1801), he was chosen to paint for the State a picture of the Battle of Nazareth. The work was begun, but never finished. It would necessarily have been an apotheosis of Junot, and the First Consul, who had his own opinion as to the unique and proper subject for such distinctions, was not slow to cancel the commission. He replaced it by another, with a theme in which he took an interest of a different kind ; and in 1804 Gros exhibited the famous *Pestiférés de Jaffa.* Its effect was triumphant: it was hung round with laurel and palm ; it was purchased for the State for as much as 16,000 francs—

in those days a magnificent sum ; the painters, Vien and David at their head, gave a banquet in its honour. Its success was deserved: it invested an act of life with heroic dignity, and it did this by means of a presentment of the truth, imaginative indeed, but literal and direct enough to convey an intense suggestion of reality ; it was eminently personal in subject, treatment, and style, and it was also a revelation of material. Its tendencies were accentuated, and its conclusions were stated more resolutely, and in some sort more brilliantly, in the *Aboukir* of 1806 and in the *Eylau* of 1809, the one a picture of war in the act, the other of war as it looks next day. It was impossible that such work should not inspire a vast amount of experiment and change ; the sentiment was too novel and affecting, the material too rich, the effect too striking and complete. In the *Pestiférés*—the *Atala* of painting—Romanticism was formulated and suggested ; with the *Aboukir* and the *Eylau* it became inevitable. Gros, as we have seen, was presently to deny his work and go over to the enemy: he was weak of will, too, and deficient of self-confidence, and it is doubtful if he realised the value, or perceived the possibilities, of his discovery. But the inspiration of which, whether consciously or not, he had been the vehicle, had already passed into the common stock. Ten years after the *Eylau* Géricault, who had forced his way to the front as early as 1812, exhibited the *Radeau de la Méduse*. Like his friend and fellow-worker, Delacroix, whose *Dante et Virgile* was itself but four years off, Géricault was a pupil of Guérin, but a follower of Gros. Plainly,

therefore, the influence of Gros was creative as well as quickening. The inception of the movement was his; and it was also his to determine the direction of the most active and potent agencies of its second phase.

Géricault and Delacroix.

GÉRICAULT had lived and worked in England (it is told of him, that he was profoundly impressed by the great romantic landscape of Turner); he was splendidly gifted and admirably trained; he was full of daring, energy, ambition, a born leader of men. But he died at thirty-three, his work—though he had done enough for fame—no more than begun, his measure only indicated; and the conduct of the movement, which had by this time become militant and progressive, devolved upon his friend and disciple Eugène Delacroix. In line with him were artists of the stamp of Bonington (another Gros man) and Decamps, Scheffer and Delaroche, Boulanger and Devéria, and in another branch of painting Isabey, Huet, Troyon, and Camille Flers. They were good men in their way, and they did good work, each after his kind. But the strongest and the most representative of all was Delacroix; and, by virtue no less of his qualities than of his aims, he was soon the chief of the advance. But while he was the hero of the rebel camp, he was the horror of the other. His first picture had the honour to be described as the work of a drunken broom; his second was denounced as a deliberate attempt to establish the divinity of the Ugly; he got a commission from the Chief of the State, and

he was requested to make the work as unlike a Delacroix as possible; his famous 'Voilà trente ans que je suis livré aux bêtes' is but a plain account of his career. The reason is not far to seek. For one thing his message was original and disturbing, and for another his manner of utterance was singularly individual and new.

The Romantic Ideal.

THE natural bias of the *Romantique* is towards exaggeration and irrelevance. He must suggest too much, or he cannot believe that he has said enough: he bewilders by sheer expressiveness. With Delacroix the aim and the end of painting was the representation of, not beauty but, emotion. Like most of the men of his generation, he held, at least in the beginning, that passion must be not measurable, careful of form, attentive to deportment, eternally conscious of good breeding, but simply passionate—passionate above all, passionate at any cost—and that nature is natural in proportion as it is violent. His sincerity was unimpeachable, and he worked out his conviction as only a man of genius can. But to see that his art was great was given only to a few, while it was obvious to the many that the immediate effect of his visions of battle and murder and despair was the reverse of anodyne. Moreover, his style was one that lent itself to caricature. His qualities remained inimitable, but to practise his defects was easy; and it came to pass that loose drawing was quoted as a characteristic of style, and false colour as a sign of genius, while a horrible subject was a proof of

poetry. 'Le romantisme mal entendu,' Heine wrote in 1831, 'a infecté les ateliers de France ; en conséquence du principe fondamental de cette doctrine *chacun s'efforce de peindre autrement que les autres, ou, pour parler le langage à la mode, de faire sortir son individualité.*' Five years after came the famous Salon of 1836. The Classics awoke to a sense of the position, and realised, confusedly but with a certain vividness, that Romanticism—like Impressionism yesterday—was often another name for ignorance and a standing apology for ineptitude. They were in office, of course ; and confounding good with bad, the reality and the sham, they resolved to strike *pro aris et focis*—for careful drawing and decorous colour. They shut and barred their doors upon Rousseau ; they rejected work by Delacroix, Huet, Marilhat, the sculptor of the *Lion écrasant un boa.* And it must be owned that their exasperation, however crudely and intemperately expressed, was not ill-founded.

Le Drame.

THE chosen field of Romanticism in this stage of its development was drama. The movement was professedly a return to nature in general ; the drama was, past all whooping, a return to human nature in particular. Alfred de Vigny was the poet of *Chatterton* ; when you said 'Dumas' you said *Henri Trois*, you said *Antony*, you said *la Tour de Nesle* ; it was Hugo's to follow up *Hernani* with *Marion Delorme*, and *Marion Delorme* with *le Roi s'amuse* and *Lucrèce Borgia.* And their interpreters were Dorval and Georges, were Frédérick and Firmin

and Bocage. And the drama was humanity in action, with costume and scenery, and the actor's face, the actor's figure, the actor's gesture and port and *prestance*, an incessant, irresistible appeal to the eye. What wonder, then, if pictures also were drama? if the current emotion-in-chief ('Ah! par la mort!' . . . 'Sang du Christ, c'est son amant!' . . . 'Seigneur, tu es un fier coquin!' . . . 'Et que cette bonne lame de Tolède . . .!') found itself expressed in the terms of paint? if, in so many words, Géricault, Delacroix, Horace Vernet, Ary Scheffer, Charlet, Decamps, Boulanger, Gigoux, the Johannots and Devérias, Raffet and Daumier and Gavarni, were all artists in the figure? and if it was in figure painting that the first great victories were gained?

Of Landscape.

In the field of landscape, where the noblest work was to be done, there was not at first much fighting. The ambition was not yet popular; the sentiment had still to become a part of the general consciousness. The style in vogue was that of Valenciennes, who was born two years after David, and who achieved in landscape a parallel reform to that effected by Vien and his notable pupil in the pictorial treatment of the figure. He classicised the art, that is: obliterating the traces alike of Watteau and of Joseph Vernet, he laid out the world in backgrounds for a populace of heroes and heroines improved from Plutarch's by an earnest course of second-rate French tragedy. The result was learned and pompous: it had the true geometrical

feeling, and was rich in archæological emphasis and the eloquence of perspective. But it was also jejune, insignificant, and profoundly dull. At the worst of times the effect of such work as (say) the Valenciennes in the Louvre—*Cicéron, étant questeur en Sicile, découvre le tombeau d'Archimède, que les Syracusains assuraient ne pas posséder sur leur territoire* is its highly respectable name—could not have been exciting. Valenciennes and his followers, indeed, were only the small change of Claude and the Poussins ; and the public was so far indifferent to their results that it was not at once seduced into knowing or caring anything about the proceedings of their assailants. Landscape is not a natural intoxicant. That experiments in the use of such material as the facts of massacre and shipwreck were passionately admired, and as passionately resented, is not surprising: they belong to experience, they are a part of the fabric of life, their interest is dreadfully suggestive. To do as much with effects of light, and studies of cloud, and reminiscences of Asnières and Montmartre, was manifestly impossible. The material was uninteresting, being unfamiliar ; the humanity was too purely subjective to be immediately apparent. Accordingly, the beginnings of Romanticism in landscape were quiet and prosperous enough. Isabey exhibited at twenty, and gained a First Class medal with his first picture ; Huet was medalled at twenty-nine, Troyon at twenty-five, Camille Roqueplan at twenty, Jules Dupré at twenty-two ; Corot broke ground at the Salon of 1827, and never missed an exhibition till his death.

A NOTE ON ROMANTICISM

THE intention of French landscape had all along been mainly decorative. The formula was found almost at starting, and in the hands of Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), Claude Gellée (1600-1682), and Gaspard Dughet (1613-1675), a culmination was attained which is comparable in its way to Raphael's design and the painting of Velasquez. It may be described as a presentment, essentially imaginative and heroic, of some greater aspects and some broader truths of nature. It is an art of luminous dawns and solemn dusks; its aërial architecture is vast in design and largely accurate in fact; its essentials are majesty of line, harmony of parts, dignity of conception, and a grandiose simplicity of sentiment and effect. It gave an ideal to art, and the strength of its example is not yet departed. But it had little to do with the common, work-a-day world whose pictorial quality, as perceived and developed by Rubens (1577-1640), is the material of modern landscape; and in France, where the realistic theory was not permitted to take root, and where in times comparatively recent the simple and passionate experiments of Georges Michel (1763-1842) were entirely ignored, its effect upon art was the reverse of fortunate. In the work of Watteau (1684-1721), the landscape element, for all its suggestiveness, its mystery and charm, is an accessory; in that of Boucher (1704-1770) and his following, its function is unchanged, if its magic be departing; with Joseph Vernet (1714-1789), a pupil of the Italian pupils of Claude and Gaspar, it began to be once more painted for itself, and to be touched with

Before and After.

a serious spirit of observation and inquiry; with Valenciennes (1750-1819) and his tribe—Bidault, Michallon, Bertin, Aligny, and the rest—and the development of the *paysage historique*, it lost, as I have said, all touch with life, and fell, as it seemed, into a state of hopeless anecdotage. At this time, indeed, landscape was at its lowest almost everywhere. The Italian school was dead of emphasis and affectation; in Flanders the seed of Rubens and the posterity of Breughel (1568-1625) had both passed utterly away; in Holland, where the naturalistic principle had passed from culmination to culmination in the work of Van Goyen (1596-1666), Cuyp (1605-1691), Rembrandt (1607-1699), Ruysdael (1625-1682), Hobbema (1638-1709), there was now the silence of the void. Only in England was there anything of the ardour and the stress of life. There two noble influences had developed: one the tranquil and lovely art of Wilson (1714-1782), the most complete and graceful expression of the Claude convention in existence; the other, the brilliant and suggestive art of Gainsborough (1727-1788). Both were far in the past; but during the first quarter of the present century the men who had arisen in their room were doing greatly as they. Crome (1769-1821) was following with singular strength, intelligence, and originality the lead of Meindert Hobbema, and in founding the Norwich School—Cotman, Vincent, John Crome, Stark, and the others—had established a new centre of activity; Girtin (1775-1802) and Cozens (1752-1799) had given a fresh start to water-colours; the astonishing and eccentric genius

of Turner (1775-1851) was in mid-career; Constable (1776-1835) had found a new departure and developed a peculiar inspiration; Thomson of Duddingston (1778-1840) was renewing and reinspiring the heroic convention of the Poussins by bringing it into nearer touch with nature, and informing it with his own sincere and ardent individuality; it was the epoch of De Wint (1784-1849), David Cox (1785-1859), Copley Fielding (1787-1855), Collins (1780-1847), Harding (1798-1863), to name but these. England had been the last to catch the spark. It was reserved for her to do with French landscape as with French literature, and count for not a little in the royalty of some of the kings of the art. And the chief agent in the work was Constable.

Constable.

THE thing, no doubt, was in the air. Romanticism was a return to more than human nature, after all. The tradition of J.-J. Rousseau and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre and the practice of Scott and Byron and Chateaubriand were making the landscape element an essential part of literature; and in painting the example of Rubens and the greater Dutchmen was found in intimate alliance with the authority of the Englishman Bonington and the initiative of the Frenchman Géricault. When in 1822 Paul Huet entered the *atelier* of Baron Gros, he had already painted for at least two years in the open air, and knew the Ile-Séguin as it were by heart. Huet was only one of many; so that when sowing-time came, and the sower came with it, the ground was well and

widely prepared. How widely and how well was shown by the famous Salon of 1824. Among the exhibitors were Bonington, Lawrence, Thales and Copley Fielding, Harding, Wild, and Constable. Lawrence received the red ribbon ; and gold medals were awarded to Bonington and Copley Fielding, who were represented, the one by five pictures and drawings, the other by no less than nine. But the success was the Constables. They were three in number, the chief of them being the *Hay Wain* (originally purchased with two others for £250), presented some years since to the National Gallery by Mr. Henry Vaughan ; and the fury of discussion with which they were received was such as to reach the ears and flatter the idiosyncrasy of the painter himself, though (as one who gloried in the name of Briton) he regarded the excitement of his hosts with a feeling of fine, solid, good-humoured contempt. He received a gold medal ; his pictures, which at starting appear to have been badly hung, were removed to 'prime places in the principal room' ; their effect—with that of *The White Horse*, exhibited next year at Lille and elsewhere—was equally vivid and profound.

In England a respectable failure then and for many years to come, Constable, at this time a man of eight-and-forty, was in the plenitude of his genius and accomplishment : his theory was not less individual and sound than his practice, notwithstanding a certain lack of feeling for elegance in the use of paint, was masterly. His merit was twofold. He had looked long at truth with no man's eyes but his own : and having caught her in the act,

he had recorded his experience in terms so personal in their masculine directness and sincerity as to make his leading irresistible. Never till his time had so much pure nature been set forth in art. He showed that the sun shines, that the wind blows, that water wets, that clouds are living, moving citizens of space, that grass is not brown mud, that air and light are everywhere, that the trunks of trees are not disembodied appearances, but objects with solidity and surface and a place in their aerial environment. He proved beyond dispute, that the tonality of a landscape is none the worse for corresponding with something actually felt as existing in the subject, and that the colours of things are not less representative than their textures and their forms. He demonstrated, once for all, the eternal principles of generalisation, and that a picture lacking in the sense of weather and the feeling for mass: a picture, too, in which the small truths of a scene are preferred before its larger and more characteristic elements: is so little in sympathy with any romantic or poetic view of nature as to have no existence save as a more or less pleasing pattern. In fact he was found to have carried the realistic ideal to a point so far ahead of the farthest reached by any of his predecessors, that his results, and the convention on which he achieved them, were practically new. What was more, they were new in the right way and to the right purpose. They tended to the cult of sincerity in observation and expression; they showed the use of a complete equipment; they foreshadowed a world of possibilities, the right of way through which was only to be won

by close and patient intercourse with nature. They suggested an art, which should deal broadly with man's impressions of natural appearances: with weather, atmosphere, distance, the Sky in its relation to the Earth, the Earth in her subjection to the Sky; and their correspondence with his moods. They were the beginnings, in short, of Romanticism in landscape. They did for it what Scott's novels and Byron's verse had done, or were doing, for fiction and poetry and the drama. They were the inspiration of what is fast coming to be recognised as the loftiest expression of modern painting; for not far behind them was the art of Rousseau, Daubigny, Dupré, Courbet, Diaz, and, above all, Millet and Corot.

PROFILES ROMANTIQUES

I

Georges Michel, 1766-1848.

His place in French art is peculiar. At a time when the classic convention was at its most triumphant, he was painting from nature in the plain of Montmartre, intent upon realising a conception of art adapted from, and largely inspired by the work of Ruysdael and Hobbema. He was, indeed, a *Romantique* before Romanticism; yet when Romanticism came, and was seen, and conquered, it passed him by as though he had not been.

His handling is seldom strong, his modelling is often primitive and naïve; but his colour—whose scheme is one of low blues and browns—is sometimes almost personal, and is nearly always decorative, and his simple portraitures of nature are touched with an imaginative quality that, conjoined with the sound convention of which he was a master, enables them to hold their own upon a wall against the good work of far greater men.

II

Ingres, 1780-1867.

INGRES was born into an epoch which tempered revolt and massacre with a studied mimicry of the antique; and when, after a term of work at Toulouse under Roques (1754-1847), who had been the friend and fellow-student of Louis David at Rome, under Vien (1716-1809), he came to Paris, and was received (1796) in David's studio—'David,' said he, 'a été le seul maître de notre siècle'—he was already himself. Already, that is, he considered form to be the essential in art, and saw in painting, not colour nor handling but, only drawing and design.

Under David, 'a sculptor in two dimensions,' these tendencies were steadily developed. In 1801 he won the Prix de Rome; but the State had no money to spare, and it was not until 1806 that he could take his place in the Villa Médicis, where he remained some fourteen years, addicting himself, like his master, to the study of the paintings of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and, unlike him, to the worship of Raphael, whose work he pored over, analysed, and copied with all the force of an ardent and resolute nature. During this period, too, he painted for himself with amazing industry. His exhibits included the *Œdipe et le Sphinx* and the *Odalisque*; in some others he anticipated the material of Romanticism; and in 1824 his *Vœu de Louis Treize* made him suddenly famous. Hitherto the classics had disdained him: now he took his place at the head of the anti-revolutionary army, and for the next ten years he combated upon

the sole right side. He had many pupils, and his authority, immense as it was, was increased from time to time by the production of such masterworks as the *Bertin*, the *Apothéose d'Homère*, the *Martyre de Saint-Symphorien*. In 1834 he left once more for Rome, this time as Director of the Villa Médicis; and during his tenure of office, which ended in 1841, he produced the *Stratonice*, the *Vierge à l'hostie*, and the *Cherubini*. For the rest of his life he made his home in Paris, where, till the end, he drew, painted, and taught with admirable energy and perseverance, and with a devotion to the principles of art, as he understood them, which resembled the enthusiasm of religion. Ingres.

He was rude, quarrelsome, violent, excessive in his likes and dislikes. He openly insulted Delacroix—'Monsieur, le dessin est la probité de l'art'—who was one of the staunchest and the most intelligent of his admirers; he was intolerant of all the works and ways of Romanticism; he called Rubens 'the genius of evil,' and held that to compare 'Rembrandt and the others' with 'the divine Raphael' and the Italians was simple blasphemy. But his sincerity was such, and such were his talent and accomplishment, that where he did not excite enthusiasm he commanded respect. Romanticism is already ancient history; but the fame of Ingres has suffered little change, and even in the anarchy of to-day, when Delacroix is voted dull, and Corot is superannuate, and even Millet and Rousseau are Old Masters in the bad sense of the term, his work is found admirable by painters of many schools. The reason seems to be that what he did was undeni-

Ingres.

ably well done. His colour is cold and thin ; such feeling as he had for the medium of paint was not innate but acquired ; and his convention, received from David, and improved after the Raphael of the *Stanze*, is not real enough to be human nor lofty enough to be heroic. But in its way his draughtsmanship is almost impeccable ; and if it be true that he considered painting as not so much a special art as a development of sculpture, it is also true that in the application of this theory he has seldom been excelled.

III

Corot, 1796-1875.

COROT is a culmination. On his own ground he may challenge comparison with the greatest. He entered upon his career at a juncture when the classic convention, as developed by the descendants of the Poussins, was mined with decay and tottering to its fall, and as yet the forerunners of Romanticism were but groping their way towards new truths and new ideals ; and it was his to unite in his art the best tendencies of both the new school and the old. It is to be supposed, that his interest in pure Nature and his perception of her inexhaustible suggestiveness were stimulated and determined by the revelations of certain artists who were at once his ancestors and his contemporaries ; it is at any rate certain that he was himself as ardent and curious a student of facts as has ever painted, and that the basis of his art is a knowledge of reality as deep and sound as it is rich and novel. On the other hand, the essentials of classicism—composition, selection,

treatment, the master-quality of style—were his by genius and inheritance. In the artistic completeness of his formula he stands with Claude; in the freshness and novelty of his material with Constable. Corot.

In him, however, there is much that is not Constable, and much that is not Claude. There is Corot himself; a personality as rare, as exquisite, as enchanting as has ever found expression in the plastic arts. He had that enjoyment of his medium for its own sake denied—they tell us—even to Raphael; his sense of colour was infallibly distinguished and refined; his treatment of the rarest type. Given such means, and no more, and it is possible, as Courbet has shown, to do great things. To Corot, who painted as Jules Dupré declared, 'pour ainsi dire, avec des ailes dans le dos,' much more was possible. In his most careless work there is always art and there is always quality—a strain of elegance, a thrill of style, a hint of the unseen; while at his best he is not only the consummate painter, he is also the most charming of poets. I think it is Cherbuliez who says of Mozart that he was 'the only Athenian who ever wrote music.' The phrase is a good one: it suggests so happily an ideal marriage of sentiment with style. With the substitution of landscape for music, it might be Corot's epitaph. Corot is the Mozart of landscape.

IV

Eugène Delacroix, 1799-1863.

He was still a student when in 1822 he exhibited his *Dante et Virgile*, and conquered reputation at a stroke. Gros (1771-1835), who described the picture as 'du Rubens châtié,' offered to receive him into his studio; but Delacroix, much as he admired that master, refused the honourable opportunity, and till the end remained with Guérin, though Guérin cared nothing for his work. The young man had something to say, and was bent on saying it in terms of his own; he was, besides, a great believer in gymnastics—all his life long he never sat down to paint without making a sketch from Poussin, or Raphael, or the antique; and it is probable that he thought Guérin, who was only a good sound academical draughtsman, a better master than Gros, whose manner was more personal, and whose talent had certain analogies with his own. For the plastic and decorative parts of art, he studied these elsewhere: in the studios of Géricault (1791-1824), and Bonington (1801-1828), and Paul Huet (1804-1869); in the Louvre under the influence of Rubens; in the Jardin des Plantes with Barye (1795-1875). His indebtedness to Constable (1776-1837), under whose inspiration he completely repainted his second great picture, the *Massacre de Scio*, is matter of history; but it is fair to add that he is said to have anticipated that master's innovations in landscape studies of his own doing, before *The Hay Wain* appeared upon the scene. In 1825 he went to England (Bonington and Isabey were of the party), where he

knew Lawrence and Wilkie, heard the *Freischütz* ('avec de la musique qu'on a supprimée à Paris'), was subjugated by the genius of Shakespeare and Kean, and impelled anew in the direction of nature and romance. In 1826-27 he produced, among other things, the historic lithographs in illustration of *Faust*, in which Goethe declared him to have surpassed the author's own conceptions. In 1828 he exhibited the *Mort de Sardanapale*, the *Christ au Jardin des Oliviers*, and the *Marino Faliero*; and in 1830 he painted the inspired *le Vingt-Huit Juillet*. Two years afterwards he went to Morocco (with the Ambassador, M. de Mornay) and to Algiers, and brought back the material for the *Femmes d'Alger*, the *Convulsionnaires de Tanger*, the *Noce juive*, and other achievements in the same vein. It was the last but one of his journeys. Italy he never saw. He made the round of the Belgian galleries in 1838; and thereafter he quitted France no more.

Eugène Delacroix.

From the first (much against his will; for he was a nervous and febrile creature, elegant in manners, refined in taste, incapable of pose, and intolerant of notoriety) he was saluted as a champion of Romanticism. But he had seen such mediocrities as Louis Boulanger and Eugène Devéria preferred before him in the past: it was not until the Salon of 1833 had revealed him for a master that he took his place in the forefront of the movement as the equal of Hugo in verse and of Dumas in drama, as a captain of the revolutionary army. Then came the *Bataille de Taillebourg gagnée par Saint-Louis*, the *Barque de Don Juan*, the *Bataille de Nancy*, the *Combat du*

Eugène Delacroix.

Giaour et du pacho the *Boissy d'Anglas*, the *Ovide chez les Scythes*, the *Justice de Trajan*, the *Médée*, the *Muley Abd-el-Rahman*, the *Entrée des croisés à Constantinople*, the decorations of the Palais-Bourbon, the Louvre, the Hôtel-de-Ville, the *Héliodore* and the *Lutte de Jacob avec l'ange* at Saint Sulpice—a world of moving and intense creation ; and still his success was only partial. Though Couture affected to despise him, and to Ingres and his followers he was anathema, the painters were with him almost to a man ; Courbet himself, though he assumed he could do as well or better—even Courbet is found admitting the superiority of the *Massacre de Scio*. But the public were interested in other things : the plaintive heroics of Ary Scheffer, the 'last tableaux' of Delaroche. The *Hamlet* of 1836 was very far from being the only work of his rejected by the jury ; to the anger and amazement of Theodore Rousseau, the *Croisés à Constantinople* itself was coldly received ; it was only in 1855 that the painter's force was fully recognised. In 1859, after several repulses, and the preference (amongst others) of Schnetz and Cogniet, he was elected a Member of the Institute, and exhibited for the last time ; and four years after, he died. His greatest triumph was yet to come. The exhibition of the pictures and drawings found in his studio was, says M. Burty, 'une réhabilitation et une ivresse.' Art was far cheaper then than now ; but instead of the hundred thousand francs at which these relics had been appraised, the sale brought in close on three hundred and fifty thousand. Millet, whose for-

tunes were at their lowest ebb, was among the buyers. It was hard work for him to get bread, but he could not deny himself a Delacroix drawing. Eugène Delacroix.

Apart from his art, Delacroix was a man of singular intelligence, lettered, of a trenchant insight and broad sympathies. In music his ideals were Beethoven and Mozart: he had no liking for the innovations of Berlioz, and could not endure his own to be compared with them. His essays and notes are something more than good reading: they prove that in painting his tastes were not less catholic than sound. He accepted Raphael and Poussin as completely as Rubens and Rembrandt; he thought the world of Charlet and the world of Ingres; he reverenced Holbein, but that did not prevent him from greatly admiring Géricault and Lawrence; his criticisms, in fine, are those of a painter who has mastered the theory as well as the practice of his art, and is alive to beauty in any and every form. For his place in art, it has yet to be decided. In France, as I have said, he is a national glory; in England, where he is little known, and where he is considered with a certain jealousy, as one who compelled success in a department of painting where certain Englishmen had found nothing but disaster, his technical accomplishment has been denied, and his inspiration dismissed as factitious or vulgar. It is argued that he was too thoroughly a Frenchman of 1830 to be interesting to all time and to all peoples; and in the argument there is no doubt a certain truth, as there is in its converse, that it is precisely because he was a typical Frenchman and a representative of his epoch that he

Eugène Delacroix.

is to be accepted now as one of the greatest in his century. The final judgment will probably smell of both these verdicts. What Delacroix did was to express the spirit, the tendencies, the ideals, the passions, the weaknesses of a new age in terms so novel and forcible as to be absolutely appropriate. The violence, the brutality, the insincerity, the bad taste, of which it is complained, were not specially his: they were inherent in the movement, and we must allow for them in Delacroix as we allow for them in Byron and Hugo, in *Atala* and the *Symphonie fantastique*, in *Antony* and *Rolla* and *la Peau de chagrin*. It is safe to say that, if that be done, much will remain that is imperishable. It has yet to be proved that his literary imagination—the gift of evocation which made him the familiar and the commentator of Ariosto, Dante, Shakespeare, Scott, Byron, and Goethe: the quality, says Baudelaire, 'qui fait de lui le peintre aimé des poètes'—is human and sound enough to survive the touch of time. Of his plastic endowment there can be no such doubt. If he were nothing else, he was a painter; and if he did nothing else, he thought in pictures. His colour—which Rossetti did not like—is not the dress, the decoration, of his ideas, but a vital part of them; often loose and incorrect, his drawing is always expressive and significant; his invention is inexhaustible; his capacity of treatment may be compared to that of Hugo in words and to that of Berlioz in music. There is no department of painting in which he did not try his hand, and none on which he did not leave his mark. History and romance, religion and portraiture,

genre and landscape and the figure—in all of them he was Eugène Delacroix. Eugène Delacroix.

'En le supprimant,' says Baudelaire, 'on supprimerait un monde de sensations et d'idées, on ferait une lacune trop grande dans la chaîne historique.' That is the poet's view. The painter is not less imperious and explicit. 'Nous ne sommes plus au temps des Olympiens,' says Théodore Rousseau, 'comme Raphaël, Veronèse, et Rubens, et l'art de Delacroix'—that Delacroix who represents 'l'esprit, le verbe de son temps,' and in whose 'lamentations exagérées' and whose 'triomphes retentissants' there is always 'le souffle de la poitrine, son cri, son mal, et le nôtre'—that art is 'puissant comme une voix de l'enfer du Dante.' Here is a curiosity of art criticism: perhaps for the only time in history, the poetic and the technical critic are at one.

V

Bonington's father was for some time Governor of Nottingham Castle; but, being in the worst of ways 'an artist'—that is, a man incapable of decency or regularity—he was degraded from his official position. Upon this he left England, and went to Paris, where he set up a lace-shop. He was a painter of portraits when he chose; and his son, who also was his pupil, went with him, and at fifteen was copying in the Louvre, and drawing at the École des Beaux-Arts and in the studio of Baron Gros. It was then the beginning of Romanticism. Napoleon had vanished to Saint Helena; but Gros in painting, Spontini and Lesueur in music, and Bonington, 1801-1828.

Bonington. Chateaubriand and Mme. de Staël in literature—all these were living and potent influences, and Bonington, whose training was practically French, and whose sympathies were altogether individual, was destined to play a part not much inferior in importance to the best of them. After his kind, indeed, and in his degree, he was one of the leaders of the Romantic Movement. He knew Géricault, and was one of those who witnessed (1819) the triumph of the admirable *Radeau de la Méduse*. He was the friend, and in some sort the master, of Eugène Delacroix, who professed the highest admiration of him, and whose companion—with Isabey and Colin—he was when, in 1825, the painter of the *Dante et Virgile* and the *Massacre de Scio* crossed the Channel to look about him in England, and study Wilkie and Lawrence and Constable on their own ground; and to both these, as to many others great and small—Ary Scheffer, Isabey, Flers, Roqueplan, Troyon, and Paul Huet—his work was an influence and an example. He had in him the makings of a great artist; he could achieve, and he could suggest and inspire; it appeared that he was marked out for the highest destiny.

But his career was brief. In 1822 he went to Venice, and what he did there is still, in its way, a national possession. He exhibited—with Harding, Wyld, the two Fieldings, Lawrence, and John Constable—at that famous Salon of 1824 which is the date of a new departure in modern art; and, like Constable and Copley Fielding, he was found worthy of a gold medal. He is heard of again at

the British Institution in 1826, and again at the Royal Academy in 1828; and wherever he appears he astonishes and triumphs. He was good, indeed, at whatever he chose to essay. In lithography—a medium in which the Romanticists won some of their greatest triumphs—he was equally active and expert; his work in oils was worthy of the time of brave experiment and achievement at which it was done; in water-colours he was a head and shoulders better than the best about him. Then, his versatility was uncommon: he painted water, and he painted landscape, and he painted history, and his work, whatever the theme, was remarkable. There can be no doubt that, had he lived, he would have rivalled with the very greatest of the moderns, and have been, like Constable and like Delacroix, a leader and a *chef d'école*. But at seven-and-twenty he died of brain-fever, the result of a sunstroke caught while sketching; and I cannot but think that Art has sustained no greater loss since his demise. Bonington.

He was a painter of extraordinary talent, and of promise more extraordinary still. 'Il y a terriblement à gagner dans la société de ce luron-là,' says Delacroix, 'et je te jure que je m'en suis bien trouvé.' There are some moderns, he continues, who are his friend's superiors in strength, it may be, and in exactness; but there is none, and perhaps there never has been any, who possesses 'cette legèreté d'exécution, qui, particulièrement dans l'aquarelle, fait de ses ouvrages des espèces de diamants dont l'œil est flatté et ravi indépendamment de tout sujet et de toute imitation.' He could never, he goes on to say, 'se lasser d'admirer

Bonington.

sa merveilleuse entente de l'effet et la facilité de son exécution.' Bonington, it is true, was difficult to please; he would often completely repaint 'des morceaux entièrement achevés, et qui nous paraissaient merveilleux'; but his accomplishment and genius were such that 'il retrouvait à l'instant sous sa brosse de nouveaux effets aussi charmants que les premiers.' And withal he had such a talent of adaptation and assimilation as recalls the heroic practice of Dumas. He would quietly work in a figure, or a set of accessories, from a picture known to everybody who saw him paint; and he would do this in such a way that (it is always Delacroix who speaks) his borrowings 'augmentaient l'air de vérité de ses personnages, et ne sentaient jamais le pastiche.' Bonington's gift, indeed, was rarely equal in quality and comprehensive in ambition and attainment. In historical *genre* his achievement has been surpassed; it has been surpassed in landscape and marine; but in all these it is brilliantly individual, and in the two last it has, besides, the charm which comes of sentiment and a right distinction of style.

VI

Decamps, 1803-1860.

He aspired to paint religion and history, as well as Smyrniote life and true Levantine light and colour; and in 1834, when he exhibited his famous *Défaite des Cimbres*, he had his hour of triumph. It was his one great success in this department: he never reached again the same height of popularity. And the reasons are not far to seek. For one thing,

Romanticism was not officially accepted: it was understood to mean no more thar immorality in theory and incompetence in practice; and Decamps was one of the ensigns of Romanticism. For another, his education was imperfect, his brain and hand were out of unison; the one might plan, but the other could not execute. Decamps was naturally proud and angry; and it is not surprising that he should soon have chosen to avoid the trials and disasters of publicity. After 1834 he exhibited but seldom, sold his pictures straight from the easel, and spent his life in profitless attempts at heroic work. 'You are a lucky fellow,' he said to Millet, after the painter of *le Semeur* had shown him all the pictures in his studio: 'you can do what you want to do.' Decamps could not; and he died (of a fall from his horse) a disappointed man. Decamps.

He was hardly one of the paladins of Romanticism; but he bore no inconspicuous part in the battle, and his influence was good in type and considerable in degree. His intelligence—quick, inquiring, tenacious—readily received new truths and new ideas; he was the sworn admirer of such great explorers as Rousseau and Delacroix; of its kind his interest in nature was both vigorous and sustained; as a colourist he was individual enough to have had many imitators; he grappled hard with the problems of illumination and atmospheric environment; and as a pioneer and experimentalist he is deserving of much respect. He lived to witness the triumph of Romanticism; but the greater honours were not for him, and he is probably best remembered as a discoverer of the painters' East.

VII

Diaz, 1808-1876.

DIAZ had many masters—Delacroix, Correggio, Millet, Rousseau, Prud'hon—and succumbed to many influences in turn. But if he followed, it was only that he might learn to lead; if he copied, it was the more completely to express himself. His master-qualities are fancy and charm; but capricious as he was, and enchanting as he never failed to be, he was a rare observer of nature. 'Personne,' says M. Jules Dupré, 'n'a compris mieux que lui la loi de la lumière, la magie, et pour ainsi dire la folie, du soleil dans les feuilles et les sousbois.' What gives his work its peculiar quality of delightfulness is the combination of lovely fact with graceful fiction. His world would be Arcadia if it were not so real—would be the world we live in if it did not teem with exquisite impossibilities. I think of him as of an amiable and light-hearted Rembrandt. He had a touch of the madness of genius, or that madness of the sunshine (of which his old companion speaks) would certainly have escaped him. And rightly to express his ideas and sensations, he made himself a wonderful vocabulary. His palette was composed, not of common pigments but, of molten jewels: they clash in the richest chords, they sing in triumphant unisons, as the voices of the orchestra in a score of Berlioz. If they meant nothing they would still be delicious. But beyond them is Diaz—the poet, the *fantaisiste*, the artist; and that makes them unique.

VIII

His advance was neither erratic nor slow. First seen at the Salon of 1832, he was the recipient of Third and Second Class medals in 1835 and 1840, of First Class medals in 1846 and 1848; of the Legion of Honour in 1849; and of another First Class medal at the Exposition Universelle of 1855, when he exhibited the *Bœufs allant au labeur* by which he is represented in the Louvre.

He began with landscape pure and simple, and it was in that field that he won his earlier successes. Like Rousseau, he attempted subjects of several sorts, and went far and often afield in search of inspiration. He was found painting, not only at Sèvres and Saint-Cloud and in the Forest of Fontainebleau but, in Brittany and the Limousin and all over Normandy; and it was a sketching tour in Holland that revealed his vocation to him, and, by determining a change of manner and theme, first set him in the way of immortality. Hitherto (1833-1846) he had been known for the violence of his colour, the truculency of his brushwork, his excesses in the matter of paint. In the study of the Dutch masters—particularly, it is said, of Paul Potter and Rembrandt—he acquired a knowledge of saner principles, developed a capacity for better work, and discovered his fitness for the conquest of a new province in art; and after 1848 he was himself, he was Troyon the *animalier*, the greatest painter of sheep and cattle of his century. He had succeeded to his true inheritance, and he continued to enjoy it till his death. To say that he was very

Troyon.

popular, and sold whatever he would, is to say that he produced much loose, careless, and indifferent stuff: that, in a word, he was no more above pot-boiling than Corot or Van Dyck. But he did great work as well; and his good things are good indeed.

His Romanticism was but an effect of example and the paintiness of youth. Having sown his wild oats, he returned to the contemplation of nature with eyes renewed and a novel understanding; and he recorded a set of impressions distinguished by rare sincerity of purpose and directness of insight in a style of singular breadth, vigour, and felicity. His drawing is loose and inexact; and he composes, not as an inheritor of Claude but, as a contemporary of Rousseau. But he had the true pictorial sense; and, if his lines be often insignificant, his masses are perfectly proportioned, his values are admirably graded, his tonality is faultless, his effect is absolute. His method is the large, serene, and liberal expression of great craftsmanship; and to the interest and the grace of art his colour unites the charm of individuality, the richness and the potency of a kind of natural force. His training in landscape was varied and severe; and when he came to his right work, he applied its results with almost inevitable assurance and tact. He does not sentimentalise his animals, nor concern himself with the drama of their character and gesture. He takes them as components in a general scheme; and he paints them as he has seen them in nature—enveloped in atmosphere and light, in an environment of leas and streams and living leafage. His work is not to take the portraits of trees or

animals or sites, but, as in echoes of Virgilian music, to suggest and typify the country: with its tranquil meadows, its luminous skies, its quiet waters, and that abundance of flocks and herds at once the symbol and the source of its prosperity. Troyon.

IX

He is an artist who cares nothing for money or fame and everything for art; he is able to follow his bent, and paint as he pleases, and he has had his reward. To the young zealots who have just discovered the Blue Shadow his name and example are of small account. But by artists he is respected and acclaimed as the last of a greater generation. Dupré, 1812-1889.

He is still a contemporary; and to estimate the worth of his art is impossible. It may, however, be said that his achievement is both vast and varied, and is touched throughout with a peculiar poetry. As becomes the friend and champion of Rousseau, the great experimentalist, the indefatigable explorer, he has attempted nature in all its aspects. He has painted the melancholy of the plain, the peaceful serenity of fat pasture and pleasant upland, the mystery of the forest, the vastness of the sea; and he has infused with his own sincere personality whatever he has done. In an age of backsliding and charlatanism he has upheld the dignity of imaginative art, and the traditions of the school he helped to found and has done so much to illustrate. [1888.]

X

Théodore Rousseau, 1812-1867.

IN the beginning all went well with ROUSSEAU. Romanticism was in the gaudiness of full flower: it was the year of *Antony* and *Darlington* at the Porte-Saint-Martin and of *Marion Delorme* at the Théâtre-Français, of *le Vingt-Huit Juillet* at the Salon and *Robert le Diable* at the Académie de Musique, of Balzac's *Peau de chagrin* and Hugo's *Notre-dame*, the *Atarguil* of Eugène Sue and the *Roi des ribauds* of Paul Lacroix; and that Rousseau was a deserter from Rémond and a recreant from the faith of Rémond's gods was sufficient to secure attention to his aims, respect for his ideals, and unshrinking confidence in his capacity. His first Salons were those of 1831 and 1833; in 1834 he appears to have gained a medal, and sold his picture, a *Lisière de bois*, to the Duke d'Orléans; in 1835 he was once more represented, and by a couple of *Esquisses*. Then the tide turned. To the Jury of 1836—Heim, Bidault, Ingres, Schnetz, the two Vernets, Paul Delaroche, Guèrin, among others—he submitted his *Descente des vaches*, a landscape with cattle painted from sketches made in the Jura; and, in company with Marilhat, Champmartin, Paul Huet, Louis Boulanger, Barye, and Delacroix, he was refused a place in the official exhibition. He remained without the gates till 1848; and but for the accident of a revolution he might not have reconquered the right of way so soon.

His position during these twelve years of exile was more or less distressing. Decamps, George

Sand, Daumier, Delacroix were his admirers and well-wishers; Diaz, Ary Scheffer, Jules Dupré, the critic Thoré were the most diligent among his friends. Revered and commiserated on the one hand as one of the martyr-saints of Romanticism, he was execrated on the other as a sort of helot in drink. Sometimes he sold a picture, and more often than not he was free to paint and repaint his work at will. He was not of a happy disposition; and, as he took himself and his reverses with a certain solemnity, 'tis probable that he suffered. Things were first mended for him by the advent of the Second Republic. The official jury was dismissed; the mob of painters took to self-government; and Rousseau was elected one of the Jury of 1848, the first under the new dispensation. Then Ledru-Rollin, as head of the State, gave him a capital commission; and after a lifetime of anxious chastity: in the course of which, impelled thereto, as Sensier explains, 'par une susceptibilité outrée de son caractère,' he declined the hand of a young lady to whom he was deeply attached, and who was very much in love with him: he threw in his lot with a *payse* of his who had cast herself on his protection, and retired for good and all to Barbizon. But there was a sickly strain in him; and the passage from absolute failure to comparative success was not at first to his advantage. In 1849 he exhibited for the first time since his exclusion thirteen years before. He won a First Class medal; but when he found that Jules Dupré, who had given him proof after proof of faultless friendship, had received the red ribbon he professed himself

Théodore Rousseau.

Théodore Rousseau.

affronted, refused to be appeased, and broke with his old comrade there and then. To the Salon of 1851 he sent six canvases ; but this year the ribbon fell to Diaz, and Rousseau, after charging the Hanging Committee with conspiracy, and being compelled to retract his accusation, gave out that he would exhibit no more. He kept his word until the Salon of 1852, where he was represented by an *Effet de givre* and a *Paysage après la pluie*, which gained him at last admission into the Legion. After this the circumstances of his life and the quality of his temper improved. So at the Exposition Universelle of 1855 he was splendidly conspicuous, he made money enough to pay Millet 4000 francs for his *Greffeur* ; he had so far improved in temper and tact as to make the purchase not in his own behalf but as the agent of a rich American. By 1857 he had acquired sufficient importance to be made the victim of a sort of 'knock-out' on the part of a Belgian dealer. In 1861 he sold a lot of twenty-five pictures and studies at the Hôtel Drouot for some 37,000 francs ; in 1863 another lot of seventeen for close on 15,000 francs. Three years later Prince Demidoff commissioned him to paint two pictures for 10,000 francs apiece ; while with MM. Brame and Durand-Ruel he did business to the extent of 140,000 francs, and after paying his debts was able to spend some 30,000 francs upon Japanese drawings and rare prints. In 1866 he was a member of the Salon Jury and the Emperor's guest at Compiègne ; and the year after he sent two pictures to the Salon, exhibited over a hundred sketches and

studies at the Cercle des Arts, and was appointed President of the Jury at the Exposition Universelle, where he was represented by thirteen of his finest works. For these he was presently awarded one of the four Medals of Honour. The distinction, which he shared with MM. Cabanel, Meissonier, and Gérôme, was a tremendous blow to him. He had set his heart on officer's rank in the Legion; Corot, Pils, Gérôme, Jules Breton, and Français were gazetted without him; the disappointment was greater than he could endure. He was promoted after some little delay; but he had meanwhile been stricken with paralysis, and after a six months' agony he died in the December of the same year. Mme. Rousseau had long been hopelessly insane: you read of her, unconscious of bereavement, capering and singing in the very chamber of death. Théodore Rousseau.

Rousseau was not the poet of a site, the wooer of a single dryad. Insatiable of experience, greedy of discovery and conquest, he was for ever breaking new ground and opening up fresh provinces of material. He began by exploring the environs of Paris, and passed at a stride to the rocks and solitudes of Auvergne. He was at least twice in Normandy (1831 and 1832), where he studied the *Côtes de Granville* of his second Salon. In 1834 and 1861 he painted in the Jura, where he collected the material of his *Descente des vaches* and his *Vue de la chaîne des Alpes* (1867). In 1835-36 he went to Broglie, to paint a view of the castle, commissioned of him by the Duke as a gift for Guizot; and in 1837 he worked long in Brittany, the scene of the

Théodore Rousseau.

Marais en Vendée (called 'la Soupe aux herbes') and the *Avenue des châtaigniers.* He was thrice with Jules Dupré in the Île-de-France (1841, 1845, and 1846), and among the booty which he brought back with him were the *Effet de givre*, the *Lisière de bois: Soleil couchant*, and a famous *Avenue de forêt.* From Berry (1842) he returned with the *Mare*, the *Curés*, the *Jetée d'un étang après la pluie*; from Gascony (1844), with the *Four communal* and the *Marais dans la lande.* But his favourite painting-ground was the Forest of Fontainebleau. He discovered it as early as 1833: year after year he lodged at Ganne's, the historic tavern, or in some peasant's cot, within easy distance of the Bas-Bréau and the Gorges d'Apremont; he set up his tent in Barbizon in 1848, and abode there until he died. Here Diaz was his pupil; here Jacque and Millet were his neighbours; here, as in a vast open-air studio, he matured his largest inspirations, resolved his knottiest problems, illustrated his boldest and richest effects. The Forest has had no truer lover and no better painter. He saw it, not as a crowd of trees but, as a monstrous organism, an enormous individuality; and he has rendered as none else has done the sense of its complex mystery and immensity, its infinite changefulness of colour and form, its multitudinous life, its impenetrable confusion of birth and death and increase and decay.

I have traced his wanderings in search of suggestion and experience with this particularity in order to show the range of his ambition, the originality of his experiments, the variety and novelty of his results As a rule his method of production was

painfully laborious and slow: the foundations of his pictures were constructed and made out with a reed pen in their smallest details; and on the formation thus provided stratum after stratum of paint was superimposed, until an end was gained, and he deemed that no more could be done. But the sum of his achievement is very large, and its quality is disconcertingly unequal. It may be that, like Wordsworth, he caught at more than art could grasp; and it may be that his hand was only now and then the faithful servant of his brain; or it may be that he suffered from perplexity, and was fain to grope his way towards ideals that were dimly seen at first, and that shifted shapes as he advanced, as a mountain reveals itself under new aspects with every turn of the road. What is certain is that, while too often niggled and incoherent, 'precious' yet inarticulate, at his best he had originality of conception and sincerity and strength of sentiment, with a large and noble method, a singular power of expressing and evoking emotion, a magnificent view of colour, an admirable potency of style. Sensier relates that, even in his darkest hours, it was hard for him to part with his works: he would keep them for years, and retouch and repaint till sometimes, as from the unknown masterpiece in Balzac's story, the 'glory and the dream' had been painted quite away. Thus his successors find him most consistently admirable in his *ébauches* —his 'lay-ins'; and the impression produced by his life and achievement is one of incompleteness. His art, indeed, has none of the consummate and joyous mastery of Corot's. It is not seldom

Théodore Rousseau.

Théodore Rousseau.

heroically inspired and irresistibly expressed ; but it is mainly tentative and experimental, and it is often touched with failure.

XI

Millet, 1814-1875.

MILLET'S real teachers were the Old Masters in the Louvre, and especially Correggio, Nicolas Poussin, and Michelangelo : 'celui qui me hanta si fortement toute ma vie.' From the first he learned the processes of colour and modelling ; from the second the principles of composition and the greater and severer exigencies of style ; and from the third the mystery of gesture and expression. Other influences were Rubens and Delacroix in one direction, and in another Mantegna, Angelico, and Filippo Lippi ; and later Rembrandt came, and the great landscape painters contemporary with himself.

Painted to sell, his earlier pictures are frankly and naïvely sensuous. Their colour is rich enough to remind us that for years the painter was the friend and fellow-worker of Diaz ; in modelling and chiaroscuro they are often admirable ; they express, in terms that are sometimes sumptuous and always beautiful, a liberal and healthy sentiment of the nude. It was not until Millet left Paris for Barbizon (1849) that he returned to the ideals of his youth, and became, by swift and easy stages, the epic painter of rusticity. At Barbizon, where he knew Rousseau, and where he laboured till his death, he began by producing his puissant and affecting *Semeur*, which was exhibited in 1850, the

year of Courbet's *Enterrement d'Ornans*. It was the first of a long line of masterpieces—the *Glaneuses*, the *Bûcheron et la Mort*, the *Homme à la houe*, the *Meules*, the *Berger au parc*, the *Vigneron au repos*, to name but these—in which the new capacities of landscape, the conquests of Rousseau and Diaz and Constable, are found in combination with an heroic treatment of the figure. This development was Millet's work, and remains the chief of his contribution to art. Millet.

Both elements are fused in so close an intimacy as to form but one interest, so that, pictorially considered, each picture of Millet's is an organic whole. But this is not all. Of most the effect is ethical as well as plastic. They are not simply works of art: they are as it were lay-sermons in paint, for they embody ideas which, if not absolutely literary in themselves, are to some extent susceptible of a literary expression. It was Millet's weakness, in fact, that he was not less poet than painter. The French peasant was his hero, the romance of man in nature his material. To his fellow-craftsmen, his work must always present extraordinary interest; for, while his gift was peculiar, and his accomplishment distinguished, there have been few whose study of reality has been more searching and profound, and few the record of whose observations is so pregnant with significance. But, whether happily or not, he did not work for his fellow-craftsmen alone. He elected, whether happily or not, to be priest as well as picture-maker—to put off in paint a certain number of ideas and sensations which, it may be, had better have been left un-

Millet.

attempted save in words. And, whether happily or not, he touched the scenes of that 'epic in the flat' which was his legacy to time with a dignity, a solemn passion, a quality of fatefulness, a sense of eternal issues, which lift him to the neighbourhood of Michelangelo and Beethoven.

XII

Jacque, 1813-1894.

CHARLES JACQUE and Troyon are the *animaliers* of modern landscape. And Jacque has etched and painted sheep and pigs and fowls as few have done; and if his fame be not the highest, it is high enough. His sheepfolds have little in common with the solemn and moving visions of Millet; the magic of Diaz, which transfigures a hunt into something coloured and heroic, is beyond him; he is not so good a painter as Troyon, nor has he so large and true a sense of landscape. But he has represented the forms, the manners, the characters, the movements of certain beasts in an environment of light and air, and with effects of mystery and touches of suggestion that go far to make his election sure. [1888.]

XIII

Leys. 1814-1869.

THERE were two painters in LEYS. In his earlier work—his studies of manners, and the aspects of things as they are—he was obviously in sympathy with modern aims, and was able to unite a fine atmospheric quality with masterly handling and

genuine dignity of style. Some twelve years before his death, however, his manner changed, and he became that Belgian Pre-Raphaelite—the pupil and direct inheritor of the Van Eycks—whom Dante Rossetti esteemed to be the greatest, because the most original, master of the century, and whom others decline to regard as anything but a maker of workmanlike *postiches*—as an artist utterly lacking in the creative faculty, and producing his best work under the impulse of an inspiration partly imitative and partly archæological. It is said that even in Belgium, as was shown by the middling success achieved by his work at the Exposition Nationale in 1880, his vogue has had its day; that hereafter he is like to be more generously regarded for the personal quality of his few etchings than for the severe and studious unoriginality displayed in his innumerable pictures; that his best pupils resemble him least; that those who have imitated him directly have done nothing worth considering. But, when all is said in his disfavour that can be, there remains no doubt that he was a painter. His greater pictures are marked by learning, finish, careful draughtsmanship, ingenious brushwork. It is true that they are deficient in essentials: often the lines are rigid, the colour is coldly brilliant, the enveloping medium conventional and unreal. But they are master's work, though the master be not of to-day.

Leys.

XIV

Meissonier, 1815-1891.

MEISSONIER'S pictures are innumerable: all have amazed the multitude. Some have commanded prices as in the dream of an opium-eating artist in finance. Nay, even spite itself has served him; for when Mrs. Mackay destroyed, with divers circumstances of indignity, the portrait he had painted of her, the profession made haste to repair the insult with a banquet of honour. Indeed, the felicity of his half-century (and more) of self-production has been imperturbable.

His merits are obvious: so obvious that no millionaire can go wrong with him. It has been said that he paints great pictures on tiny canvases; but to accept the proposition is surely to have an original conception of greatness. Again, it is claimed for him that he is the heir of artists so various and so complete as Terburg and Mieris and Gerard Dow; and again it has to be noted that these men painted the life they lived and knew, while Meissonier's world is purely factitious—is indeed a last expression of that passion for strange suits which was a characteristic of Romanticism. The truth is, he is French of the French: French in his care for microscopic detail, French in his patient ingenuity and his conscientious disdain for what seems to him bad work, French in the neatness of his ambitions, French in the dry, impersonal quality of his colour, the deftness of his handiwork, the logical effect of his line, the trim assurance of his effects. 'Il a mieux que personne le pittoresque de tout le monde'; and that is why, in France

and out of it, he seems the culmination we know. [1889.] Meissonier.

XV

DAUBIGNY'S work was unequal: which is as much as to say that, like Corot, he was successful. The Artist suffers in proportion as the Dealer is happy; and Daubigny was sometimes careless, and could on occasion be feeble and tame. But his good work is very good, and must be judged by a standard only lower than the highest. He had a great love for running water: he passed much of his time in a house-boat, *le Bottin*; and, as Mr. Hamerton has noted, for his 'intimate affection,' his 'simple devotion,' to the river of his choice, he was 'rewarded by an insight into its beauty,' which, to compare him for a moment with the famous Englishman who had painted the Seine before him, was entirely wanting in Turner. These qualities of 'intimate affection' and 'simple devotion' are characteristic of Daubigny—are what, in the analysis of his individuality, is most readily disengaged; and it is, I think, from their expression that his art derives its peculiar savour. His imagination is of an inferior strain to Rousseau's; he has elegance, distinction, charm, but not in the supreme degree that Corot has them; he is a pleasing colourist, where Diaz is a great one; his technical accomplishment is admirable, but it would be waste of words to compare it to the *maëstria* of Courbet. Yet the sanity and contentment of his regard for nature, his innocent and grateful con- Daubigny, 1817-1878.

Daubigny. fidence, as of a happy and not too masterful or curious husband—these are his own. He is perhaps the least of the great Romantic brood; but he belongs to it, and his achievement, from however lofty a level it be considered, and by whatever canons it be tried, is safe from oblivion and superior to disparagement.

XVI

Frère, 1819-1886. MEDALLED in 1851 and 1852, the late ÉDOUARD FRÈRE was decorated in 1855; he was discovered by Mr. Ruskin, who likened his colour to Rembrandt's, and remarked that he 'painted with his soul,' and combined 'the depth of Wordsworth, the grace of Reynolds, and the holiness of Angelico'; he sold himself for twenty years to a Brussels dealer. In a word, he made his fortune, and, applauded everywhere, was especially successful in England and the United States. The long list of his pictures, which have been reproduced by every sort of process, is hard reading.

He is in every sense of the term a popular artist. His talent—originally simple, pleasing, sincere—could not withstand the influence of the enterprising Dealer and the unenlightened Buyer. It is easy enough to 'wallow in the pathetic'; and, as Frère discovered, it is not less profitable than it is easy. On the other hand, his good work is quite good. Mr. Ruskin's enthusiasm is not in these days easy to understand; and the question whether Frère did or did not 'paint with his soul' has ceased to have any special interest. But there is no doubt

that he had character, expression, a certain grace, a thin veil of feeling. In the beginning, too, he painted much from nature, and showed himself by no means indifferent to the practice of his great contemporaries. Perhaps the worst that can be said of him is that, a sentimentalist himself, he exaggerated his defects for the pleasure of a sentimental public. Frère.

XVII

He was a friend of Rousseau, with whom he painted for some time at Barbizon, and who described him as 'a Zoroastrian'—as 'un Parsis enchanté de la lumière orientale.' You read in Sensier how he brought a famous old windmill—the 'Moulin de la Galette'—from Montmartre, which is one of the cradles of modern landscape, with a view to preserving it as a relic, and of transporting it to Barbizon, and rebuilding it for use as a studio. The plan fell through, or there might be something to say of Rousseau's influence upon its author. As it is, the pair have little in common save their delight in travel and the exploration of sites. For Ziem, though he proceeds from a great school, is by no means a great painter. His manner is facile, elegant, engaging; his colour agreeable and decorative; his observation rather superficial than searching; his sentiment neither moving nor profound. But he has the gift of charm; and his rendering of his impressions of nature is seldom found wanting in some qualities of painting. [1888.] Ziem, 1812.

XVIII

Monticelli, 1824-1886.

BORN in Marseilles, MONTICELLI was a pupil of Raymond Aubert (1781-1857), who made him a devotee of line, a fanatic of Raphael and Ingres. His conversion began (it is said) before a Delacroix, and was completed by the influence and example of Diaz, in whose neighbourhood, in Paris, he lived for some years, and whose manner he mimicked with such spirit and intelligence that his work was often sold for his master's. Returning south, he painted steadily, sold as fast as he produced, and amused himself with all his strength. It is the nature of the Provençal, as Daudet showed, to admire what is eccentric, noisy, personal, vacant; and Monticelli—handsome, vigorous, eloquent, persuasive, uncommon—was of all painters the one for Provence. His fame grew legendary: he was not the lawful son of a gauger, but a bastard of the Gonzagas; the great Diaz had secluded him for many years to steal the secret of his colour; and so on: till there was not his like in the length of the Rhone Valley. His story has been but vaguely told; but it seems that to this period of triumph there succeeded one of desperate reverses, for which nobody was responsible but Monticelli himself. A second sojourn in Paris, during which the painter was reduced to the necessity of selling his pictures from the pavement, and herding at night with vagabonds in waste lands and empty houses, ended in flight before the advance of Von Moltke. Monticelli had not only to tramp it to Marseilles, but for six-and-thirty days to paint his way from place to

place. Settling in his native city, he adopted his final manner, and stood revealed as the painter of pure sensations, the colourist for colour's sake, who has perplexed and scandalised so many critics. He gave the rein to his faculty of improvisation, producing a picture a day, and selling his work for whatever it would bring. And year by year the paint grew thicker and less significant, the harmonic instinct more eccentric and uncertain, the intellectual quality more childish and obscure. It is said that, like Musset, he took to the worst drink of all —that his rare and admirable temperament was wrecked in absinthe; it seems certain that in him, as in so many of the imperfectly-gifted, the sensualist got and kept the upper hand of the artist. For some time before the end they were but few who knew if he were alive; his 'painted music,' his clangours of bronze and gold and scarlet, his triumphs of unrepresentative effect, had profited him so little. Monticelli.

The be-all and end-all of painting with him was colour. A craftsman of singular accomplishment, to tint and tone he yet subordinated drawing, character, observation—three-fourths of art. Delacroix and Turner used, it is said, to amuse themselves with arrangements in silks and sugar-plums; and what they did in jest, or by way of experiment, was done by the Marseillais in sober earnest, and as the last word of Art. True it is that he has a magic—there is no other word for it—of his own: that there are moments when his work is infallibly decorative as a Persian crock or a Japanese brocade; that there are others when there is audible in these volleys of

Monticelli.

paint, these orchestral explosions of colour, a strain of human interest, a note of mystery and romance, some hint of an appeal to the mind. As a rule, however, his art is purely sensuous. His fairy meadows and enchanted gardens are so to speak 'that sweet word Mesopotamia' in two dimensions: their parallel in literature is the verse that one reads for the sound's sake only—in which there is rhythm, colour, music, everything but meaning. If this be painting, then is Monticelli's the greatest of the century. If it be not—if painting be something more than dabbling exquisitely with material—then are these fantasies materialised, these glimpses of the romance of colour, no more than the beginnings of pictures—the caprices of a man of genius gone wrong.

Upon the present generation—which delights to confuse one art with another: which must have descriptive music, and will only take an interest in pictures that are disguised literature—the influence for good of Monticelli, of painting reduced to its simplest elements, is not a thing to be despised. Man's capacity for enjoyment is limited; his capacity of idiosyncrasy—his hobby-horsical capacity—is not; and it is odds but if he feel in all its fulness the vague magic of Monticelli, he may think himself superior to the more varied and complex enchantment of Raphael and Rubens. In art as in life, the undue development of a special faculty is fatal to the general growth. And what is true of those who make is true tenfold of those who only admire and feel. Where the Artist only breaks his shins, the Amateur is pretty certain to break his neck.

XIX

THERE is no painter of these times whose work is better known, or has been more liberally rewarded. In colour, draughtsmanship, the technique of art, he is the type of the Complete Academician. To such as take their cue from Velasquez and Rembrandt he is only (as some one said of some one else) 'a man of letters who has deviated into paint'; but even they are fain to acknowledge his wonderful cleverness, to accept his advice in archæology and his inventions in character and incident, and to admit that, if what ought to be expressed in words be, *ipso facto*, appropriate to expression in pigment, then is he beyond dispute a painter. [1889.]

Gérome, 1824.

XX

LIKE Millet, JULES BRETON paints the figure in its relation to landscape, and he paints it with a view to the pictorial expression of its innate significance and sentiment. But he has neither the strength nor the subtlety of his exemplar: he is lacking alike in Millet's dignity of style and in Millet's mastery of material and of fact. He is the poet-in-paint of the Breton *femme des champs*, and his record of her aspects and her qualities is always emphatic in terms and a thought too sentimental in feeling and effect. Still, his intention is generally grandiose, and—while his colour is rather impersonal than not, and his handling not more than well educated and correct—his results are sometimes marked by real solemnity of emotion and propriety of utterance. [1889.]

Jules Breton, 1827.

XXI

Vollon, 1833-1900.

VOLLON, in water-colours as in oils, is a master-craftsman. His colour is rich, spontaneous, and individual, his drawing at once suggestive and exact; while in his brushwork—large, vigorous, expressive—there is the gusto of the born painter. Withal, his range is wide. The *Femme du Pollet*, the *Pierre Piachat* (1868), the *Espagnol* (1878), are essays in the presentment of human character and the human form; the *Port de la Joliette* is a picture of moving ships and blue water, of sunshine and sea air and marine architecture. But his best work has been done in still-life. In man and in landscape there is always character, and there is always form: they possess an interest apart from that of paint; it is enough to show them as they are by means of accurate drawing and representative colour. The case is far other with flowers and fruit, with copper stewpans and joints of meat and the textures of fur and feather. Either they must be left alone, or they must be pictorially seen and pictorially treated. To render the facts of them grain by grain, or hair by hair, or petal by petal, is to play a losing match with the camera. Imitation for its own sake is the basest of aims, and the pursuit of it can have but the meanest of results. In Vollon's art, as in Chardin's, the quality of literalism is the last of which the artist has dreamed. He sees and renders his subjects as a painter pure and simple—as parts of a whole whose other components are immaterial and intangible. The question with him is not one of textures and surfaces, but one of the presentation of

light, the suggestion of air, the differentiation of values, the development of plane on plane and gradation after gradation in obedience to the requirements of modelling, the pictorial record (in a word) of the innumerable operations of the environing medium of whatever exists as material for art. To put the matter in other terms, he stands in the same relation to the successors of Constable as Chardin stood to those of Hobbema and De Hooch. He treats his armours and his piles of fish, his bowls of strawberries and dead birds and groups of pots, precisely as an open-air painter deals with clouds and distances and trees. The sun shines on them, and the wind blows; they are localised in space, and shown together with the facts of their unseen yet all-important envelopment. His still-lifes, indeed, have been described as 'des paysages d'intérieur,' and as they have the essential qualities of good modern landscape, the phrase is neither infelicitous nor untruthful. Vollon.

XXII

His art is a development of Romanticism. His portrait groups are modern in every sense of the word; his allegorical pictures have a certain smack of 1830 and of the Courbet of the *Atelier du Peintre*; he is a student of atmosphere and light, and has recorded his impressions in appropriate and novel terms. Of late years his manner has become a little hard and dry, and his care for detail somewhat exaggerated. But he is always a craftsman, and in his best work he is a genuine colourist and something of a poet. [1888.] Fantin-Latour, 1836.

XXIII

Legros, 1837.

He began, with Champfleury, as a 'realist'; but he is better described as 'an Old Master belated,' and from the first the description fitted. It is only in sentiment and choice of subject that he is a modern. The developments of Constable and his successors can scarce be said to exist for him. In his treatment of the figure he is inspired by the example of Holbein and Jehan Foucquet; in his landscapes he is a pupil of Nicolas Poussin; he touches hands with Van Dyck and Rembrandt in his etchings, and with Vittore Pisano in his medals. His colour, again—severe, solemn, chastened—is modern in no sense of the word; and the contrast between himself and his contemporaries is made more trenchant by the austerity of his ideals, his disdain of trick, the sustained dignity, the lofty sobriety, the austere distinction of his art. It has been said of him, and with truth, that he lacks charm, and seeks and finds too exclusively the beauty of ugliness. But it is also true that he is a consummate artist, whose influence for good can hardly fail to be enduring, heartening, and profound. [1888.]

XXIV

Bastien-Lepage, 1848-1884.

Among those who interested him were Corot, Courbet, Fantin-Latour, Daubigny; but the prime favourite of all was Édouard Manet (1833-1886). Manet had developed the theory of what is called *impressionnisme*, and was struggling to paint

things as he saw them, without chiaroscuro and with an exact regard for the actior upon his subjects of the 'diffused light' in which they were enveloped, and by which their shapes were modified and revealed. Under this same 'diffused light' it was that the younger man considered Nature: Nature who, in the phrase of Mr. W. C. Brownell, was 'rarely or never his material,' but 'nearly always in exact strictness his model.' It was in deference to its requirements, and with a fearless trust in the results of its operation upon the cold sunlight and the grey-green leafage of his own department of the Meuse, that he produced his most striking and most personal effects; in the pursuit of it he grew blind to ideal beauty, and was betrayed into the perpetuation of a novel and unlovely mannerism of tone and colour and aspect. But his appreciation of its possibilities was so just, and his use of them so ingenious and suggestive, that his work would have been remarkable in the presence of these elements alone; and in some other directions his endowment was of the best. To a sense of character, alike in landscape and in humankind, of peculiar apprehensiveness and delicacy he added a singular capacity for expression: his brush-work was broad or exquisite at will; he could handle his materials with an accomplishment uncommon even in France, and with that touch of style which stamps the born painter. It was not long ere he began to tell in art. His health was deplorable, but he painted steadily, and from the famous *Annonciation aux bergers* (1875) he did nothing that was not closely scrutinised and eagerly discussed, and little

Bastien-Lepage.

Bastien-Lepage.

but was applauded and admired. In 1877 he exhibited the *Foins*, in 1878 the *André Theuriet*, in 1879 the *Sarah Bernhardt*, in 1880 the *Jeanne d'Arc*, in 1881 the *Mendiant* and the *Albert Wolff*, the *Père Jacques* in 1882, the *Amour au village* in 1883, the *Forge* in 1884; and, though he died at six-and-thirty, he had lived long enough to found a school, and to take rank with the masters of his time.

'He is not enough in love with beauty,' says the fine critic already quoted: 'he insists too much on what is ugly in Nature, he is too uncompromising in his refusal to adorn in the slightest degree the most forbidding subject'; and if the 'école réaliste-impressionniste' be visited with obloquy, that, and that only, is the reason. There is little to add to this. Bastien-Lepage is no doubt responsible for the existence, at first or second hand, of a vast amount of superfluous unbeautifulness, and for the oppression of much latter-day art—his own achievement, that is, and that of his pupils—under a heavy burden of mannerism. But he was a faithful and passionate student; his technical mastery was in a sort complete; the least lovely of his works is removed from even the suspicion of vulgarity by a curious distinction of style; he is always found to have the abiding virtue of sincerity. Alike in landscape and in portraiture he survives as the author of a new departure.

FIVE DUTCHMEN

I

HE is a painter of daylight—above all, of daylight as it were domesticated: of its appearance when it is lodged between the confines of four walls, its effect upon architectural features and the colours and the lines of furniture. His early work is only exact and literal: his subjects were mostly church interiors, which he rendered with laborious accuracy of detail and minuteness of finish. Then, having disciplined his hand and mastered his material, he became a painter: his touch grew free and bold, his drawing instinct with expression, his treatment energetic and personal, his colour refined, distinguished, and suggestive; and he began to convey in terms of exquisite sobriety his sense of the all-pervading influences of atmosphere and daylight. Working indifferently in water-colours and in oils, he attained to a singular mastery of both; and though it has not always pleased him to do well in either, and he is responsible for a great number of bad pictures, it may be said of him that his best is unique in modern painting. None, perhaps, has had so keen and just an apprehension of the plastic

Bosboom, 1817.

Bosboom. quality of an interior as Johannes Bosboom; and none has, perhaps, revealed so much of its pictorial significance, or struck from its suggestions a note of such peculiar yet engaging romance. Of course he is a development; for is not Holland the birthplace of painted light? But he is so little the slave of his greater predecessors, of Rembrandt as of Pieter de Hooch, that he eliminates all human interest from his work. It is without reference to their relation to man, it is wholly for themselves, that he paints his cottage corners and his vast and lofty aisles. To him they are all sufficient: as the troubled skies and green meadows of his native Suffolk were to Constable, as to Corot the quiet waters and the dawning skies of Ville d'Avray. And his sole mission is to present them as he sees them through the exquisite gradations of their aërial envelope. [1888.]

II

Israels, 1824. He is essentially a painter of man and man's emotions. Whatever their intrinsic merit, his landscapes and interiors are only settings for the human figure; however justly observed and rendered, his effects of light are always subordinate to and illustrative of, an interest of character and sentiment. He is a good painter of popular subjects; and it is not nearly so much because he is a good painter as because his subjects are popular that his renown is world-wide, and there is scarce a gallery of modern pictures but contains an example

of his work. It is to his honour—it attests the incorruptible quality of his artistic sincerity—that, with all the applause that has been his, he should have remained his own severest critic, and have gone on improving as he has gone on painting. First and last, however, his real master has been, not Kruseman nor Picot but, the magician of *The Night Watch* and the *Syndics*; and to be maintained at such height of emulation is to find rest impossible. This has been the happy fortune of Israels. His early work—a trifle violent in colour, somewhat strained in composition, in illumination arbitrary, in execution laboured and painful—is only so much unskilled and second-hand Rembrandt. But he was hard to please; and it is the practice of years that has made him the capable craftsman of his greater pictures. Here his colour is individual, spontaneous, sometimes even rich, and his brush-work large and vigorous; his drawing, if a little loose and vague—as of a Millet indifferent to Poussin and unconscious of the antique—has a quality of suggestiveness; his light is clear, fluent, impalpable, remote from paint; his shadows are floating and luminous; often mannered, and often naïvely naturalistic, his compositions are simply and effectively pictorial. It is small wonder if in Holland he have been a leader in the revival of painting. Israels.

He is a painter of pathos. The emotion is one easily strained; and always to produce it aright and of the purest quality is in these days impossible. It is all-too apt to degenerate into mawkishness and twaddle; it is subject to the taint of affectation; when its flow is readiest and fullest, there oftentimes

Israels. is its expression least to be encouraged—for to 'pipe the eye' is only now and then a creditable proceeding, and to pipe the eye on any and every provocation is to put oneself outside the pale of art, and stand forth the fit exponent of no more in nature than is feeble and contemptible. Even with Shakespeare the thing is sometimes theatrical; even with Dickens it is often unveracious; and for Millet, can one always acquit him of a community of aim with Édouard Frère? Israels is neither Millet nor Dickens—still less is he Shakespeare; and his exercises in the pathetic are very often merely repellent. As a rule his appeal is all-too obvious. He makes no secret of his design upon your tears. On the contrary, he asks you to sit down and have a good cry with him; and he tells you plainly, not only that it will do you good but, that you will really enjoy it—that you will find it a luxury and a lesson in one. Sometimes it is impossible not to decline his invitation—not to resent it with scoffs and sneers. But on occasion his pathos is touched, both in conception and in execution, with a certain homespun dignity; and then he is irresistible. He is not a great poet like Millet: not in idea nor in utterance has he ever a touch of the heroic. But he has realised that it is man's destiny to grieve and to endure, and he often conveys this moral in terms that go straight to his hearers' hearts. [1888.]

III

Jacobus Maris, 1837-1899.

At his highest he produces work that takes rank with the best of its time. He is not always a poet: the tone of what he does is commonly that of prose. But the prose (to carry on the metaphor) is master's work: it is stamped with a noble sincerity; in vigour and directness and variety it is not just now to be surpassed. In his pictures of man there is very little human interest. The figure is considered and handled much as though it were a piece of still life—in relation, that is, to its aërial envelope—and not for the sake of any intrinsic element of character or sentiment; so that the result is only pictorially good, and appeals to none save an æsthetic emotion. It is otherguess work with his landscape. Not only is it large in treatment, dignified in style, and finely, albeit simply decorative in effect. You see at once that here the man's heart and brain are in entire and perfect consonance: he has felt as well as understood his subject, and the record is affecting as the experience was passionate. He is one of nature's intimates; and his expression of the peculiar sentiment of this or of that of her innumerable moods is scarce less just than his rendering of its special aspect is accurate. His skies are a case in point. None since Constable, the ancestor with whom to my mind he has most in common, has rendered clouds —the mass and the gait of them, the shadow and the light, the mystery and the wonder and the beauty —with such an insight into essentials, and such a command of appropriate and moving terms as Jacobus Maris. He paints them, not solid and still

Jacobus Maris.

but, active in space, full of the daylight and the wind, menacing with storm, or charged with the benediction of the rain; and they look upon you from his canvases like the living children of the weather that they are. [1888.]

IV

Mauve, 1838-1888.

MAUVE may not be ranked with Troyon. He is much less vigorous and less original; he is not nearly so great a painter; his work is not so solid in execution nor so decorative in effect. On the other hand his draughtsmanship is sound, his brush-work full of gusto, his colour quite his own; to a right sense of nature and a mastery of certain atmospheric effects he unites a genuine strain of poetry. In pure landscape he is often excellent: he paints it with a taking combination of knowledge and feeling. His treatment of animals is at once judicious and affectionate. He is careful to render them in relation to their aërial surroundings; but he has recognised that they too are creatures of character and sentiment, and he loves to paint them in their relations to each other and to man. The sentiment is never forced, the characterisation never strained, the drama never exorbitant: the proportions in which they are introduced are so nicely adjusted that the pictorial, the purely artistic, quality of the work is undiminished. To Troyon animals were objects in a landscape; to Mauve they are that and something more. His old horses are their old masters' friends; his cows are used to the girls who tend

them; his sheep feed as though they knew each other, and liked it. In a word, his use of the dramatic element is primarily artistic; and it is with something of a blush that one compares his *savoir-vivre* with the bad manners of some animal painters nearer home. [1888.] Mauve.

V

MATTHEW MARIS is an artist of rare parts and singular accomplishment, averse from publicity and contemptuous of distinction, and content to paint for himself and a few friends. He mastered his craft almost at starting; and his earliest work is distinguished by sanity of aim and completeness of method. But it is not in his earliest work that he can be rightly savoured. He has in him a vein of poetry, a strain of imagination, that is none the less intense for being somewhat morbid; and he was quick to part company with solid earth, and to become a painter of dreams. He is far less concerned with the outward show of things than with their spiritual shapes, their attribute of mystery, their essence and innate significance; and he expresses as much of these as is revealed to him in terms of strange and peculiar beauty. His view of life is melancholy; his sympathies are curiously individual and remote; his humanity is warped, fantastic; his romance, for all the close and brooding passion of its expression, is so uncommon as to appear unreal. But he has a magic of his own, and to withstand his incantations is impossible. Their Matthys Maris, 1839.

Matthys Maris.

appeal is vague as that in certain of Heine's verses:—

'Aus alten Märchen winkt es
Hervor mit weisser Hand,
Da singt es und da klingt es
Von einem Zauberland':—

and withal as curiously affecting. I do not want to strain the comparison. Heine is the most human of poets; Matthew Maris is one of the least sexual of painters. But I own that to me the Dutchman's pictures are now and then inevitably suggestive of the more fantastic and far-away of the greater artist's lyrics. They might almost pass for illustrations of certain pages in the *Buch der Lieder*, just as certain pages in the *Buch der Lieder* recall to me with no uncertain voice the unearthly glamour, 'the light that never was on sea or land,' which shimmers from so much of the painter's work. Here is an instance of what I mean:—

'Im Zaubergarten wallen
Zwei Buhlen stumm und allein,
Es singen die Nachtigallen,
Es flimmert der Mondenschein.'

That, with what follows, is a Matthew Maris in words.

Israels has described his art as 'the fine gold of Dutch painting'; and, being that, it will always be caviare to the general. It may be, indeed, that the half of him will not be told to us; for his life is spent in the pursuit of unattainable perfections, and he regards the most of those pictures which he consents to part with as no more than experiments. Be this as it may, they are good enough for them that

have eyes to see. If they proved no more, they would still prove that two great and precious qualities are indisputably his. He has a gift of exquisite colour and an infallible sense of tone. Of late the former potency has suffered change: his reveries have grown sombre and sad ; he has done with his weird yet lovely combinations of magical blue and ethereal gold ; he paints, not dreams but, the melancholy ghosts of dreams. But his tonality is always faultless ; and those, perhaps, who have caught the full perfume of his subtle and peculiar genius will find new charm in his darkening mood. [1888.]

Matthys Maris.

SOME LANDSCAPE PAINTERS

I

Nasmyth, 1758-1840.

NASMYTH'S reputation has greatly declined of late; and the reasons are neither few nor far to seek. He had a sincere and pleasant sense of the pastoral in landscape; he was an ardent and intelligent student of the Dutch masters, and he put such individuality as he had into the convention which they had shaped to such lovely ends; he was something of an Eighteenth Century poet, and his liking for beauty, pedestrian as it was, had yet a reality of life that is still palpable, and a capacity for respectable and decent expression that has admirers even now. But, as he was essentially small in his ambitions, so was he essentially petty in his triumphs. What he had to say amounts to nothing in particular; and, while explicit and studied enough to satisfy the needs of a certain sort of literalism, the terms in which he said it are cold, formal, altogether wanting in distinction. His matter, in other words, is merely commonplace, and his manner, hard, 'tight,' niggled enough to be inspiring to none save the careful students of facts.

II

THE last years of TURNER'S life were a strange and sordid mingling of dotage and uncleanness. In 1842 he exhibited his *Burial of Sir David Wilkie* and *The Exile and the Rock Limpet*, in 1843 his *Approach to Venice* and his *Sun of Venice going to Sea*, in 1844 the extraordinary piece of *impressionnisme* known as *Rain, Speed, and Steam*. To some these last works of his are revelations of new possibilities in art, while to others they are only the outcome of a mind diseased and the expression of a colour-faculty gone to physical decay and ruin. But, whatever the fact in art, in life the Turner of these squalid last years was a dismal monomaniac. He had a house in Queen Anne Street (for the pictures contained in which he was offered, and refused, an hundred thousand pounds), and that house was kept by a woman who had begun to live with him in 1801 as a girl of sixteen, and had gone on living with him ever since; but though she knew of another retreat of his, she had no idea where it was, and it was not until late in 1851 that she was able to identify her master with a certain 'Puggy Booth,' who was thought to be a retired Admiral (Turner had already been known to pass himself off as a Master in Chancery) who had a house in Chelsea, and lived there with an old woman whose face was hideous with cancer. He died there some days after the identification. His will, which he had made himself, was a monument of muddled inexpressiveness. It was the subject of years of argument; but in the end it gave his pictures and

Turner, 1775-185..

Turner. drawings to the nation, a sum of £20,000 to the Royal Academy, and the bulk of his funded moneys, together with his rights in engravings, to his next of kin.

His life—so voiceless and so stunted in fact, so gross and unworthy in appearance—has not yet found its Balzac. His art, so intelligent, so apprehensive, so ambitious in its aims, so confused yet so suggestive in its results—has been the origin of so much literature that to admit that it is art at all is getting difficult, and to assert that it is not only art but great art has become wellnigh impossible. Turner, indeed, belongs at this time neither to hell nor to heaven, but hangs, like Mahomet's coffin, somewhere—nobody knows in what degree of altitude—between the empyrean and the abyss. On the one hand is Mr. Ruskin with the great army of those who think with him; and for them Turner not only resumes the excellences of Claude, the Poussins, Ruysdael, Rembrandt, Rubens, Wilson, Crome, Van de Velde, Gainsborough, Constable, but is also Turner, and so the last potentiality—'the ultimate and consummate flower'—of landscape. On the other is the little but increasing group which demands of an artist not personality but art, not experiment but achievement, not riot but order, not excess but measure, quality, perfection—not Turner and Rousseau but Claude and Corot—and sees in him a man whose genius, to put it metaphorically, lived in a castle with a score of posterns and no great gateway. To strike and hold the balance between the two factions is impossible. Turner has been so magnificently over-praised that,

as was inevitable, he is just now—he will be for some time to come—the breaking-point of a great wave of reaction. Till that wave has exhausted its energy the very truth is only to be caught in splashes. Thus it is certain, as Mr. Monkhouse has shown, that Turner's life was lived in a series of duels in paint with other men: that in water-colours he studied, assimilated, and improved upon the practice of the best of his time; that in oils he set himself to understand, repeat, and do better than the best of De Loutherbourg, Wilson, Van de Velde, Titian, the Poussins, Claude, to name but these. But it is by no means so certain that, as Mr. Monkhouse would have us believe, he succeeded. It is nothing if not doubtful that his colour-sense was ever anything but crude, antic, and a little coarse. But his ingenuity was enormous; his interest in facts is scarce to be described; his dexterity—in water-colours anyhow—has yet to be surpassed; his treatment of Nature—with its extraordinary and bewildering combination of an artistic yet arbitrary regard for ideals of composition and an inartistic and slavish regard for superfluous detail—was personal, to say the least; he drew with uncommon neatness and precision, he was curious in styles, he touched upon a thousand hints of mystery and beauty and romance. And the result for him that is enamoured of art—who looks upon paint as so much visible beauty, and is not concerned with its moral significance or its unpictorial suggestiveness; who sees that Turner's blues are shrewd, and his yellows trumpery; and who is mad and wicked enough to judge of the literary quality

Turner.

Turner.

of (say) *The Exile and the Rock Limpet* by that of *The Fallacies of Hope*—the result, I say, is rather negative. That Turner was a great artist *A Frosty Morning*, among other things, remains to show. That he was ever a great colourist is matter of opinion: the facts are with us that latterly he grew colour-blind, and that, when it comes to swearing, the sensation of the expert in paint is every whit as authoritative as the practical testimony of the painter. That he has not entirely obliterated the memory of Claude is plain to any one who can clear his mind of rhetoric, and compare the two where they hang (as Turner intended they should hang) in the National Gallery. However correct it be to advance that he was the source of a vast amount of art-criticism, it is uncritical to affirm that he founded a school in painting, or that his influence upon his successors has been comparable in any sense to that which is still being exercised by Constable and by Crome. But it is none the less true that, while on the Continent he is not greatly esteemed, among Ruskin-reading populations he is a kind of superstition, and commands higher prices than any save those among his successors who are the most in fashion. Also, his worst enemy has been the wonderful man of letters whose inspiration he was in the beginning, and whose care his fame has continued to be. There is no such deadly influence as excess of praise; and that Turner has survived the enthusiasm of Mr. Ruskin is excellent argument for his greatness.

III

CONSTABLE, the most influential, and one of the greatest, landscape-painters of the Nineteenth Century, was born at East Bergholt, where his father, Golding Constable, a wealthy mill-owner, resided. He was intended for the Church, and went to school at Lavenham and Dedham and elsewhere; but he was distinguished in nothing save 'proficiency in handwriting' till late in his 'teens, when, says Leslie, he was found to have become 'devotedly fond of painting.' Golding Constable would seem to have divined the future, he was so resolutely intolerant of the unkindly and fatal passion; and his son, whose only friend was the village plumber (with whom he used to go out sketching from Nature), and who was obliged to hire a room that he might have a place to paint in, was presently obliged to compromise, and, having finally declined to become a parson, to take his place in one or other of his father's mills. It was the best he could have done. It was part of his business to watch the weather; and that he became the greatest observer of wind and cloud and rain yet known in painting was due in no small means to this fortunate piece of tyranny. Constable, 1776-1837.

At this time Sir George Beaumont—Wordsworth's Beaumont: Beaumont of the brown tree—was a frequent visitor to Dedham, which was his mother's home. The Dowager-Lady Beaumont and Mrs. Constable were friends; and at the elder lady's house John Constable was taken with one of the great passions—after nature and himself perhaps

Constable.

the greatest—of his life. Sir George was not a great painter; but, as his bequests to the National Gallery will show, he had an admirable taste in pictures. Devoted, above all, to Claude and Wilson, he was accustomed to carry the *Hagar* of the former master about with him wherever he went, and, in making his acquaintance, Constable made that of the prince of landscape painters as well. His taste in landscape, it is to be noted, was largely classic: he was an ardent and devoted admirer of Titian, the Poussins, Wilson, and his highest enthusiasm was for Claude. 'How enchanting,' he writes (of the *Narcissus*), 'and lovely it is; far, very far surpassing any other landscape I ever beheld.' He was then at Cole-Orton, as Sir George's guest: he had gone there to copy his favourite painter, and he worked so hard as to impair his health. 'I do not wonder,' he cries to his wife, in a rapture that makes him careless of grammar, 'at your being jealous of Claude; if anything could come between our love, it is *him*'; and, again, a few lines later, he bursts out with 'the Claudes, the Claudes, the Claudes, are all, all I can think of here.' This (and more to the same purpose) was written some five-and-thirty years after that first sight of the *Narcissus*, which, says Leslie, 'he always regarded as an important epoch in his life.' It is fair to add that, with Sir George's Claudes, he saw Sir George's Girtins, a set of thirty water-colours, which he was advised to study as 'examples of great breadth and truth,' and whose influence, Leslie thinks, 'may be more or less traced through the whole course of his practice.' Nothing

like this can be said of the Claudes. Unlike Turner, whose enthusiasm was nothing if not imitative, Constable remained himself, and to achieve the marriage of the new art with the old was reserved for one later and greater. Constable.

His first visit to London was in 1795. He had a letter of introduction to Farrington (1747-1821), who looked at his work, predicted his greatness, and told him what he knew of the practice of his own master, Richard Wilson; and made the acquaintance of 'Antiquity Smith' (1766-1838), the author, antiquary, draughtsman, and engraver, from whom he received much valuable counsel and encouragement. The next year he was settled again at Bergholt, reading Algarotti and Leonardo and Gessner, copying 'Tempesta's large battle,' painting *A Chymist* and *An Alchymist*—'for which I am chiefly indebted to our immortal bard'—drawing cottages for Smith to engrave, making flying visits to London, working between-whiles in his father's counting-house; and in the February of 1797 he was admitted a student of the Royal Academy, and, says Leslie, 'had resumed his pencil not to lay it aside.' After that you find him making elaborate studies from the living model and from anatomical sections; copying Wilson, Ruysdael, Carracci, and Claude; sketching at Ipswich—where 'I fancy I see Gainsborough in every hedge and hollow tree'—in Derbyshire, and 'among the oaks and solitudes of Helmingham Park'; and painting, in utter scorn of the 'cold trumpery stuff' he saw being done about him, to please himself, until in 1802 he broke ground, with a *Landscape* at the Royal Academy.

Constable.

The most useful of his friends was Benjamin West (1738-1820), who encouraged him generously and well; persuaded him to refuse a drawing-master's place, which Dr. Fisher (afterwards Bishop of Salisbury) had offered him, and depend entirely upon himself; and gave him a great deal of excellent advice, some of which—as, for example, the hint to remember that 'light and shadow never stand still'—he adopted, and some of which—as, for example, the precept that 'whatever object he was painting,' he should 'keep in mind its prevailing character rather than its accidental appearance'—he forgot more frequently than was good for him. For the rest, he had convinced himself that there was '*room enough for a natural painter*' (the italics are his own), had decided that 'truth only will last, and can only have just claims on posterity,' and had determined to cease from 'running after pictures and seeking the truth at second hand'; so that he had fairly begun his course, and shaped his destiny.

Both were uneventful enough. He sailed to Deal in an East-Indiaman, and used the experience in a picture (1806) of *H.M.S. 'Victory' in the Battle of Trafalgar*; he went sketching in the Lake District, and turned the results to some account in the exhibitions, but found that the solitude of mountains depressed his spirits; he painted some portraits, a couple of altar-pieces for Brantham and Nayland Churches, a great number of copies (chiefly Sir Joshuas) for the Earl of Dysart; he married, after years and years of probation, and was quietly happy in his wife and children; he exhibited constantly and to such purpose that in 1822—when he

had been three years an Associate, and was known as the painter of *The White Horse* (1819), the *Stratford Mill* (1820), and *The Hay Wain* (1821), to name but these—he is found asking his friend Archdeacon Fisher for the loan of £20 or £30. His prices were small enough, for he was glad to take £100 apiece for *The White Horse* and the *Stratford Mill*, which were both six-foot canvases, the first he ever painted; for his famous and excellent *Boat passing a Lock* (1824) he got but a hundred and fifty guineas 'including the frame'; and he was content, after some haggling, to sell *The Hay Wain* and *A Lock on the Stour* for £250 the pair, and to give the purchaser, a Frenchman, 'a small picture of *Yarmouth* into the bargain.' This was the most profitable sale he ever made. For the purchaser exhibited his purchase at the memorable Salon of 1824; and Constable awoke to find himself the most famous Englishman in all the history of French art.[1] Constable.

[1] For the results of his appearance see *ante*, pp. 251-254. This was his highest moment, and, so far as I know, he did not profit by it in England. He died, indeed, in 1837, and Ruskin, bent on winning the world for Turner, ran amok at Constable, as he had run amok at Claude. The effect of his unscrupulous, adroit, and most ingenious ecstasy was that we had to suffer Rossetti, and to read our Constable, as the rest of the world had read him, in a French translation. Now Ruskin is gone: 'The sweet war-man is dead and rotten': and one can admire as one will, so that even Mr. Whistler is somebody, and a Nicholson (say) is not to be put out of court because it is not like something else—a Fra Angelico, for instance, or a Carpaccio, or a Tintoret. On the whole, we have had our fill (and more than our fill) of *Modern Painters*. 'Twas an irresistible book in its time. But Turner is pretty much where he would have been had it never been written. So, too, are Constable and the others—the unworthy, the obscene, the jugulated—Van Dyck, and Rembrandt, and Gaspar Poussin; and that is, or should be, enough. [1901.]

IV

Cotman, 1782-1842.

THE year after COTMAN'S death, his effects were sold at Christie's: most of his drawings went for a few shillings apiece, and the top prices of a two-days' sale—which produced the beggarly total of £262, 14s.—were £6, and £8, 16s. Since then times and tastes have changed; and Cotman has long been recognised, as his biographer remarks, for 'one of the most original and versatile artists of the first half of this century,' a draughtsman and colourist of exceptional gifts, a water-colourist worthy to be ranked among the greater men, and excellent whether as a painter of land or sea. Indeed, he was a rarely endowed and, whatever his medium, completely accomplished artist. In etching, for example, he drew his inspiration from the overpowering achievement of Gianbattista Piranesi, and if he had nothing of the grandiose imagination and the sense of mystery and romance which give to that master a place apart among those who have treated the results of architecture as material for art, he is also found to be lacking in the trick of emphasis, the tendency to exaggerate, disfeature, and misreport, by which the Venetian's work is often vitiated, and which make him so redoubtable a model. It is the same with him in water-colours and in oils. His master-quality is a capacity for simplification and selection. It was a maxim with him to 'leave out, but add nothing,' and he practised his theory with an assurance of hand and an intelligence of eye that stamp him, in this respect at least, a true and excellent artist. No

doubt he would have done better had he attempted less and laboured in fewer fields; but, even so, his best work is lifted into greatness by the presence of a manly and sincere imagination tempered with style. Cotman.

V

Cox was a patient and faithful student of Nature, and particularly of certain essential facts in Nature: as the action of light, the effect of wind and rain and mist, the shape and the motion of clouds, the variable and affecting quality of atmosphere; and the best of his achievement—simple, direct, sincere—is an individual reflection of much that but for him might have gone unrecorded. As it seems to some, he is least attractive and convincing when he is most elaborate; for then his work is apt to set forth far too much of his personal idiosyncrasy (on the whole 'tis tame and commonplace), and to be greatly wanting in the freshness and spontaneity of his transcripts from the living fact. Naturally, his admirers are numerous and ardent, and to those not with them his reputation appears exaggerated. David Cox, 1783-1859.

VI

He was not original nor powerful; but he was always 'Grecian Williams' and an exponent of the classic convention in landscape. This is to say that he composed with elegance, drew with correctness, and was judicious in selection, tranquil in Williams, 1783-1829.

Linnell.

and rugged solemnity of purpose, of which his work was a sincere, if halting, expression. But his colour, with its coarse purples and its garish reds and greens, is painfully hot and vicious; his mastery of paint is never conspicuous save in absence; his handling, for all its air of bravura, is niggled and small enough to be oddly at variance with the vague of his ambitions and the passionate melodrama of his ideas. His diligent hand was altogether at odds with his labouring brain, and it is doubtful if in the range of British art there is any achievement in which the quality of paintiness is so violently apparent as in his. A typical Linnell is enough to show that, well as he meant and vigorous as was his temperament, the outcome of such endowments as his is ever a negation of art.

IX

Müller, 1812-1845.

In 1846 this man's pictorial remains were sold by auction, and, the Public having awakened to the fact that he had been one of the foremost landscape painters of the time, his executors cleared some £4600 by the sale. All the same, it is like enough that he had not attained to anything like his highest; and it is certain that he was largely gifted and finely accomplished. He painted and drew with equal vigour and facility, and, as his faculty of composition was both well-bred and well-trained, and his pictorial invention of singular readiness and fertility, he produced as much in the few years that it was given him to live as many men of twice his age.

At his best his colour is full, rich, personal, alive ; his pictorial quality is excellent in kind and overpowering in degree ; he produces an effect of strength and of completeness—of personality in union with style—which few Englishmen have had in them to surpass. Müller.

X

THE best of BOUGH was Bough himself ; and of the humour, the temperament, the independence of mind, the buxom and jovial sincerity that went to make that up, there is not too much in his work. His chief oil pictures are the Cadzow Forest scenes, the *Dumbarton*, the *Baggage Waggons* (a reminiscence of Müller), the *Rocket Cart*, the *St. Monance*, the *Borrowdale*, the *Edinburgh*, the *Holy Island*, the *Mail Coach entering Carlisle*, the *Kirkwall Harbour*, and the *London from Shooter's Hill*. They are big, bold, 'scenic' work, and, at least as effects in pictorial histrionics—for Bough was nothing if not 'theatrical'—their interest is considerable. It is on his water-colours, however, that his renown is stablished. They have a tenderness and a fulness of expression which he never compassed in the other medium. His skies are very often good, and in his renderings of wind and motion he captured and paraded not a little of the feeling and the energy of several greater men. Again, he was eminently versatile: all aspects of Nature were familiar to him ; marine, or pastoral, or sylvan, he had an eye for whatever would paint, and, in water-colour at least, a real gusto of expres- Sam Bough, 1822-1878.

Linnell.

and rugged solemnity of purpose, of which his work was a sincere, if halting, expression. But his colour, with its coarse purples and its garish reds and greens, is painfully hot and vicious; his mastery of paint is never conspicuous save in absence; his handling, for all its air of bravura, is niggled and small enough to be oddly at variance with the vague of his ambitions and the passionate melodrama of his ideas. His diligent hand was altogether at odds with his labouring brain, and it is doubtful if in the range of British art there is any achievement in which the quality of paintiness is so violently apparent as in his. A typical Linnell is enough to show that, well as he meant and vigorous as was his temperament, the outcome of such endowments as his is ever a negation of art.

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At his best his colour is full, rich, personal, alive ; his pictorial quality is excellent in kind and overpowering in degree ; he produces an effect of strength and of completeness—of personality in union with style—which few Englishmen have had in them to surpass. Müller.

X

THE best of BOUGH was Bough himself ; and of the humour, the temperament, the independence of mind, the buxom and jovial sincerity that went to make that up, there is not too much in his work. His chief oil pictures are the Cadzow Forest scenes, the *Dumbarton*, the *Baggage Waggons* (a reminiscence of Müller), the *Rocket Cart*, the *St. Monance*, the *Borrowdale*, the *Edinburgh*, the *Holy Island*, the *Mail Coach entering Carlisle*, the *Kirkwall Harbour*, and the *London from Shooter's Hill*. They are big, bold, 'scenic' work, and, at least as effects in pictorial histrionics—for Bough was nothing if not 'theatrical'—their interest is considerable. It is on his water-colours, however, that his renown is stablished. They have a tenderness and a fulness of expression which he never compassed in the other medium. His skies are very often good, and in his renderings of wind and motion he captured and paraded not a little of the feeling and the energy of several greater men. Again, he was eminently versatile: all aspects of Nature were familiar to him ; marine, or pastoral, or sylvan, he had an eye for whatever would paint, and, in water-colour at least, a real gusto of expres- Sam Bough, 1822-1878.

Sam Bough.

sion. His work abounds in commonplaces; he was too often enamoured of the superficial. But, on the whole, his art is vigorous, healthy, frequently agreeable, and sometimes better than any but the best.

XI

Cecil Lawson, 1851-1882.

WHETHER LAWSON had or had not said his last word remains uncertain. What is not doubtful is that he was a born painter, with a vigorous and sterling gift of expression. Within the limits of an intense, if rather narrow, scheme of green and blue he was a true, though not a distinguished, colourist; and his best work is marked by breadth of vision and largeness of treatment, and therewith a real sense of style. His inspiration was frankly Flemish: he was a pupil of Rubens, and the convention to which he chose to adapt his ideas was chiefly modelled on his master's. It follows that his painting, whatever its defects, and however near it be to failure, is always positively artistic, and that his relations with Nature are characterised by a certain reticence and good breeding. Facts are never the end with him—they are only the means: he refrains from the vulgarity of realisation, and essays no more than the pictorial expression of certain balanced and choice suggestions. His handling is often not less solid than dexterous; in his victories, as in his defeats, he remains a painter. It is possible that, had he lived, he would have made his convention popular and intelligible, and founded a school with higher aims than experiment and a

better ambition than that of being merely representative. Cecil Lawson.

XII

He is described as an 'amateur,' and in a sense the description is descriptive enough; but amateurs of Thomson's stamp are as rare as great artists, from which, when they are found, they are not easily distinguished. Thomson, indeed, is comparatively the greatest Scots landscape-painter. What is more, his place in British art is eminent as well as peculiar. His technical practice could be faulty on occasion, but at its best it is sound in method and brilliant in effect. His colour is often of remarkable significance and beauty. His pictorial faculty was so sane in kind and so vigorous in quality as to be almost infallible: it was as a painter that he looked at fact; it was as a painter that he received, selected, and arranged his impressions; it was as a painter that he formulated his conclusions, recorded his results, and produced his effects. For not only was he a devout and ardent student of Nature: he was also an innamorate of art, and especially of art as understood and practised by the great men of the great landscape school of Rome. It is told of him that he was an immense admirer of Turner, but I do not think it easy to gather that much from his works. Before the Englishman's ambitions and effects, however dazzling they may have seemed to him and however closely he may have cherished them, he preferred the ideals and the achievements of the Poussins and of Claude. And the fact Thomson of Duddingston, 1778-1840.

Thomson of Duddingston.

remains that his best, while profoundly romantic in temper, is large in treatment and dignified in aim, and is touched throughout with the supreme distinction of style: is, in truth, a lasting demonstration of the uses of convention and an eloquent reproof to them that asseverate that art is individual or is nothing.

FOUR PORTRAIT PAINTERS

I

Reynolds. 1723-1792.

SIR JOSHUA painted men and women and children with equal distinction, understanding, and effect; and he remains the completest artist, and perhaps the greatest painter, that Britain has yet produced. No doubt there have been men whose intelligence was more curious and more apprehensive; and it may be there are some who have done brush-work as close to fact and as eloquent according to the conditions and the rules of paint. But none, whether in portraiture or landscape, has maintained so lofty and so imperturbable a level of excellence, or shown so constant and so exquisite a respect for dignity of style. It is the fashion to talk of Turner as of one divinely inspired, of Gainsborough as being magnetic, infallible, irresistible, of others to similar purpose, each after his kind; and in a sense the fashion is right. We English have always regarded art as nothing if not personal, and have valued our artists not according to their places in the hierarchy of paint, but according as we found them interesting, mysterious, engaging, and the like; and the result has been that, even as we have

Reynolds. devoured, with an appetite for whose intrepidity no praise can be too great, such crude imaginings and half-phrased ideas as the work of Blake and Rossetti (to name but these), we have contrived by the operation of a peculiar mental process—an effect partly of culture and partly of native worth—to get ourselves into such a condition of taste as makes the denial of Sir Joshua's pre-eminency rather meritorious than not. But it is not Sir Joshua who suffers: it is ourselves. He was, it is true, above all things the exponent of a mere convention; and before that the English mind—fed full of the immense suggestiveness of Turner, and made drunken with the nepenthe of Turner's chief prophet—is only too apt to prefer such strange gods as mystery, romance, individuality, and the rest of them. But it is none the less true that Sir Joshua, whatever his place in the art of Britain, is a far more brilliant and conspicuous figure in the art of the world than any Englishman before or since his time. It is a commonplace that he had design, colour, the capacity of brush-work, the pictorial sense, the genius of characterisation, the perfection of good breeding, the charm of a distinguished style, and therewith the touch that brings such artists as Thackeray to his feet and constrains such sturdy, hobnailed Muses as Wordsworth's to take up their testimony against him. It is a commonplace, too, that he was sometimes mannered, and on occasion could be feeble; that he carried his interest in his material to a point at which he wilfully sacrificed the future to the present, and expressed himself in terms which he probably knew would not endure the

touch of time; that he was 'courtly,' prone to please, addicted to flattery, very conscious of the merits of Sir Joshua Reynolds. What is of vital importance is that he was so complete a master of a certain noble, and withal a most imperious, convention that he challenges comparison to those whose invention and achievement it was, and whose merit it remains, to have expressed themselves to immortal purpose within its limits and in obedience to its rules. The pedants pass—they and their catalogues with them; the literary critic of art dies of his own literature; the fashions, the airs and graces, of inspiration change, flourish, and are forgotten almost with the hour. But for Sir Joshua there is no vanishing, nor death, nor change. He had the supreme good sense to recognise that Raphael, Titian, Van Dyck were his masters, and that as their pupil he was greater than everybody save themselves. Reynolds.

II

GAINSBOROUGH is as brilliant and fascinating a personality as exists in English art. He was the kindest, the waywardest, the most passionate of men: 'a natural gentleman,' says Northcote; a fanatic of music and a romantic lover of musical instruments; curious of novelty, greedy of experience; with more interests than he could manage, more ambitions than he could gratify, more temperament than he could adequately express. His achievement, alike in portraiture and landscape, is large, and the quality of much is very good. But Gainsborough, 1727-1788.

Gainsborough.

it includes some elements of imperfectness which are as the seeds of death. His training was incomplete; his accomplishment was never consummate; his colour, for all its charm, is thin—is as of Watteau without richness and without lambency and glow; his brushwork, for all its ease and spontaneity and suggestiveness, too often produces an impression which may be likened to the effect of painted china; his work is too frequently experimental or capricious. There is in him something of the amateur; and it is impossible not to feel that his art is not fully representative of his admirable native gift. He had a rare facility of hand; he was inventive, ingenious, even imaginative, and he was so in his own way, with a mixture of sincerity and grace that is very winning; in landscape he touched at times a note of natural and peculiar romance. But it is vain to deny that his possibilities were greater than his performance, and that to equal him with so great a master of style as Reynolds is to ignore the very essentials of art.

III

Romney, 1734-1802.

THE dominant in ROMNEY'S life is a note of sexual tragedy. The worship in paint which he professed for Emma Lyon is comparable of its kind and in its degree to that which Dante practised for Beatrice in poetry. That he was not materially her lover is suggested by the fact that he never tired of painting her. The triumphing male does not commonly disperse his energies in celebrating the peculiarities

of his conquest. There have been examples to the contrary, of course; but good taste, good feeling, the instinct of sex, the necessities of art, are generally on the other side, and for one such outcry of full-fed satisfaction as (say) Rossetti's *Nuptial Sleep* (which may or may not be genuine), there are a thousand such voicings of mere desire as (say) *Adelaide* and Romney's 'Lady Hamilton' *passim*. In any case Romney's place in British art is not with the highest. He had grace, invention, facility; above all, he had, and still has, charm; but if he were a type of the artistic temperament, there is scarce any sense in which he can be said to have been an artist, and even at its best his work is found to be more or less of an *à peu près*—a something which is only almost done, and to be enjoyed must be approached and considered with certain touches of the child's humour of makebelieve. In portraiture he is sometimes very nearly good; as a dabbler in pictorial romance he was responsible for many attempts at doing something not then to be done. But he was—as Nelson was—a man with a passion, and his condition remains the more fortunate. The nation greatly honoured the hero who did its work at the Nile and Copenhagen and Trafalgar. And it seems to have decided to regard in something of the same spirit the man who, dimly seeing and imperfectly showing the existence of new possibilities in art, yet painted one woman in such a way that he chiefly lives as that one woman's painter.

IV

Raeburn, 1756-1823.

THE material RAEBURN found in his native place was of the finest quality. The blessing of the Union was everywhere apparent, but Scotland was not yet Anglicized, and Edinburgh was still her capital in fact as well as in name. As the city at once of Walter Scott and of the Great Unknown, it was a metropolis of poetry and fiction; as the city of Jeffrey and *Maga*, it was a centre of so-called criticism; as the city of Raeburn and John Thomson, it was a high place of portraiture and landscape; as the city of Archibald Constable and the Ballantynes, it was a headquarters of bookselling and printing. It was the city of Reid and Dugald Stewart, of Erskine and Henry Dundas, of John Home and Henry Mackenzie, of Braxfield and Newton and Clerk of Eldin, of Francis Horner and Neil Gow; and as Raeburn painted the most of these—and indeed there was scarce an eminent Scotsman but sat to him—his achievement may be said to mirror some thirty years of the Scots nation's life. Scarce anywhere could he have found better models; which, for their part, were thrice fortunate in their painter. Honourable as were his beginnings, they scarce gave earnest of the results of his later years. His genius, essentially symmetrical and sane, did but mature with time; artistic from the first, his accomplishment was finest at his death; his vision was at its keenest in his latest efforts; his life, in fine, was a piece of work as sound and healthy and manly as his art. Thus: 'he is said to have lost a great deal of money by becoming security for

a relative, but he bore his loss with great composure, and painted no more industriously after than before'; he spent much of his leisure in 'mechanics and natural philosophy'; he practised sculpture—it is said that when he was studying under Michelangelo in Rome, he came near to preferring it before painting—with a certain diligence; he 'excelled,' says his biographer, 'at archery, golf, and other Scottish exercises'; he laid out and built 'on so judicious and tasteful a plan' that his estate became in no great while 'the most extensive suburb attached to Edinburgh'; he was an excellent talker; he appears to have been singularly fortunate in his domestic relations; he enjoyed the friendship as he commanded the admiration of the most distinguished men of his time; his health was perfect; he stood upwards of six feet two in his boots; 'it may be added that, while engaged in painting, his step and attitudes were at once stately and graceful.' His character and his career, indeed, have all the balance, the unity, the symmetrical completeness, of his genius and his achievement; and the rhythm to which they moved—large, dignified, consummate: like that of a Handelian chorus—remained unbroken until the end. It came in 1823. He was now a man of sixty-seven; his health was apparently imperturbable; with Scott and Adam and Shepherd, he had been for some years in the habit of 'interposing a parenthesis into the chapter of public business for the purpose of visiting objects of historical interest and curiosity'; and this year he had not only 'visited with enthusiasm the ancient ruins of St. Andrews, of Pittenweem,

Raeburn.

Raeburn.

and other remains of antiquity,' but had also 'contributed much to the hilarity of the party.' Returning to Edinburgh, he had been honoured with a sitting from Sir Walter, of whom he was anxious to finish two presentments, one for himself and one for Lord Montagu; and 'within a day or two afterwards' he was 'suddenly affected with a general decay and debility,'—a condition 'not accompanied by any visible complaint.' He lingered no more than a week; and so it befell that the portrait of the author of *Waverley* was the last to make any call upon a capacity of brain and hand unequalled in that owner's day. Thus does Scotland work: she has the genius of fitness, so that to the world without her achievement seems ever instinct with the very spirit of romance. There are two great artists in the Edinburgh of 1823, and the one dies painting the other (the fact remains 'a subject of affectionate regret' to the survivor). I think of Hugo—of the *Je crois en Dieu* of his last will and testament, his careful provision of a pauper's hearse. And I revert with pride and gratitude to the supreme experience of this august pair of friends.

There is often virtue in a nickname; and much as Jameson is still renowned as the Scottish Van Dyck, even so, but with greater propriety, might Raeburn—who used neither compasses nor chalks, dealt with his sitters directly through the medium of paint, and was identified with the use of the 'square' touch at least a couple of generations before its present apotheosis—be distinguished as the Scots Velasquez. It is told that when Wilkie was painting in the Muséo del Prado, he had but to

consider the work of the Spaniard to be 'always reminded' of the Scot's; and it is a fact that the one has at least some tincture of the breadth of manner, the unity of effect, the quick, inevitable touch, the notable capacity for preferring essentials—something, too, of the turn for perfect prose as opposed to high romantic poetry—which are present to so marvellous a purpose in the other. But these comparisons of less to greater are misleading; and it were well to push the parallel no further. The interest of art is absolutely incompatible with the sentiment of patriotism; and it is enough to know that Raeburn, whatever his degree of kinship to the king of painters, was an excellent and distinguished artist in paint. He came at the break between old and new—when the old was not yet discredited, and the new was still inoffensive; and with that exquisite good sense which marks the artist, he identified himself with that which was known, and not with that which, though big with many kinds of possibilities, was as yet in perfect touch with nothing actively alive. His draughtsmanship was good enough when he chose; his colour was sound enough to be distinguished; sober as it may seem, his feeling for paint was very real; his brushwork—intelligent, vigorous, expressive—was that of a man of choice and forceful temperament trained in the ways and nourished upon the conventions of a great school. And with all this he was Henry Raeburn—a personality so shrewd and sensible, so natural and healthy and sincere, as to seem not out of place in the cycle of Walter Scott. He was content to paint that he knew, and that only; and his

Raeburn. conscience was serviceable, as well as untroubled and serene. Of the mere capacity for portraiture—the gift of perceiving and representing individual character and form—he had more, perhaps, than any portrait painter that has lived; and not a little of his merit consists in that he was always so far its master as to be able to vocalise it (as it were) in the terms of paint, so that his portraitures are, to begin with, pictures. Here, if you will, are facts; but here, unmistakably, is paint, is accomplishment, is art. And that is why a bad Raeburn is better than the best of men like Shee and Grant. That is why a good one might be compared without much suffering or offence to a good Sir Joshua; the truth being that Sir Henry at his strongest need hardly vail his bonnet to the best that have painted the living aspects of men. A gentleman is company for the king. [1890.]

ARTISTS AND AMATEURS

I

George Morland, 1763-1804.

He was born in London, where at four he is said to have been taught in West's *atelier*, while at ten he was an expert in certain branches of anatomy, at twelve he could model ships, and at eighteen he taught himself the fiddle. Meanwhile his father, to whom he had been bound apprentice, had put him through a course of discipline severe enough to make a right painter of him. He was long imprisoned with a series of casts from the antique, and when he had mastered these, he was turned on to copy pictures, which Henry Robert Morland, always at his wits' end for money, sold as fast as they were done, to the Jews. George, in fact, was born into a world of thriftlessness and dishonourable expediency, and it was inevitable that, with the blood and the training which were his, he should have turned out the rather ruffianly Bohemian we know.

It is said that even at the height of his captivity he used to cheat his father and make money for himself: that he found time in the day to paint a great deal of stuff, which at night he used to lower

George Morland.

from his attic window into the street; there friendly dealers were on watch for it, and thence a parcel of money returned to him at the end of the line which had taken his panel out into the world. Be this as it may, the end of his apprenticeship found him sick and tired of seclusion and hard labour and dependence; and, refusing an offer from Romney of a three years' engagement at £300 a year, he went to live with a picture-dealer. Of course he took to seeing life, and to seeing it with gusto; and as in those days to see life was to be drunk often and to frequent all sorts of lusty company, it was not long ere Morland began to go to the bad. He had the appetites of a sailor come ashore from a seven years' cruise, and ir his landlord he found (to complete the analogy) the cruellest of crimps. Escaping at last, he went to Margate, where he painted a number of miniatures, and whence he returned to London to produce his first successes—*The Idle Mechanic* and *The Industrious Mechanic*, which were instantly engraved—and to meet, woo, and marry Nancy Ward, a sister of Ward the engraver, who presently married Morland's sister, Maria. The two couples lived together till they quarrelled; when Morland, after a short stay in Great Portland Street, migrated to Camden Town, Lambeth, East Sheen, Queen Anne Street, the Minories, Kennington, Hackney, and so to the 'rules' of the Bench, and, finally, to a spunging-house in Clerkenwell, where he fell ill and died.

His life, the while, was as it were a double strand of hard drinking and hard work. He 'spreed' at painting, and he 'spreed' at life. He produced

with extraordinary facility; his hand was not less ready and accomplished than his brain was prodigal of pictorial inventions; he designed and painted subjects and animals, and indecencies, and landscapes, and marines, with equal gusto and dexterity and force; his temperament was so abounding that he was long able to keep pace with his abounding popularity; obliging dealers aiding, he coined himself into guineas, and so, like the reckless and passionate unthrift he was, he flung away his genius and his life in handfuls, till nothing good was left him but the silence and the decency of death. George Morland.

In all the range of British art there are few things better than a good Morland. It has been complained of him that his tastes were 'coarse,' that his habit of mind was 'low,' that his was a 'vulgar and unseemly soul,' and all the rest of it; and it is obvious that for those who look to art for moral and spiritual meanings, and are content to do without painting if only they can carry away a little literature, his work is a kind of outrage. For Morland was nothing if not a painter, and Morland's pictures are nothing if not arrangements of paint. He was a vigorous and expressive draughtsman; he had the craftsman's sense of his material and the craftsman's delight in the use of it. Further, he was a colourist; and the fact remains, that his pictures are painter's work, and, whatever their morals, must ever live with the eternal life of art.

II

David Wilkie, 1785-1841.

WILKIE, 'a pictorial Galt,' was less a painter—less a master of paint—than a delineator of character and 'an anecdotist in colour and form.' In that capacity he has given pleasure to several generations of good folks, who know not what painting is. His pictures were long most popular with engravers; and it is in these, I take it, that he survives, for 'tis a fact, I fear, that in this Burne-Jonesian, 'this ghastly, thin-faced time of ours' his colour feels mean, his drawing seems to lack energy and strength, his art is seen to partake too much of the character of cheap literature,[1] while he himself has far more the look of a man of letters who has deviated into paint than of the painter somehow mixed up with letters, which he really was. For all that, Wilkie's is a pathetic figure. If he erred, it was because he knew no better; and, being a Scot, he had but to learn the truth, to risk his all upon its capture. Paint, as Velasquez knew it, was unknown to Wilkie till he was a man of forty-two; and it is infinitely to his credit that he no sooner knew what it was than he began to experiment in the right use of it. That he should fail was inevitable: he had been going astray with all his heart for some five-and-twenty years, and the time of learning had

[1] The 'Æsthetic Movement' has made painting so excessively literary, that either it is literature in a new medium or it is nothing. But the literature is not for the crowd: it is high-romantic, old-world, mystical; and with the crowd, which loves incident, and is interested in character, it passes for painting. All the same the difference between *The Blind Fiddler* and (say) *Cophetua and the Beggar Maid* is not so great as at first may seem. [1901.]

passed for him. But at least he tried his best, and to the student of art the failures of his latter years are far more moving than the successes of his earlier days are 'humorous.' They show that he had in him to be good as well as popular, and that his consciousness of failure must have made life hard to endure. David Wilkie.

III

THE achievement of this pious and painful creature has provoked some ecstasies of encomium; but it is scarce possible to regard him as other than a good, honest, industrious, and faithful architectural draughtsman. If no more than painfulness and piety be asked of him, he will triumph. But if his work be taken and considered as art—that alters the case; for it is found that there is no more warrant for his pre-eminency than a certain amount of rhetoric on the part of a third person. There is no doubt at all that PROUT was conscientious, literal, exact, laborious; but neither is there any that his colour was poor and thin, that his method was small, and that, once we cease to consider him as a magazine of facts, he goes to the bottom of time with the great mass of the English Water-colour School. Prout, 1784-1852.

IV

HUNT was deformed and sickly, never married, began by painting landscapes and vegetables, went on to deal with comic rustics, and ended as a painter Hunt, 1790-1864.

Hunt. of fruits and flowers. He was a patient, hard-working, devout student of facts, and he did his utmost to render the forms and hues and textures of objects with meticulous and literal fidelity. His success in the pursuit of this ambition has made his work the theme of an immense amount of over-powering eloquence; but his ideal, however estimable in itself, and however useful in the development of (say) a professor of botany, was in most respects remote from paint. In fact, his regard for detail produced a style that is so niggled and so petty as to be merely contemptible; his determination to be exact resulted in the achievement of effects in colour that are only garish and unpleasing; in his resolve to omit nothing he lost count of his subjects as wholes, ignored such essentials as breadth and mass, forgot the very existence of such essentials as atmosphere and light. He was, no doubt, a pleasant humourist; he took an intelligent interest in a great variety of facts; he was always conscientious, and he was generally vulgar. Withal, he was so indifferent to—or so unconscious of—some primary constituents in art, that to call him artist is to abuse the word.

V

Landseer, 1802-1873. Sir Edwin Landseer's last years were wrecked with melancholy, his hand long outlived its cunning. All the same, he was probably the most popular painter that ever lived. The English are a sporting and a petting people; and in Landseer,

with his extraordinary gift of sympathy with animals, they found and recognised an absolute English painter. Then, his facility was prodigious, and the chief engravers of his epoch—Holl, Cousins, Heath, Lewis, Thomas Landseer, Finden, Graves, and the rest—were all employed upon him. At one time there was scarce a house in Britain that was not decorated with Landseers, and there are not many even now in whose decoration a Landseer is not included. It is, indeed, in black and white and at second-hand that the man is most himself. He is of those who read best in translation: he was, so far as paint is concerned, not specially an artist. Now and again he rises to a certain height of accomplishment, and is found capable of brilliant brushwork, and by no means blind to the fact that to exist as an arrangement in paint is a picture's first condition of excellence. But while, his notable and useless dexterity notwithstanding, his interest in the technical parts of art was superficial and intermittent, his interest in such minor elements as character and incident and sentiment was ever vivacious and acute; so that the bulk of his work was of its essence non-pictorial, and he survives as, not an artist in paint but, the author of a vast amount of graphic literature. In its way that literature is capital: it is full of emotion and humour, it is brilliant with invention, it is often moving, it is commonly ingenious and suggestive. But it is essentially popular, and it is mostly innocent of style.

VI

Harvey, 1806-1876.

HARVEY was skilful, earnest, and ingenious; his invention was facile and sufficient; he drew cleverly and carefully; his ambition, while often too large for his capacity for expression, was always respectable and human. He is seen—as so many are seen—to greater advantage in his sketches, which are spirited and taking, than in his finished canvases, whose technical virtue is not often good enough, and whose colour is apt to be unattractive and uninspired. Coming in the brave days of *Waverley* and the romantic Renaissance, he chose, as was natural, his subjects rather more for their literary than for their pictorial quality, and was long content to practise what is called—obligingly enough—'imaginative art,' and to rival with Fraser and Allan in the production of painted illustrations. He had, however, a true affection for landscape: he used it with understanding and sincerity in most of his subject pictures, and for some years before his death he painted nothing else.

VII

Phillip, 1817-1867.

PHILLIP, called 'Phillip of Spain,' began as a painting man of letters, and ended as something of a painter; and it is therefore safe to assume that, had he been born into a school, he would have been a painter from the outset, and at the last as good a painter in fact as, by the operation of a pleasant patriotic fiction, he is sometimes made to seem. He

was always less interested in paint than in character and incident; even in his best years his colour was rather vigorous and representative than spontaneously and essentially pictorial; he seldom failed to touch that note of commonness—of mind, intention, effect—which is the distinguishing mark of the popular artist. But he had a temperament of such uncommon energy and strength that at thirty-four, after making a wash-pot of Moab, and casting his shoe over Edom for full seventeen years, he was able to renew his ideals and his method and his style; and for the rest of his life he worked, according to his lights and in the measure of his strength, in the direction of better things. It is not for every one to lay down Wilkie for Velasquez; and it is saying much for Phillip that he did so to such good purpose as to leave to posterity the task of deciding whether he was, or was not, a painter. Phillip.

VIII

The results in poetry of ROSSETTI's last period were published soon after the end, and it was seen at once they were the work of a man of genius who, if imagination flashed splendidly now and then, had lost such hold as he might ever have had on the essentials of his art. As for his painting, a chief ambition of his friends had been to keep his good things out of his reach; lest his humour of perfection—of elaboration, that is: elaboration and the imparting of extraordinary significances—had been their ruin. Rossetti, 1828-1882.

Rossetti.

To be just to Rossetti is as difficult for his friends as for his enemies. These remain under the spell of his rare endowment; while those who knew him not, but still know art, are conscious mainly of the bastard issues to which he led, and the vicious methods which he practised into popularity. There are many to whom his merit consists in that he failed in two several arts, and yet contrived to create enthusiasts for and against his results in both; and the position of these is perhaps the safest of all. That in both he has but to be weighed in any balance to be found wanting is plain. What has yet to be demonstrated is to what the deficiency was due. Was it a fault of brain and temperament? and could Rossetti have done more than he did? Or was it inherent in the time? was it the absence of a convention and a school? the necessity of experiment? the quest of ideals impossible to realise, in that first of all they were dimly seen, and next that the means of expression—the grammar of style and words and paint—were only to be achieved through greater difficulty and distress than Rossetti and his disciples cared to face?

The truth is to find. What is not uncertain is that Rossetti himself was, from the first, and in both paint and poetry, peculiar to unhealthiness; and that, while in poetry and paint he was obviously a temperament, he habitually exacted of paint the effect of words, and resolutely imposed upon words the uses and the duties of paint, and so was what is called an artist in neither. He had ideas (technical and other), invention, imagination; or he could never have painted *The Blue Bower*, nor written

Love's Nocturn, and *The Blessed Damozel*, and some passages of *The House of Life*. But it may —it must—be protested that the results, however vigorously and directly they appeal to a certain type of mind, are of their essence inartistic. Mr. Theodore Watts has written some eloquent and closely reasoned pages to show that Rossetti had the genius of verbal mystery, and was in touch with the many-sided, enormous, ever-shifting issues of romance; and Mr. Theodore Watts, who knows his trade, and has proved that he can handle his facts to good purpose, is no doubt right in some parts of his contention. But if he can read *Sister Helen*, for example, without wishing that at least a third of it had remained unwritten—or at least unprinted—then has he yet to show that he is fully alive to the perfection, and at every point awake to the completeness, of *Kubla Khan* and the *Ode to a Nightingale*: that (in fine) he knows the difference between organic art and art that is inorganic in that the life it lives is only one of phrases and suggestions, the half of which we should have been spared, and whose aggregate effect is to set us wondering if Milton were not a mistake, and if Shakespeare would not really be the better (as Johnson suggested that he would) for a vast deal of chastisement. And if this be, as I believe it is, the case with Rossetti the poet, how and in what terms shall the case be stated against Rossetti the painter? Excessive, tortured, morbid, affected, call it what one will, Rossetti's feeling for words was real, and was now and then expressed in finely minted verses. Had he as real a feeling for paint? did he ever contrive a

Rossetti.

Rossetti.

sequence of six brush or crayon strokes which are as instinct with brain and style as (for instance) his 'Against the sunset's desolate disarray' or his 'And thy heart rends thee, and thy body endures'? Was his colour at its best as exhilarating and delightful to the eye as—I 'll not say Titian's but—Monticelli's, or as absolutely and innately a component of his idea as—I 'll not say Rembrandt's but—Corot's? I do not think he had.

What is not doubtful is that on occasion his determination to have colour at any cost in verse, and poetry at any cost in colour, was so disastrously effective that it went far to confuse one art with another, and has left a myriad simple souls—who at bottom only clamour to be edified: who resemble nothing so much, in fact, as those male and female children which are the School Board's natural prey—in an immense perplexity as to whether words and paint, and the ideals and conditions thereof, are, or are not, one and the same. And broadly stated, therein consists the argument against Rossetti. Was he, either in words or pigments, an artist? And if he were, what were Coleridge and Keats in the one medium, and what were Velasquez the brushman and Monticelli (say) the colour-monger in the other?

The truth is with Time. Meanwhile, Rossetti created a school of painter poets and a school of poet painters; in two arts he remains an influence for good or ill as marking as Wagner in music and drama; and in both his effect, being imperfect, will in the long run pass, and be forgotten as it had never been. The thought of such a waste of tempera-

ment and character, of the loss of so many genial conclusions, is saddening; but to be consoled one has but to remember that Constable—who is Corot, Rousseau, Troyon, Millet, the Marises, Israels—is actively alive. The processes of the Muse are bewildering and discomforting; but her issues are unchangeable, and her judgments compensate for all. [1889.] Rossetti.

IX

PAUL CHALMERS went often afield in search of subjects; but he lived his life in Edinburgh. He was twice on the Continent, and a visit to Holland (in 1874) had a marked influence on him: however basely, his own style of handling was already in a line with Rembrandt's, and his fuller knowledge of that master's methods was an intractable inspiration. He was a born colourist: he was inclined to sacrifice everything to colour. His nature was intensely sympathetic: 'He could never paint what he did not feel.'[1] His early style was laboured and hard, but he developed larger methods. Much of his work remains incomplete, because his standard was so high, and his accomplishment so inexact, that he was apt to fail, and fail again, till he wearied of endeavour, and lost interest and heart. He was never careless nor superficial, but took infinite pains to master his subject, and get himself inside it; he has been known, indeed, to have as many as two-and-ninety sittings for a single portrait.[2] It was at Chalmers, 1836-1878.

[1] Who can? [1901.]

[2] I am told that the greatest English-speaking painter insists on even more. But, then, he always does the trick. Chalmers did not. [1901.]

Chalmers.

once his misfortune and his fault that he could never satisfy himself: that he was unable to see when a picture was as complete as he could make it. In the result he loved mystery, half-tones, the intercourse of light and shade: whatever was hard and straight and precise was odious and unpaintable. He was sometimes an artist; he was always more or less artistic; but he was incomplete, or imperfectly developed. He was disastrously affected by irresolution and fastidiousness; but those who knew him best say that in years to be he would have outgrown his faults, and his genius would have had full play.

X

Pinwell, 1842-1875.

PINWELL is better seen in black and white than in colour, as an illustrator than as a painter. He had plenty of invention, with a knack of composition, facility, a certain prettiness and charm; and as his drawing was neat, and his literary apprehensiveness was real, he was found successful in suggesting his authors' meanings to their readers: so that for him to annotate a given text in pictures was held a piece of luck for both poet and public. In water-colours his merits are less obvious—or, rather, are largely vitiated by the presence of some strong defects. His style was neither broad nor vigorous, and he had a tendency to be niggled and small in handling, lively in colour, broken in composition, and divided in effect. Against all this, there must be set the fact that, young as he died, he was somebody, and had already identified himself, with Walker and Mason, with a new move in art.

XI

IN HOLL'S essays in *genre* he strikes a note which is not altogether his own—which sounds, indeed, to better purpose and with a fuller and richer sonority, in the work of Israels. His material is the pathos of poverty; his colour is sombre to unpleasantness; his effects are deliberately melancholy. In portraiture, however, he remains a personality. He was the painter of men. His studies of the other sex are neither sympathetic nor intelligent: the pictorial capacity latent in the costumes and the characteristics of modern womanhood were not apparent to him; he was lacking in elegance, grace, the sexual interest, the underwear of gaiety and *esprit*; and he did well to permit himself few chances of failure. But to the representation of the manhood of his time—its statesmen, churchmen, financiers, soldiers, vestrymen—he brought some painter's attributes. A student of Velasquez (to consider whose work he made, quite late in life, a special journey to Madrid), he was himself a craftsman. His brushwork, if somewhat wanting in distinction, was measured, dexterous, and significant; he was painter-like in his use of paint, if the pattern on which his scheme was executed was nearly always unbeautiful, and commonplace more often than not; his inventions, albeit in some sort coarse, were legitimate in design and striking in effect; his drawing was vivacious and correct; and his modelling, while deficient in subtlety, said all it set out to say. Again, his insight was direct and truthful: he was unrivalled in his generation in a

Frank Holl, 1845-1888.

Frank Holl. capacity for seeing his sitters as materials for official portraitures, and for expressing their public humanity in the terms of paint; and though he cannot be held to have had style—in the sense that Sir Joshua, or even Gainsborough, had style—he had a manner, and that manner his own. It has been said of him that he painted history. But he was the historian of an age of prose, and his medium was ever the prose of paint, and was sometimes its journalese.

XII

Manson, 1850-1876. GEORGE MANSON died at twenty-six; but he had lived long enough to show that he had a root of the matter in him. His draughtsmanship was expressive; his colour, while low in key and limited in range, was real; his interest in his material was sensuous as well as intellectual; he was addicted to the representation of character and humour, but he expressed himself in pictorial terms. It is probable that with him, as with some other 'inheritors of unfulfilled renown'—a phrase that seems to act on men like haschisch in the way of developing an abnormal sense of possibilities—too much has been made of what he did, and far more than enough of what he never got a chance to do. But there is little doubt that he would have lived a painter, and that his death was a loss to the Scottish School.

TWO MODERNS

I

Charles Keene, 1823-1891.

WERE the august, unedifying corporation presided over by Sir Frederick Leighton elected on the sole grounds of art, a very large proportion of Mr. CHARLES KEENE'S innumerable contributions to *Punch* would have been signed and sponsored by a real R.A. It has been said, indeed—and with only a seeming exaggeration—that there is right pictorial art enough in any one of that gentleman's *Punch* drawings to furnish forth a whole gallery in the summer exhibition at Burlington House, and leave no inconsiderable amount of the same rare quality for distribution among such of the sacred Forty as have not already come in for their share. It sounds excessive ; but the sense is beyond dispute. Pictorial art is not wholly a matter of paint and canvas and gold frame and a number in a catalogue. On the contrary, it is so little a matter of these things that it is absent from at least nine-tenths of the combinations of these things which are achieved and presented in the course of the Royal-Academical year.

Mr. Keene has never dealt in any of them, it is

Charles Keene.

believed ; or if he have, it has been so much for his own amusement that he has never deigned to ask the public what it thought of his results. But for all that he has been almost insolently prodigal of proofs that he possesses all the essential qualities that go to make the true pictorial artist, and possesses them in rare fulness of measure. Thus, to begin with, he is a draughtsman of singular faculty and skill, whose touch is large, unfaltering, admirably adroit, and more capable, certainly, of suggestion and expression than that of any other living Englishman ; he is a colourist in black-and-white, and it is a continual refreshment to the eye to watch him so balancing his masses, and so arranging his lights and shadows, as to make his work above and before everything else a picture ; his capacity for design—for covering a given surface with a rhythmical and orderly arrangement of forms and lines—is inexhaustible ; his gift of selecting and presenting the purely pictorial elements of a character or a scene is so seldom found wanting that its exercise seems almost mechanical. It is just these qualities that are inconspicuous in modern English paint, and it is in the possession of just these qualities that Mr. Keene is thrice-fortunate. There is no doubt that he is a student of character, none that he is an excellent humourist, none that his results are commonly touched with the right inspiration of comedy or farce. But it is the prime distinction of his work to be essentially art. You look at it as an aspect, a pictorial combination of black-and-white, an effect achieved by certain contrasts of light with dark and line with form, before you dream of in-

quiring into its details, and you master it point by point before you care to take a thought of the legend it is supposed to illustrate. The character, the fun, the furniture and decoration—in a word, the literary interest—are all subordinate to the pictorial quality. Yes, the old gentleman (now you look at him!) is delightful, of course; and the suggestion of breadth and extreme solidity conveyed by the back-view of his helpmeet is simply enchanting. But these elements are only a pretext for design. The facts are beyond questioning, the presentation of character is not less exhilarating than accomplished, the jest is delightfully conveyed; but the artist has seen them first and last, not as so much literature-in-the-flat but, as so many elements in a scheme essentially and unalterably pictorial. That they happen to be interesting and attractive for other reasons and from another point of view has really nothing to do with it. The effect of Rodin's bronzes is liberally and intensely suggestive of human passion; but they begin and end as achievements in sculpture. It is the same—*mutatis mutandis*—with the black-and-whites of Mr. Charles Keene. Their effect is largely humorous, but they begin and end as achievements in design. Charles Keene.

They say that his range is limited; and if they leave out of count—as undoubtedly they do—his notable gift of art, they are well within their rights. Mr. Keene the humourist is not nearly so rich and vigorous and varied an experience as Mr. Keene the master of colour and design. But Mr. Keene the humourist is the last in the world to be put superbly by. His material is either ugly or grotesque: he

Charles Keene.

cannot present you with a lady, and there is more than a smack of the 'commercial' in his gentlemen; his maids are own sisters to their mistresses, and his Highland chieftains are of one strain with the gillies and the keepers that accompany their walks abroad. But the reproach is not for Mr. Keene alone. John Leech, for instance, never drew a lady; his gentlemen are 'tigers' one and all; his type of beauty is about as variable as the aspect and effect of a *Times* leader; he is the funniest person (perhaps!) that ever expressed himself in drawing; but his limitations are as plain as the nose on your face. Mr. Du Maurier, again—well! does Mr. Du Maurier's range come any nearer to being universal than Leech's? And is it, when all's said, so much as a barleycorn wider than Mr. Keene's? His high-nosed Duchess, his long-legged Colonel, his Bishop, his Vulgarian, his German Musician—has not one seen them all a thousand times? Does not one know them as one knows the clock? There is nothing in physiognomy if his Maids are not their own Mistresses in disguise: there is nothing in heredity if his Butlers are not his Bishops just a little run to seed. Mr. Keene is not nearly so funny as Leech, and has no more right to be accused of 'universality of type' (as the saying is) than Mr. Du Maurier: though if it came to design—to the comparison of the two as artists pure and simple—there would, may be, be something else to say. But within his marches he not only calls nobody master but is far and away the best and strongest champion we have. His Scotsmen may or may not be all the heirs of Bruce and Burns would like, but

they are irresistibly funny; his 'gents' are gents innate and irreclaimable, his servant-girls have scarce an aspirate in all the length and breadth of their constitutions; his cooks, his keepers, his cabmen, his elderly ladies, his Irish peasants, his board-school boys and teachers—if all these be not intimately observed and absolutely realised, then, surely, the theory of observation and the ideal of realisation are lost. As for his drunkards—(English and Scots)—and his old gentlemen in the City, I hold them sacred, and I 'll not discuss them—I will look, and uncover, and pass. They are among the good things of comic art; and to speak of them save with gratitude and respect were to show oneself unworthy their acquaintance. Charles Keene.

The man with whom he has most in common is Honoré Daumier, and that this can be said of him is vastly in his praise, for Daumier was the greatest master of the grotesque that ever found expression in line. Like Mr. Keene's, his material is either ugly or ridiculous; and to consider his fierier energy, his more consummate mastery of means, his ampler and more vigorous capacity for realisation and suggestion, is to exult in the reflection that an Englishman is the richest of his heirs. [1890.]

II

To talk of a British school of sculpture were much the same as to talk of woods where are no trees. They have managed the matter far better in France, for there the sculpturesque tradition is centuries old, Auguste Rodin.

Auguste Rodin.

and has endured without a break: so that where *we* have perforce to refer to Torrigiano and Roubillac and Canova and Boehm—foreigners all, yet British in virtue of their achievement—they can discourse at will of Jean Goujon and Puget, of Houdon and Rude and Barye, to name but these, who are French of the French in virtue of birth and training and convention. Just now, it is true, we can rejoice in the work of Messrs. Gilbert and Onslow Ford; but both these are French by education and accomplishment, and against them Paris can set a round dozen at least: among them such men as Paul Dubois, Mercié, Gaudez, Dalou, Cain, Fremiet, and above all Auguste Rodin: the last a culmination after his kind, whose work is instinct with genius, as well as being a prodigy of accomplishment and style.

There is little to say of him by way of biography. He is some forty or fifty years old; he was a pupil of Barye and Carrier-Belleuse; he worked a great deal at Sèvres; he has 'ghosted' in his time, and in his time has been accused of casting his creations from the life; he has received some third-class medals; he has been twice or thrice the hero of a Government purchase; he is represented in the Luxembourg; he had the honour to be rejected a year or two ago by the jury of the English Royal Academy; he is the author of a *John-Baptist*, an *Age of Bronze*, an *Eve*, a number of busts—Rochefort, Hugo, Carrier-Belleuse, Antonin Proust, Henri Becque, and others—the tremendous group, *les Calaisiens*, for Calais, innumerable *figurines* and fantasies; he has been engaged for years on a pair of bronze doors for the Palais des Arts Décoratifs—

the most prodigious monument to Dante and the *Commedia* that has yet been done; he is just now busy with a memorial to Bastien-Lepage for Damvilliers and a *Claude Lorraine* for Nancy. That is about all that need—or can—be told of the man; while as for the artist, his time is to come, and as yet he exists but for his fellow-craftsmen and the few outside the arts that know and are moved by greatness when they see it. Auguste Rodin.

Yes; greatness is the word. So excellent a judge as M. Dalou, the artist of much that is large in conception and vigorous and accomplished in method and style, has declared that when the century goes out it will remember the aforesaid pair of doors as its heroic achievement in sculpture; and M. Dalou speaks as one having authority and in the name, I take it, of all his brother-wooers of the Muse. And if that be true—as I believe it to be true—then where between himself and Michelangelo is there so lofty a head as Rodin's? True, there is Barye; and he, too, had genius and style, and he, too, was a path-breaker and an influence. And true, there was Alfred Stevens, who was gifted as few have been, and whose work is by far the best evidence of a capacity for the highest in sculpture that Britain has to show. But Barye's range was limited: great artist, and great sculptor as he was, he was an *animalier* or he was something of a mediocrity; and great artist, and great sculptor, as he was, he had the faults of his environment, and was a victim as well as a hero of Romanticism. As for Stevens, he might, sure, have done anything he chose, and have risen to those heights of achieve-

Auguste Rodin.

ment which are inaccessible to all but the very great; but his lot was cast on evil days, and he remains an example of the strange, perplexing carelessness with which our Britain wastes her rarest and sweetest energies. It is different with Rodin. He has suffered like the rest—like Barye, Millet, Corot, Rembrandt, all the men who came with a message to times not ready to give it ear; but like these others he has made his chance, and like these others he has assured himself of victory. His busts alone were enough to place him in the future: the style of them is so complete, the treatment so large and so distinguished, the effect so personal yet so absolute in art. The *Hugo*, for example, makes you wonder that the *Contemplations*, and the *Misérables* are no stronger than they are; and the *Hugo*, if it be the one on which the master lingered longest, is by no means the most irresistible of the group. And the busts, whatever their number, and whatever their individual and collective worth, are only one entry in the general account. The hand that modelled these austere yet passionate statements of virile force and suffering and endowment, and expressed their sculpturesque quality in such terms of art as recall the achievement of Donatello himself, can on occasion create such shapes of beauty, and such suggestions of elegance and charm, as put the Clodions and the Pradiers to the blush, and enable you to realise, in the very instant of comparison and contrast, the difference between the art that is great whatever its motive and its inspiration and the art that only passes for great because it happens to be gracious and popular. And with

Rodin, as with Rabbi Ben Ezra, 'the best is yet to be.' His *Bastien-Lepage*—which shows the painter at his easel in his working dress, straining his shaded eyes to focus an effect of light—is an achievement in 'realism' that may change the course of monumental art; his *Calaisiens*—his miserable burghers taking leave of their fellow-townsmen and in act to follow the lead of the heroic Eustache de Saint-Pierre—is such a reading of history into sculpture as only comes to a man of genius, and therewith such a suggestion of human emotion as could be achieved by none save a master-craftsman, who is also a great creative artist; while as for the Dante Doors—so abounding in invention, in realisation and suggestion, in accomplishment of the rarest type—what is left to say of them? Except that Rodin, like Dante, has 'seen hell,' and, like Dante, has turned the experience into immortal art, there is not much. Here, if you will, are a thousand hints of the possibilities of human passion: from Paolo and Francesca melting into each other:— Auguste Rodin.

'La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante':—

as no man and woman have done in sculpture since sculpture began, to the nameless miscreants, the very dregs of the damned, that crawl and writhe and foison—always in the terms of sculpture!—up and down, and in and out, and here and there and everywhere, in enormous yet distinguishable complexity all over the master's achievement. But here too is art: here is sculpture in its essence, sculpture with all its conditions accepted and fulfilled, sculpture as strictly sculptural as the Par-

Auguste Rodin.

thenon Frieze. You may read into it as much literature as you please, or as you can; but the interpolation is not Rodin's but your own. Sculptor he is, and sculptor he remains. No doubt he has read his Dante, and no doubt his work would have been other than it is had his Dante gone unread. But it exists apart from Dante, and if the *Commedia* were suddenly to disappear, the loss would be—so far as Rodin's work is concerned—no loss at all. It is not literature in relief nor literature in the round: it is sculpture pure and simple. And if the sons of men habitually expressed themselves in similar terms, that literary quality on which, the race being what it is, it cannot choose but depend for the louder and the more instant part of its fame—that literary quality would cease from troubling, and the thing itself would exist as sculpture pure and simple: as those prodigious and dreadful conceptions of line and mass and surface, imagined by Michelangelo in memory of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, exist as sculpture pure and simple; with the incomparable prose of Donatello and the august heroic poetry of Phidias and Praxiteles.

It has been said that Rodin's art is an expression of passion. That is true; but it is true in one sense only. Passion to him is wholly a matter of form and surface and line, and exists not apart from these. In other words Rodin is a sculptor. His expression consists in line and form and surface; without these he were merely inarticulate—were only the man in the street. That much he has recognised; and the result of his recognition is that

he lives for art, and that—his gift being what it is— if sculpture should die with him, the end would be not unworthy of the best that has gone before. He is our Michelangelo ; and if he had not been that, he might well have been our Donatello. And with Phidias and Lysippus all these some-and-twenty centuries afar, what more is left to say of the man of genius whose art is theirs? [1890.]

Auguste Rodin.

A CRITIC OF ART

I. M.

R. A. M. S.

1847-1900

Concerning Critics.

STEVENSON'S *Velasquez* is no new book: it has had some years of life, and, if good work count for aught in time and achievement, it must certainly endure while painters paint, and men delight, or are interested, in their work. I know but one book to place beside it in English, and that is the author's *Rubens*;[1] and I think that as yet there is but one in French—the admirable *Maîtres d'autrefois* of Eugène Fromentin—which has anything like its interest alike for artist and for connaisseur. This is as much as to say that it and its companion—the *Rubens*—are the sole pieces of 'art criticism,' in the right sense of the phrase, that we have. Now, there are critics and critics, and between them it is as variable service as between your fat King and your lean Beggar. 'Enfin,' Balzac said of the Steinbock of *la Cousine Bette*: the Steinbock who, having approved himself a sculptor, and won old Hulot's

[1] At the time of writing the apprehensive and charming *causerie* which prefaces Mr. Heinemann's *Raeburn* had not been published.

daughter to wife, forgot his duty, and kissed his genius dead in the arms of Mme. Marneffé: 'Enfin il passa critique comme tous les artistes qui mentent à leurs débuts.' This he said, being wellnigh at the end of his career, in a moment of peculiar scorn; and there is a sense in which the saying is eternally true; a sense, too, in which it is capable of universal application. To Balzac the critic was a writing or painting creature which had failed, but which, in its endeavour to succeed, had learned enough to be able to make the worst of any good thing done outside the confines of its crawl; and I suppose that, as Balzac knew his Paris, and suffered in his person from all sorts and conditions of critical activities, from Ste.-Beuve downwards, we may take his word for it that critics of this make there have ever been, and will ever be, while there are masters of genius to set their little faculties at work. Comes the question—*What* is a critic? And even here, in face of the answer that a critic is a man with a special and peculiar gift of appreciation, you will find, if you care to look, a certain indestructible element of rightness in Balzac's description. It may be that he was thinking, when he made it, of the literary critic best esteemed in literary history. I mean Ste.-Beuve. He, also, was of those artists 'qui mentent à leurs débuts'; for he began by publishing a volume of verse, which nobody ever reads, and a novel, which, as I believe, not half a dozen living men have read. Yet was he an incomparable critic of the arts in which he failed;[1] and

[1] 'After all, what are the critics? Men who have failed in literature and art.' Thus after Balzac: thus, or very nearly

we are as like to see another Hugo, another Alfred de Vigny even, as another Ste.-Beuve. And as Balzac's utterance was true of Ste.-Beuve, so likewise was it true, in varying degrees, of the authors of *Velasquez* and *les Maîtres d'autrefois*. Both began in paint, and the best of both is seen in letters. There is a difference. The author of *Dominique* and the *Maîtres d'autrefois* came near to being a painter; the author of the *Velasquez* and the *Rubens* never did anything of the kind. Yet both were critics of the sole virtuous type. Both had the divine gift of appreciation; both had painted enough to be experts in the technique of painting; to neither one nor other might a painter appeal as a man of letters gone wrong; by both a painter, if he so appealed, was taken at his own valuation, and cast into outer darkness; by both a picture was appreciated from the painter's point of view; by both, and especially by the author of *Velasquez*, it was asserted, not categorically but none the less triumphantly, that the painter sees life, form, colour, romance, beauty, passion, solely in the terms of paint: so that he who reads words into paint is merely a literary person who might be very much better employed. Both, in fact, were anti-Ruskin; and as yet the success of both seems in some sort inconsiderable. I say 'seems,' for I believe that both have won the race hands down.[1]

thus, for I quote from memory: the Disraeli of *Lothair*; who also *savait son monde*; who also had suffered; who, in defining, voiced the passion of a thousand sufferers less courageous than himself, whether to strike or steal.

[1] I do not forget Mr. Whistler's enchanting *Ten o'Clock*. But that is as it were an indigestion of strawberries, a feast

A CRITIC OF ART

R. A. M. Stevenson.

I HAVE not to write an appreciation of *les Maîtres d'autrefois*: if I had, I should have to transmute into English that wonderful three-page portrait of Van Dyck. What I have to do, so far as literature is concerned, is to note that in the *Velasquez* and the *Rubens* Stevenson has done for England what in the first book Eugène Fromentin did for France. Till he came, the literature of that England which he loved so well: the literature in which are comprehended the Shakespeare and the Milton he adored: had, as they say, 'no show' in this matter. Art-criticism, so called, was a raging and soul-moving business. Ruskin, for instance, uplifted a most beautiful voice, and tenored nonsense, nonsense, for many years and through interminable volumes, about Turner, Constable, Rembrandt, Angelico, Carpaccio, William Hunt—the Lord knows who; others did likewise about Rossetti, others about Millais, others yet about Burne-Jones. I do not say that such literary exercises as *Modern Painters* and the rest are impossible; for to say that were to say that I believe, for one thing, in the disappearance of that singular and penetrating product of the years, the Person Who has Found Culture, and, for another, in the miraculous development by everybody who goes to the Royal Academy exhibitions of a feeling for paint. But I insist upon it that, since Stevenson lived to produce his *Velasquez* and his *Rubens*, and in the achieving of these ends gave the public a chance of understanding what the

for the high Gods; and I fear that it has not had anything like the effect to which its art and brilliancy, let alone its mere rightness, entitle it.

painter means when he puts forth a picture, the chances are largely in favour of the gradual elimination of literary interest from the art-critic's tale of tools. The good public is, after all, not nearly the Fool Collective that some would have us believe. To appeal to it through paint alone were to play skittles with certain of its best renowned privileges: its understanding of and delight in books, and its romantic, not to say bookish, view of what it holds to be nature. So to the end of time Apelles must reckon on his Cobbler: even as to the end of time the most of men and women will see in a picture only as much of it as their acquaintance with letters and life lets them see, and will applaud a painter only in proportion as his theory of life and letters jumps with theirs.

His influence.

But the human race is compounded of many perplexing and delightful differences. In a very great part of it there must exist the sense of colour, or the sense of line, or the sense of line and colour. There are years and years between these and the message of the *Velasquez*. But the message will win to these in time and by degrees. The time may be long, the degrees seem imperceptible. But the message will arrive. Stevenson is dead but now. But I love to think: if you will, to cherish the illusion: that what is called art criticism can scarce ever be quite the same it was when he began his work of suggestion, edification, inspiration. Then it was all rhetoric and morals. You esteemed a painter because he exampled the charm of the

domestic hearth ; or because, Nature being the sole and only thing worth taking to your soul, he treated Nature as a common harlot, and did what he would with her ; or because he could neither paint nor draw, yet, in the absence of both drawing and painting, he appeared to have something to say which, ill said or not at all, was yet so gloriously suggested, that there you were, you know! There you were! But for Stevenson, there you might be still. But, in his placating, irresistible way, he took his public to first principles. He stood by the elements of art. He led you back to what he would (in talk) have called the Almighty Swells. And in the light of his smile, not less than in the light of his teaching, such a pious and painful achievement in pictorial sampler-work as *The Briar Rose* (say) never so much as began to be. Titian, Claude, Rembrandt, Corot —to one ever fresh from communing with these kings of paint, how else than futile could this poor monument of industry appear? [1]

YET this *Velasquez* of his, in which, having as by art-magic got into the painter's skin, he explains his man's intentions and expresses his man's results with a sobriety of method, a justness of tone, a precision of phrase which make it literature—this

'Bob.'

[1] A true painter so far as he went, he would have nought to do with any of this school, excepting always the man of character who, *à ses heures*, came almost as right in paint as he got near to being right in poetry : I mean Dante Rossetti. For the rest, the painters closest to him in fact and sentiment were the great landscapists of the school which culminated in Corot. Theirs was the art of painting as he practised it ; and his was practically the first voice uplifted this side the Channel in their praise.

book, I say, is as it were the worst of him. I ever esteemed him a far rarer spirit, a far more soaring and more personal genius than I found in his famous cousin; and in this view I was in no wise singular. Had you met him by chance, and been privileged to hear him discourse on his prime subject, you must inevitably have thought him a prince among artists: so full of reasoned inspiration were his conclusions, so luminous his statements, so far-reaching and suggestive his illustrations. You could not have helped yourself; yet in the end you must have wept to find yourself mistaken. For mistaken you must certainly have been: the truth being that this wonderful and delightful creature, though he might have stood for the Ideal Artist, had never an art complete in all his fascinating and unique endowment. Contained in him were the beginnings of all the arts that be; but they were inarticulate, and as it were incapable of self-assertion. He painted in a way; but his pictures were only suggestions for pictures; and he knew it. I have seen verse of his, fit and unfit for print, which showed that he knew as much of Milton's aims and processes as he did of Corot's. He delighted in great music—in Gluck, Mozart, Handel, Beethoven; but his sense of it was rhythmical,[1] so that to him melody was largely a matter of accent and symmetry. I need scarce say that music ended for him with Beethoven. He had a kind of technical interest in Berlioz, as a

[1] One day, wanting to tell me of a certain number in *Jephthah*, he beat it out on the piano, using the keyboard at large. We got the music afterwards; and the rhythm and the rhythmical effect were exactly as he had sketched them. But the intervals were Handel's.

great artist in orchestral colouring and the romance of instrumentation; but for Wagner he cared little. In his serene and omniscient enthusiasm he made light of popularities: as Rossini's, or the late Munkàcsy's, or the living Holman Hunt's. He hated emphasis, and would be content with naught save elegance, dignity, truth. Truth he would have; but if it came to him vulgarly handled—as it did in the achievement of (say) Millais—he withdrew into himself, and sought it elsewhere. If he failed to find an ideal in Wagner, he turned, with a far-away smile in those 'eyes of youth' of his, and looked in Corot, or Milton, or Gluck. He got one in all these; and he was content to rejoice, and let the phrasers, the Rhetoricians with a Purpose, go. I speak as one unauthorised and unofficial: as one, too, who had not seen and talked with him of late; but I should say that in the complete and absolute fusion of sentiment with dignity he found his chief joy in life. A good Corot, a good Wordsworth sonnet, the *Andante* of the C Minor symphony, a passage in *Paradise Lost* or the *Agonistes*, the *Lances*, the 'Troubled Soul' in Gluck's *Orphée*—with these he was at home. They came naturally to him. The second-best did not. I would say of him that he had so fine and so instant a sense of essentials, so large and luminous an outlook on results, that, being human and sincere, he could not find in himself the strength with which to essay achievement. At his cradle the Good Fairy said:—'I give him all the gifts, and he may do anything.' But her wicked sister smiled, and answered:—'He shall have so much brains that he shall be merely

futile.' The Bad Fairy was wrong, in part; for he created art-criticism in England, and his creation will not cheerfully be let die. But, as an artist, he was inarticulate; so that so far the Wicked Fairy was justified.

In Letters and Talk.

LITERATURE is the nearest of the arts; for the material of it is words, and words are the stuff of intercourse, the material of life. It is not, then, surprising that Stevenson, having failed in paint, began to express himself in words. I have always regarded his resolve as a piece of heroism; for it was my privilege to put him in the right way, to shape his beginnings, to find him outlets for the critical stuff that was seething and teeming in him: even as it was my pain to overlook his efforts to write formal English, and so to discipline his hand that in the end the *Velasquez* became possible. He hated the process. Give him paint and a canvas, and he could splash and 'wallow' and enjoy himself; give him a piano, and a sonata, or the redaction of a symphony, or a great and noble piece of Gluck, or Handel, or Mozart, and he was happy as a king. But letters . . . a pen, and a pot of ink, and a few sheets of paper, and then . . . nothing! Or nothing till the journal appeared. And then what misery, what shame, what an odious and horrible difference between the ambition and the effect! In brief, he loathed it all; and had there been no wolf at the door, there had been no R. A. M. S. Happily the wolf was there; and the *Velasquez* was only a question of time. I had hoped for much else: a Philosophy of Life, perhaps; perhaps, had the Gods

been more than common kind, an essay: lofty yet humorous, real yet fantastic: in Romance. But I think I should ever have held that his true gift was Talk. And he had it—Heaven's! in what perfection! I have heard the best of my time; but among them there is but one R. A. M. S.

The Cousins.

In a famous essay on *Talk and Talkers*, his cousin has done his best to make him immortal. But he tells of the 'Bob' of an early date: of the 'Bob' who, himself a man grown, a graduate of Cambridge, with his mind—(such a mind as it was: daring, humorous, imaginative, inordinately apprehensive and alert!)—made up on most of the essentials in Life and Time and Eternity, came on him where he lay—'ill abed, surrounded with manuscripts'—haled him out into the open air, taught him to drink and think, to 'swallow formulas' of every sort, to see that he could not live his life in Edinburgh, that art and life and morals were not made in that unnatural way, that the true God was not of that particular middle-class device, and that the right set of things was to get out into the open, cleanse your soul and spirit in the antient, wholesome fashion, and push forth into the Infinite on your own account. Lewis Stevenson was, of course, for all his weak lung, one of Fortune's favourites; but I have ever thought, and I shall ever believe that, in having his cousin for a chief influence in his beginnings, he was favoured beyond Fortune's wont. Be this as it may, the 'Bob' he pictures in Spring-Heeled Jack, the 'loud, copious, and intolerant talker,' in whom he takes such just

delight, is a Bob not known to the present generation. 'Tis a good ten years since I saw the last of that exorbitant and amazing person: a person, be it noted, ever, for all his amazingness and for all his exorbitancy—ever an influence for the best, alike in Morals and in Art; and I can say with a certain assurance that the younger men knew nothing of him. What they got in his room was a Someone, bright-eyed, a little flushed, ever courteous, ever kindly, ever humorous, taking any bit of the Universe as his theme, descanting upon it as if he had a prescriptive right in it, and delighting every one who listened by the unfailing excellence, wisdom, sanity (however insane it seemed at times!) of what he had to say. Says a friend of his, and mine:—'He was commentary, and that should go on for ever. Good commentary on whatever God saw fit to provide. It seems to me to dwindle the applications of the Universe that it can no longer serve for his interpretations.' That, I take it, is Bob caught in the act of walking the heights, and discoursing, as he went, on things above him and below. And had Lewis lived to reassert himself, in the warm body, as he went on till the end asserting himself in cold print; and had it been possible for any of us to sit and heed while these two—the Master and the Pupil—talked of That which is, That which must be, and That which may be; then should we have heard about the best that speech can do.

Meanwhile, both lived in Arcadia, and both are dead:—

'Cold, cold as they that lived and loved
A thousand years ago.'

EACH is a loss to us. But I think, as I sit here grieving for both, that we shall get ten Lewises, or an hundred even, or ever we get a Bob. Nothing like him has ever passed through my hands. He was what I have said; and there was in him a something mystical which I, who was long as close to him as his shirt, never quite fathomed. Whatever it be worth, he died in the glory of an unalterable Belief. So, if his radiant spirit endured undimmed these gradual and shameful processes of dissolution by which so many of us, poor worms that we are, are passed into the unbroken Silence, to himself he went trailing clouds of glory. So would he die happily, as he had lived well; and with the antient, brave valediction: *Ave, frater, atque Vale*: so I leave him. [1900.]

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