CHAPTER XXX

IONICA

I AM going now to talk about a very rare kind of poetry in a very rare little book, like fine wine in a small and precious flask. The author never put his name to the book—indeed for many years it was not known who wrote the volume. We now know that the author was a school teacher called William Johnson who, later in life, coming into a small fortune, changed his name to William Cory. He was born some time about 1823, and died in 1892. He was, I believe, an Oxford man and was assistant master of Eton College for a number of years. Judging from his poems, he must have found pleasure in his profession as well as pain. There is a strange sadness nearly always, but this sadness is mixed with expressions of love for the educational establishment which he directed, and for the students whose minds he helped to form. He must have been otherwise a very shy man. Scarcely anything seems to be known about him after his departure from educational circles, although everybody of taste now knows his poems. I wish to speak of them because I think that literary graduates of this university ought to be at least familiar with the name "Ionica." At all events you should know something about the man and about the best of his poems. If you should ask why so little has yet been said about him in books on English literature, I would answer that in the first place he was a very small poet writing in the time of giants, having for competitors Tennyson, Browning and others. He could scarcely make his small pipe heard in the thunder of those great organ tones. In the second place his verses were never written to please the public at all. They were written only

for fine scholars, and even the titles of many of them cannot be explained by a person devoid of some Greek culture. So the little book, which appeared quite early in the Victorian Age, was soon forgotten. Being forgotten it ran out of print and disappeared. Then somebody remembered that it had existed. I have told you that it was like the tone of a little pipe or flute as compared with the organ music of the larger poets. But the little pipe happened to be a Greek pipe—the melody was very sweet and very strange and old, and people who had heard it once soon wanted to hear it again. But they could not get it. Copies of the first edition fetched extraordinary sums. Some few years ago a new edition appeared, but this too is now out of print and is fetching fancy prices. However, you must not expect anything too wonderful from this way of introducing the subject. The facts only show that the poems are liked by persons of refinement and wealth. I hope to make you like some of them, but the difficulties of so doing are considerable, because of the extremely English character of some pieces and the extremely Greek tone of others. There is also some uneven work. The poet is not in all cases successful. Sometimes he tried to write society verse, and his society verse must be considered a failure. The best pieces are his Greek pieces and some compositions on love subjects of a most delicate and bewitching kind.

Of course the very name "Ionica" suggests Greek work, a collection of pieces in Ionic style. But you must not think that this means only repetitions of ancient subjects. This author brings the Greek feeling back again into the very heart of English life sometimes, or makes an English fact illustrate a Greek fable. Some delightful translations from the Greek there are, but less than half a dozen in all.

I scarcely know how to begin—what piece to quote first. But perhaps the little fancy called "Mimnermus in Church" is the best known, and the one which will best serve to introduce us to the character of Cory. Before quoting it, however, I must explain the title briefly. Mimnermus was

an old Greek philosopher and poet who thought that all things in the world are temporary, that all hope of a future life is vain, that there is nothing worth existing for except love, and that without affection one were better dead. There are, no doubt, various modern thinkers who tell you much the same thing, and this little poem exhibits such modern feeling in a Greek dress. I mean that we have here a picture of a young man, a young English scholar, listening in Church to Christian teaching, but answering that teaching with the thought of the old Greeks. There is of course one slight difference; the modern conception of love is perhaps a little wider in range than that of the old Greeks. There is more of the ideal in it.

MIMNERMUS IN CHURCH

You promise heavens free from strife,
  Pure truth, and perfect change of will;
But sweet, sweet is this human life,
  So sweet, I fain would breathe it still;
Your chilly stars I can forego,
This warm kind world is all I know.

You say there is no substance here,
  One great reality above:
Back from that void I shrink in fear,
  And child-like hide myself in love:
Show me what angels feel. Till then,
I cling, a mere weak man, to men.

You bid me lift my mean desires
  From faltering lips and fitful veins
To sexless souls, ideal quires,
  Unwearied voices, wordless strains:
My mind with fonder welcome owns
One dear dead friend's remembered tones.

Forsooth the present we must give
  To that which cannot pass away;
All beauteous things for which we live

By laws of time and space decay.
But oh, the very reason why
I clasp them, is because they die.

The preacher has been talking to his congregation about the joys of Heaven. "There," he says, "there will be no quarrelling, no contest, no falsehood, and all evil dispositions will be entirely changed to good." The poet answers, "This world and this life are full of beauty and of joy for me. I do not want to die, I want to live. I do not wish to go to that cold region of stars about which you teach. I only know this world and I find in it warm hearts and precious affection. You say that this world is a phantom, unsubstantial, unreal, and that the only reality is above in Heaven. To me that Heaven appears but as an awful emptiness. I shrink from it in terror, and like a child seek for consolation in human love. It is no use to talk to me about angels until you can prove to me that angels can feel happier than men. I prefer to remain with human beings. You say that I ought to wish for higher things than this world can give, that here minds are unsteady and weak, hearts fickle and selfish, and you talk of souls without sex, imaginary concerts of perfect music, tireless singing in Heaven, and the pleasure of conversation without speech. But all the happiness that we know is received from our fellow beings. I remember the voice of one dead friend with deeper love and pleasure than any images of Heaven could ever excite in my mind."

The last stanza needs no paraphrasing, but it deserves some comment, for it is the expression of one great difference between the old Greek feeling in regard to life and death, and all modern religious feeling on the same subject. You can read through hundreds of beautiful inscriptions which were placed over the Greek tombs. They are contained in "The Greek Anthology." You will find there almost nothing about hope of a future life, or about Heaven. They are not for the most part sad; they are actually joyous in many cases. You would say that the Greek mind thought thus

about death—"I have had my share of the beauty and the love of this world, and I am grateful for this enjoyment, and now it is time to go to sleep." There is actually an inscription to the effect, "I have supped well of the banquet of life." The Eastern religions, including Christianity, taught that because everything in the world is uncertain, impermanent, perishable, therefore we ought not to allow our minds to love worldly things. But the Greek mind, as expressed by the old epigraphy in the cemeteries, not less than by the teaching of Mimnermus, took exactly the opposite view. "O children of men, it is because beauty and pleasure and love and light can last only for a little while, it is exactly because of this that you should love them. Why refuse to enjoy the present because it cannot last for ever?" And at a much later day the Persian poet Omar took, you will remember, precisely the same view. You need not think that it would be wise to accept such teaching for a rule of life, but it has a certain value as a balance to the other extreme view, that we should make ourselves miserable in this world with the idea of being rewarded in another, concerning which we have no positive knowledge. The lines with which the poem concludes at least deserve to be thought about—

> But oh, the very reason why
> I clasp them, is because they die.

We shall later on take some of the purely Greek work of Cory for study, but I want now to interest you in the more modern part of it. The charm of the following passage you will better feel by remembering that the writer was then a schoolmaster at Eton, and that the verses particularly express the love which he felt for his students—a love the more profound, perhaps, because the circumstances of the teacher's position obliged him to appear cold and severe, obliged him to suppress natural impulses of affection and generosity. The discipline of the masters in English public schools is much more severe than the discipline to which

the students are subjected. The boys enjoy a great deal of liberty. The masters may be said to have none. Yet there are men so constituted that they learn to greatly love the profession. The title of this poem is "Reparabo," which means "I will atone."

The world will rob me of my friends,
For time with her conspires;
But they shall both to make amends
Relight my slumbering fires.

For while my comrades pass away
To bow and smirk and gloze,
Come others, for as short a stay;
And dear are these as those.

And who was this? they ask; and then
The loved and lost I praise:
"Like you they frolicked; they are men;
"Bless ye my later days."

Why fret? the hawks I trained are flown:
'Twas nature bade them range;
I could not keep their wings half-grown,
I could not bar the change.

With lattice opened wide I stand
To watch their eager flight;
With broken jesses in my hand
I muse on their delight.

And, oh! if one with sullied plume
Should droop in mid career,
My love makes signals,—"There is room,
Oh, bleeding wanderer, here."

This comparison of the educator to a falconer, and of the students to young hawks eager to break their jesses, seems to an Englishman particularly happy in reference to Eton, from which so many youths pass into the ranks of the army and navy. The line about bowing, smirking and

glozing, refers to the comparative insincerity of the higher society into which so many of the scholars must eventually pass. "Smirking" suggests insincere smiles, "glozing" implies tolerating or lightly passing over faults or wrongs or serious matters that should not be considered lightly. Society is essentially insincere and artificial in all countries, but especially so in England. The old Eton master thinks, however, that he knows the moral character of the boys, the strong principles which make its foundation, and he trusts that they will be able in a general way to do only what is right, in spite of conventions and humbug.

As I told you before, we know very little about the personal life of Cory, who must have been a very reserved man; but a poet puts his heart into his verses as a general rule, and there are many little poems in this book that suggest to us an unhappy love episode. These are extremely pretty and touching, the writer in most cases confessing himself unworthy of the person who charmed him; but the finest thing of the kind is a composition which he suggestively entitled "A Fable"—that is to say, a fable in the Greek sense, an emblem or symbol of truth.

An eager girl, whose father buys
  Some ruined thane's foresaken hall,
Explores the new domain, and tries
  Before the rest to view it all.

I think you have often noted the fact here related; when a family moves to a new house, it is the child, or the youngest daughter, who is the first to explore all the secrets of the new residence, and whose young eyes discover things which the older folks had not noticed.

Alone she lifts the latch, and glides
  Through many a sadly curtained room,
As daylight through the doorway slides
  And struggles with the muffled gloom.

With mimicries of dance she wakes
  The lordly gallery's silent floor,

And climbing up on tip-toe, makes
  The old-world mirror smile once more.

With tankards dry she chills her lip,
  With yellowing laces veils the head,
And leaps in pride of ownership
  Upon the faded marriage bed.

A harp in some dark nook she sees,
  Long left a prey to heat and frost,
She smites it: can such tinklings please?
  Is not all worth, all beauty, lost?

Ah! who'd have thought such sweetness clung
  To loose neglected strings like those?
They answered to whate'er was sung,
  And sounded as the lady chose.

Her pitying finger hurried by
  Each vacant space, each slackened chord;
Nor would her wayward zeal let die
  The music-spirit she restored.

The fashion quaint, the time-worn flaws,
  The narrow range, the doubtful tone,
All was excused awhile, because
  It seemed a creature of her own.

Perfection tires; the new in old,
  The mended wrecks that need her skill,
Amuse her. If the truth be told,
  She loves the triumphs of her will.

With this, she dares herself persuade,
  She'll be for many a month content,
Quite sure no duchess ever played
  Upon a sweeter instrument.

And thus in sooth she can beguile
  Girlhood's romantic hours: but soon
She yields to taste and mode and style,
  A siren of the gay saloon;

And wonders how she once could like
  Those drooping wires, those failing notes,
And leaves her toy for bats to strike
  Amongst the cobwebs and the motes.

But enter in, thou freezing wind,
  And snap the harp-strings one by one,
It was a maiden blithe and kind:
  They felt her touch; their task is done.

In this charming little study we know that the harp described is not a harp; it is the loving heart of an old man, at least of a man beyond the usual age of lovers. He has described and perhaps adored some beautiful person who seemed to care for him, and who played upon his heart, with her whims, caresses, smiles, much as one would play upon the strings of a harp. She did not mean to be cruel at all, nor even insincere. It is even probable that she really in those times thought that she loved the man, and under the charms of the girl the man became a different being; the old-fashioned mind brightened, the old-fashioned heart exposed its hidden treasures of tenderness and wisdom and sympathy. Very much like playing upon a long forgotten instrument, was the relation between the maiden and the man—not only because he resembled such an instrument in the fact of belonging emotionally and intellectually to another generation, but also because his was a heart whose true music had long been silent, unheard by the world. Undoubtedly the maiden meant no harm, but she caused a great deal of pain, for at a later day, becoming a great lady of society, she forgot all about this old friendship, or perhaps wondered why she ever wasted her time in talking to such a strange old-fashioned professor. Then the affectionate heart is condemned to silence again, to silence and oblivion, like the harp thrown away in some garret to be covered with cobwebs and visited only by bats. "Is it not time," the old man thinks, "that the strings should be broken, the strings of the heart? Let the cold wind of death

now come and snap them." Yet, after all, why should he complain? Did he not have the beautiful experience of loving, and was she not in that time at least well worthy of the love that she called forth like music?

There are several other poems referring to what would seem to be the same experience, and all are beautiful, but one seems to me nobler than the rest, expressing as it does a generous resignation. It is called "Deteriora," a Latin word signifying lesser, inferior, or deteriorated things—not easy to translate. Nor would you find the poem easy to understand, referring as it does to conditions of society foreign to anything in Japanese experience. But some verses which I may quote you will like.

If fate and nature screen from me
  The sovran front I bowed before,
And set the glorious creature free,
  Whom I would clasp, detain, adore;
If I forego that strange delight,
Must all be lost? Not quite, not quite.

Die, little Love, without complaint,
  Whom Honour standeth by to shrive:
Assoiled from all selfish taint,
  Die, Love, whom Friendship will survive.
Not heat nor folly gave thee birth;
And briefness doth but raise thy worth.

This is the same thought which Tennyson expressed in his famous lines,

'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all.*

But it is still more finely expressed to meet a particular personal mood. One must not think the world lost because a woman has been lost, he says, and such a love is not a thing for any man to be ashamed of, in spite of the fact that it has been disappointed. It was honourable, unselfish, not inspired by any passion or any folly, and the very

* *In Memoriam*, LXXXV, 3-4

brevity of the experience only serves to make it more precious. Observe the use of the words "shrive" and "assoiled." These refer to the old religious custom of confession; to "shrive" signifies to forgive, to free from sin, as a priest is supposed to do, and "assoiled" means "purified."

If this was a personal experience, it must have been an experience of advanced life. Elsewhere the story of a boyish love is told very prettily, under the title of "Two Fragments of Childhood." This is the first fragment:

> When these locks were yellow as gold,
> When past days were easily told,
> Well I knew the voice of the sea,
> Once he spake as a friend to me.
> Thunder-roarings carelessly heard,
> Once that poor little heart they stirred.
> Why, oh, why?
> Memory, Memory!
> She that I wished to be with was by.
>
> Sick was I in those misanthrope days
> Of soft caresses, womanly ways;
> Once that maid on the stairs I met,
> Lip on brow she suddenly set.
> Then flushed up my chivalrous blood
> Like Swiss streams in a midsummer flood.
> Then, oh, then,
> Imogen, Imogen!
> Hadst thou a lover, whose years were ten.

This is evidently the charming memory of a little sick boy sent to the seaside for his health, according to the English custom, and unhappy there, unable to play about like stronger children, and obliged to remain under the constant care of nurses and female relatives. But in the same house there is another family with a beautiful young daughter, probably sixteen or eighteen years old. The little boy wishes, wishes so much that the beautiful lady would speak to him and play with him, but he is shy, afraid to approach her—

only looks at her with great admiring loving eyes. But one day she meets him on the stairs, and stoops down and kisses him on the forehead. Then he is in Heaven. Afterwards no doubt she played with him, and they walked up and down by the shore of the sea together, and now, though an old man, whenever he hears the roar of the sea he remembers the beautiful lady who played with him and caressed him, when he was a little sick child. How much he loved her! But she was a woman, and he was only ten years old. The reference to "chivalrous blood" signifies just this, that at the moment when she kissed him he would have given his life for her, would have dared anything or done anything to show his devotion to her. No prettier memory of a child could be told.

We can learn a good deal about even the shyest of the poets through a close understanding of his poetry. From the foregoing we know that Cory must have been a sickly child; and from other poems referring to school life we cannot escape the supposition that he was not a strong lad. In one of his verses he speaks of being unable to join in the hearty play of his comrades; and in the poem which touches on the life of the mature man we find him acknowledging that he believed his life a failure—a failure through want of strength. I am going to quote this poem for other reasons. It is a beautiful address either to some favourite student or to a beloved son—it is impossible to decide which. But that does not matter. The title is "A New Year's Day."

Our planet runs through liquid space,
And sweeps us with her in the race;
And wrinkles gather on my face,
    And Hebé bloom on thine:
Our sun with his encircling spheres
Around the central sun careers;
And unto thee with mustering years
    Comes hope which I resign.

'Twere sweet for me to keep thee still
Reclining halfway up the hill;
But time will not obey the will,
And onward thou must climb:
'Twere sweet to pause on this descent,
To wait for thee and pitch my tent,
But march I must with shoulders bent,
Yet farther from my prime.

I shall not tread thy battle-field,
Nor see the blazon on thy shield;
Take thou the sword I could not wield,
And leave me, and forget.
Be fairer, braver, more admired;
So win what feeble hearts desired;
Then leave thine arms, when thou art tired,
To some one nobler yet.

How beautiful this is, and how profoundly sad!

I shall return to the personal poetry of Cory later on, but I want now to give you some examples of his Greek work. Perhaps the best of this is little more than a rendering of Greek into English; some of the work is pure translation. But it is the translation of a very great master, the perfect rendering of Greek feeling as well as of Greek thought. Here is an example of pure translation:

They told me, Heracleitus, they told me you were dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed.
I wept, as I remember'd how often you and I
Had tir'd the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.

What are "thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales"? They are the songs which the dear dead poet made, still sung in his native country, though his body was burned to ashes long ago—has been changed into a mere handful of grey

ashes, which, doubtless, have been placed in an urn, as is done with such ashes to-day in Japan. Death takes away all things from man, but not his poems, his songs, the beautiful thoughts which he puts into musical verse. These will always be heard like nightingales. The fourth line in the first stanza contains an idiom which may not be familiar to you. It means only that the two friends talked all day until the sun set in the west, and still talked on after that. Tennyson has used the same Greek thought in a verse of his poem, "A Dream of Fair Women," where Cleopatra says

"We drank the Lybian Sun to sleep."

The Greek author of the above poem was the great poet Callimachus, and the English translator does not think it necessary even to give the name, as he wrote only for folk well acquainted with the classics. He has another short translation which he accompanies with the original Greek text; it is very pretty, but of an entirely different kind, a kind that may remind you of some Japanese poems. It is only about a cicada and a peasant girl, and perhaps it is twenty-four or twenty-five hundred years old.

A dry cicale chirps to a lass making hay,
"Why creak'st thou, Tithonus?" quoth she. "I don't play;
It doubles my toil, your importunate lay,
I've earned a sweet pillow, lo! Hesper is nigh;
I clasp a good wisp, and in fragrance I lie;
But thou art unwearied, and empty, and dry."

How very human this little thing is—how actually it brings before us the figure of the girl, who must have become dust some time between two and three thousand years ago! She is working hard in the field, and the constant singing of the insect prompts her to make a comical protest. "Oh, Tithonus, what are you making that creaking noise for? You old dry thing, I have no time to play with you, or to idle in any way, but you do nothing but complain. Why don't you work, as I do? Soon I shall have leave to sleep, because

I have worked well. There is the evening star, and I shall have a good bed of hay, sweet-smelling fresh hay, to lie upon. How well I shall sleep! But you, you idle noisy thing, you do not deserve to sleep. You have done nothing to tire you. And you are empty, dry and thirsty. Serves you right!" Of course you recognize the allusion to the story of Tithonus, so beautifully told by Tennyson. The girl's jest has a double meaning. The word "importunate" has the signification of a wearisome repetition of a request, a constant asking, impossible to satisfy. Tithonus was supposed to complain because he was obliged to live although he wanted to die. That young girl does not want to die at all. And she says that the noise of the insect supposed to repeat the complaint of Tithonus, only makes it more tiresome for her to work. She was feeling, no doubt, much as a Japanese student would feel when troubled by the singing of *semi* on some very hot afternoon while he is trying to master some difficult problem.

That is pure Greek—pure as another mingling of the Greek feeling with the modern scholarly spirit, entitled "An Invocation." Before quoting from it I must explain somewhat; otherwise you might not be able to imagine what it means, because it was written to be read by those only who are acquainted with Theocritus and the Greek idyllists. Perhaps I had better say something too, about the word idyll, for the use of the word by Tennyson is not the Greek use at all, except in the mere fact that the word signifies a picturing, a shadowing or an imaging of things. Tennyson's pictures are of a purely imaginative kind in the "Idylls of the King." But the Greek poets who first invented the poetry called idyllic did not attempt the heroic works of imagination at all; they only endeavoured to make perfectly true pictures of the common life of peasants in the country. They wrote about the young men and young girls working on the farms, about the way they quarrelled or rejoiced or made love, about their dances and their songs, about their religious festivals and their sacrifices to the

gods at the parish temple. Imagine a Japanese scholar of to-day who, after leaving the university, instead of busying himself with the fashionable studies of the time, should go out into the remoter districts or islands of Japan, and devote his life to studying the existence of the commoner people there, and making poems about it. This was exactly what the Greek idyllists did,—that is, the best of them. They were great scholars and became friends of kings, but they wrote poetry chiefly about peasant life, and they gave all their genius to the work. The result was so beautiful that everybody is still charmed by the pictures or idylls which they made.

Well, after this digression, to return to the subject of Theocritus, the greatest of the idyllists. He has often introduced into his idylls the name of Comatas. Who was Comatas? Comatas was a Greek shepherd boy, or more strictly speaking a goatherd, who kept the flocks of a rich man. It was his duty to sacrifice to the gods none of his master's animals, without permission; but as his master was a very avaricious person, Comatas knew that it would be of little use to ask him. Now this Comatas was a very good singer of peasant songs, and he made many beautiful poems for the people to sing, and he believed that it was the gods who had given him power to make the songs, and the Muses had inspired him with the capacity to make good verse. In spite of his master's will, Comatas therefore thought it was not very bad to take the young kids and sacrifice to the gods and the Muses. When his master found out what had been done with the animals, naturally he became very angry, and he put Comatas into a great box of cedar-wood in order to starve him to death—saying, as he closed and locked the lid, "Now, Comatas, let us see whether the gods will feed you!" In that box Comatas was left for a year without food or drink, and when the master, at the end of the year, opened the box, he expected to find nothing but the bones of the goatherd. But Comatas was alive and well, singing sweet songs, because during the year

the Muses had sent bees to feed him with honey. The bees had been able to enter the box through a very little hole. I suppose you know that bees were held sacred to the Muses, and that there is in Greek legend a symbolic relation between bees and poetry.

If you want to know what kind of songs Comatas sang and what kind of life he represented, you will find all this exquisitely told by Theocritus; and there is a beautiful little translation in prose of Theocritus, Bion and Moschus, made by Andrew Lang, which should delight you to read. Another day I shall give you examples of such translations.* Then you will see what true idyllic poetry originally signified. These Greeks, although trained scholars and philosophers, understood not only that human nature in itself is a beautiful thing, but also that the best way to study human nature is to study the life of the peasants and the common people. It is not to the rich and leisurely, not to rank and society, that a poet must go for inspiration. He will not find it there. What is called society is a world in which nobody is happy, and in which pure human nature is afraid to show itself. Life among the higher classes in all countries is formal, artificial, theatrical; poetry is not there. Of course no kind of human community is perfectly happy, but it is among the simple folk, the country folk, who do not know much about evil and deceit, that the greater proportion of happiness can be found. Among the youths of the country especially, combining the charm of childhood with the strength of adult maturity, the best possible subjects for fine pure studies of human nature can be found. May I not here express the hope that some young Japanese poet, some graduate of this very university, will eventually attempt to do in Japan what Theocritus and Bion did in ancient Sicily? A great deal of the very same kind of poetry exists in our own rural districts, and parallels can be found in the daily life of the Japanese peasants for everything beautifully described in Theocritus. At all

*See *On Art, Literature and Philosophy*, Ch. XXXI "Old Greek Fragments."

events I am quite sure of one thing, that no great new literature can possibly arise in this country until some scholarly minds discover that the real force and truth and beauty and poetry of life is to be found only in studies of the common people—not in the life of the rich and the noble, not in the shadowy life of books.

Well, our English poet felt with the Greek idyllists, and in the poem called "An Invocation" he beautifully expresses this sympathy. All of us, he says, should like to see and hear something of the ancient past if it were possible. We should like, some of us, to call back the vanished gods and goddesses of the beautiful Greek world, or to talk to the great souls of that world who had the experience of life as men—to Socrates, for example, to Plato, to Phidias the sculptor, to Pericles the statesman. But, as a poet, my wish would not be for the return of the old gods nor of the old heroes so much as for the return to us of some common men who lived in the Greek world. It is Comatas, he says, that he would most like to see, and to see in some English park —in the neighbourhood of Cambridge University, or of Eton College. And thus he addresses the spirit of Comatas:

Oh, dear divine Comatas, I would that thou and I
Beneath this broken sunlight this leisure day might lie;
Where trees from distant forests, whose names were strange to thee,
Should bend their amorous branches within thy reach to be,
And flowers thine Hellas knew not, which art hath made more fair,
Should shed their shining petals upon thy fragrant hair.

Then thou shouldst calmly listen with ever-changing looks
To songs of younger minstrels and plots of modern books,
And wonder at the daring of poets later born,
Whose thoughts are unto thy thoughts as noon-tide is to morn;
And little shouldst thou grudge them their greater strength of soul,
Thy partners in the torch-race, though nearer to the goal.

. . . . . .

Or in thy cedarn prison thou waitest for the bee:
Ah, leave that simple honey, and take thy food from me.
My sun is stooping westward. Entrancèd dreamer, haste:

There's fruitage in my garden, that I would have thee taste.
Now lift the lid a moment: now, Dorian shepherd, speak:
Two minds shall flow together, the English and the Greek.

A few phrases of these beautiful stanzas need explanation. "Broken sunlight" refers, of course, to the imperfect shade thrown by the trees under which the poet is lying. The shadow is broken by the light passing through leaves, or conversely, the light is broken by the interposition of the leaves. The reference to trees from distant forests no doubt intimates that the poet is in some botanical garden, a private park, in which foreign trees are carefully cultivated. The "torch-race" is a simile for the pursuit of knowledge and truth. Greek thinkers compare the transmission of knowledge from one generation to another, to the passing of a lighted torch from hand to hand, as in the case of messengers carrying signals or athletes running a mighty race. As a runner runs until he is tired, or until he reaches the next station, and then passes the torch which he has been carrying to another runner waiting to receive it, so does each generation pass on its wisdom to the succeeding generation, and disappear. "My sun is stooping westward," is only a beautiful way of saying, "I am becoming very old; be quick, so that we may see each other before I die." And the poet suggests that it is because of his age and his experience and his wisdom that he could hope to be of service to the dear divine Comatas. The expression, "there is fruitage in my garden," refers to no material garden, but to the cultivated mind of the scholar; he is only saying, "I have strange knowledge that I should like to impart to you." How delightful, indeed, it would be, could some university scholar really converse with a living Greek of the old days!

There is another little Greek study of great and simple beauty entitled "The Daughter of Cleomenes." It is only an historical incident, but it is so related for the pleasure of suggesting a profound truth about the instinct of childhood. Long ago, when the Persians were about to make an attack upon the Greeks, there was an attempt to buy

off the Spartan resistance, and the messenger to the Spartan general found him playing with his little daughter, a child of six or seven. The conference was carried on in whispers, and the child could not hear what was being said; but she broke up the whole plot by a single word. I shall quote a few lines from the close of the poem, which contain its moral lessons. The emissary has tried to tempt him with promises of wealth and power.

He falters; for the waves he fears,
  The roads he cannot measure;
But rates full high the gleam of spears,
  And dreams of yellow treasure.
He listens; he is yielding now;
  Outspoke the fearless child:
"Oh, father, come away, lest thou
  Be by this man beguiled."
Her lowly judgment barred the plea,
  So low, it could not reach her.
The man knows more of land and sea,
  But she's the truer teacher.

All the little girl could know about the matter was instinctive; she only saw the cunning face of the stranger, and felt sure that he was trying to deceive her father for a bad purpose—so she cried out, "Father, come away with me, or else that man will deceive you." And she spoke truth, as her father immediately recognized.

There are several more classical studies of extraordinary beauty; but your interest in them would depend upon something more than interest in Greek and Roman history, and we cannot study all the poems. So I prefer to go back to the meditative lyrics, and to give a few splendid examples of these more personal compositions. The following stanzas are from a poem whose Latin title signifies that Love conquers death. In this poem the author becomes the equal of Tennyson as a master of language.

The plunging rocks, whose ravenous throats
  The sea in wrath and mockery fills,

The smoke that up the valley floats,
  The girlhood of the growing hills,

The thunderings from the miners' ledge,
  The wild assaults on nature's hoard,
The peak, that stormward bares an edge
  Ground sharp in days when Titans warred,

Grim heights, by wandering clouds embraced,
  Where lightning's ministers conspire,
Grey glens, with tarn and streamlet laced,
  Stark forgeries of primeval fire,

These scenes may gladden many a mind
  Awhile from homelier thoughts released,
And here my fellow-men may find
  A Sabbath and a vision-feast.

I bless them in the good they feel;
  And yet I bless them with a sigh:
On me this grandeur stamps the seal
  Of tyrranous mortality.

The pitiless mountain stands so sure,
  The human breast so weakly heaves,
That brains decay, while rocks endure,
  At this the insatiate spirit grieves.

But hither, oh, ideal bride!
  For whom this heart in silence aches,
Love is unwearied as the tide,
  Love is perennial as the lakes,

Come thou. The spiky crags will seem
  One harvest of one heavenly year,
And fear of death, like childish dream,
  Will pass and flee, when thou art here.

Very possibly this charming meditation was written on the Welsh coast; there is just such scenery as the poem describes, and the grand peak of Snowdon would well realize the imagination of the line about the girlhood of

the growing hills. The melancholy of the latter part of the composition is the same melancholy to be found in "Mimnermus in Church," the first of Cory's poems which we read together. It is the Greek teaching that there is nothing to console us for the great doubt and mystery of existence except unselfish affection. All through the book we find the same philosophy, even in the beautiful studies of student life and the memories of childhood. So it is quite a melancholy book, though the sadness be beautiful. I have given you examples of the sadness of doubt and of the sadness of love; but there is yet a third kind of sadness—the sadness of a childless man, wishing that he could have a child of his own. It is a very pretty thing, simply entitled "Scheveningen Avenue"—probably the name of the avenue where the incident occurred. The poet does not tell us how it occurred, but we can very well guess. He was riding in a street car, probably, and a little girl next to him, while sitting upon her nurse's lap, fell asleep, and as she slept let her head fall upon his shoulder. This is a very simple thing to make a poem about, but what a poem it is!

Oh, that the road were longer,
  A mile, or two, or three!
So might the thought grow stronger
  That flows from touch of thee.

Oh, little slumbering maid,
  If thou wert five years older,
Thine head would not be laid
  So simply on my shoulder!

Oh, would that I were younger,
  Oh, were I more like thee,
I should not faintly hunger
  For love that cannot be.

A girl might be caressed,
  Beside me freely sitting;
A child on me might rest,
  And not like thee, unwitting.

Such honour is thy mother's,
  Who smileth on thy sleep,
Or for the nurse who smothers
  Thy cheek in kisses deep.

And but for parting day,
  And but for forest shady,
From me they'd take away
  The burden of their lady.

Ah thus to feel thee leaning
  Above the nursemaid's hand,
Is like a stranger's gleaning,
  Where rich men own the land.

Chance gains, and humble thrift,
  With shyness much like thieving,
No notice with the gift,
  No thanks with the receiving.

Oh, peasant, when thou starvest
  Outside the fair domain,
Imagine there's a harvest
  In every treasured grain!

Make with thy thoughts high cheer,
  Say grace for others dining,
And keep thy pittance clear
  From poison of repining.

There is an almost intolerable acuity of sadness in the last two mocking verses, but how pretty and how tender the whole thing is, and how gentle-hearted must have been the man who wrote it! The same tenderness reappears in references to children of a larger growth, the boys of his school. Sometimes he very much regrets the necessity of discipline, and advocates a wiser method of dealing with the young. How very pretty is this little verse about the boy he loves.

Sweet eyes, that aim a level shaft
  At pleasure flying from afar,
Sweet lips, just parted for a draught

Of Hebe's nectar, shall I mar
By stress of disciplinal craft
The joys that in your freedom are?

But a little reflection further on in the same poem reminds us how necessary the discipline must be for the battle of life, inasmuch as each of those charming boys will have to fight against evil—

yet shall ye cope
With worldling wrapped in silken lies,
With pedant, hypocrite, and pope.

One might easily lecture about this little volume for many more days, so beautiful are the things which fill it. But enough has been cited to exemplify its unique value. If you reread these quotations, I think you will find each time new beauty in them. And the beauty is quite peculiar. Such poetry could have been written only under two conditions. The first is that the poet be a consummate scholar. The second is that he must have suffered as only a great mind and heart could suffer, from want of affection.